

## **Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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Introduce yourself. Tell where you are from and where you live now. Tell how this story connects to you or reminds you of something in your life.

Because he is so well known, people often refer to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as MLK, or as Dr. King. Dr. King was born January 15, 1929 and died April 4, 1968 at the age of 39. A national holiday in honor of Dr. King was first observed in 1986 and always occurs on the third Monday in January. Many people observe this holiday as a day of service and many communities have a parade or a march and speeches.

The book *The Secret Life of Bees* takes place in 1965, at the time the Voting Rights Act was signed into law.

Read the book, taking turns. As you read, pay attention to both the words and the illustrations. Below are a few definitions of words from the book.

### **Vocabulary:**

Drive out - to make someone or something leave

blistering - very hot

blister - a painful swelling containing clear liquid on the surface of your skin. Blisters are caused by burning or rubbing.

stand up for - to defend or support someone or something

the key to - the best way to achieve something

movement - a gradual change of attitude, opinion, or policy. The Civil Rights Movement involved many protests to change attitudes and laws for equal rights.

protest march - a group of people walk from one place to another (usually to a government office or building) to say that they disagree with something. They often carry signs.

segregation - the practice or policy of keeping people of different races or religions, for example, separate from each other

on strike - to stop work in order to force an employer to agree to demands; to refuse to work until your employer does what you want.

### **Discussion questions:**

1. Why do you think the author chose "Martin's Big Words" as the title of the book?

2. I often hear parents tell a young child, "Use your words." This often happens when the child is upset or angry. What does the parent hope the child will learn from this statement?

3. Below are quotes from the book. Is there a quote that is especially meaningful to you? Explain the meaning of the quote and why it is meaningful to you.

"You are as good as anyone."

"Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that."

"Sooner or later, all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together."

"When the history books are written, someone will say there lived a black people who had the courage to stand up for their rights."

"Wait! For years I have heard the word 'Wait!' We have waited more than three hundred and forty years for our rights."

"Love is the key to the problems of the world."

"Remember, if I am stopped, this movement will not be stopped, because God is with this movement."

"I have a dream that one day in Alabama little black boys and black girls will join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."

4. The illustrator uses collage and watercolor for the artwork in the book. Do you have a favorite illustration?

collage: a work of art that is made by attaching pieces of different materials (such as paper, cloth, or wood) to a flat surface

5. Do you notice a recurring image in the illustrations in the book? What is it and why do you think the artist chose it?

6. If you have time, read the "Illustrator's Note" at the beginning of the book. This will explain more about his use of this image.

7. And read the "Author's Note" for more information about why she chose to write this book.

8. To talk about Dr. King's life is to talk about terrible things: racism, bombings, murders, assassination. Yet it is also to discuss wonderful things: love, peace, harmony, pride, determination. Is this a book you would read to a child? How can we talk to children about difficult events?