



THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CENTER
FOR NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE, INC.

BELOVED COMMUNITY TEACH-IN

FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS



2026 LESSON PLAN: K-2

An illustration of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. Martin Luther King Jr. is on the left, wearing a blue suit and tie, looking towards the right. Coretta Scott King is on the right, wearing a blue dress and a long pearl necklace, looking towards the left. The background is a soft, glowing light with a hint of a red and white striped pattern at the bottom left.

MLK Holiday Teach-In 2026

Grade Level: PK-2

Lesson Title: It Starts With Me!

Theme: Mission Possible II: Uniting a Nation. Building a Future. The Nonviolent Way.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that everyone can help create peace with their words and actions.
- Learn the meaning of nonviolence through classroom conversation.
- Identify ways they can contribute to unity and fairness.
- Engage with *It Starts With Me* by Dr. Bernice A. King as an accessible introduction to Dr. King's legacy and vision.

Success Criteria

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Verbally express what peace, kindness, or fairness means in their own words.
- Identify at least one peaceful action they can take (e.g., sharing, helping, using kind words).

Curriculum Connections

- **Character-Based Learning:** Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making
- **English Language Arts (ELA):** Listening and responding to a read-aloud
- **Social Studies:** Citizenship, fairness, cooperation

Key Vocabulary

- **Peace** – calm, no fighting, kindness
- **Unity** – together, being one team
- **Nonviolence** – a love-centered way of thinking, speaking, acting, and engaging that leads to personal, cultural, and societal transformation. (*Adaptation for PK-2: solving problems without hurting others*)
- **Kindness** – being nice, helping, using caring words
- **Respect** – treating people the right way



Book for Read-Aloud

Title: *It Starts With Me* by Dr. Bernice A. King

Summary: This picture book shows children how kindness, fairness, respect, and other small actions can change the world. It introduces ideas like love, peace, community, and equality in simple, inspiring language.

Instructional Steps

1. Warm-Up Discussion (5-7 minutes)

Ask:

- “What is peace?”
- “What does it mean to be kind?”
- “What does it mean to be part of a team?”
- “How can we help our classroom be peaceful?”

2. Read Aloud: *It Starts With Me* (10-12 minutes)

Pause during the book to ask:

- “What is this page showing us?”
- “What is something kind you can do?”
- “How can we help others feel included?”

3. Movement Break / Song (Optional, 3-5 minutes)

Play a simple song like “[Peace Like a River](#)” or “[This Little Light of Mine](#)” and invite students to sing or clap.

4. Activity: Create a “Peace Star” (10-12 minutes)

- Give each student a paper star. Ask them to write (or dictate to you) one way they will bring peace (e.g., “I can share,” “I can use kind words,” “I can help someone who is sad.”)
- They decorate their star with drawings or stickers.
- Collect all stars and post them together on a large poster or wall under the heading: “*Uniting a Nation. Building a Future. The Nonviolent Way.*”
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Optional Extension

- Share a short video clip of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. giving a speech (30-60 seconds) to show he was a real person who used kind and powerful words. Here is a clip posted by The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, “[The Audacity to Believe.](#)”
- Invite students to create a class chant/slogan/mantra: “Peace starts with me! Peace starts with us!”



Accommodations & Supports

Supports for IEP and 504 Needs

- Pre-read the quotes/reading in small groups prior to the lesson.
- Provide sentence stems such as: “I can help by ____.” or “Peace means ____.”
- Allow students to draw instead of write if needed.
- Use a visual schedule to outline each activity in the lesson.
- Offer alternative seating or sensory items for students who need movement or comfort.

Supports for Reading Differences

- Read the book aloud slowly and with emphasis on repeated phrases.
- Use visual aids or printed picture cards with key vocabulary: peace, kindness, help, respect.
- Pair auditory input with images from the story.
- Repeat or paraphrase important ideas to support comprehension.

Supports for English Language Learners

- Introduce key words with gestures and visuals.
- Provide multilingual support with key words like “peace” and “help” in languages spoken by your students.
- Pair ELLs with a buddy during the activity and reflection.

Supports for Character-Based Learning Needs

- Allow space for emotional expression (e.g., “How do you feel when someone is unkind?”).
- Celebrate every child’s contribution to the “Unity Wall.”
- Acknowledge and validate all peaceful choices—even small ones.