

# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrates the life of the civil rights leader. He used peaceful protests to help end some discrimination. A protest is an event held to show that people are against something. Discrimination is when people are treated unfairly for their race, gender, age, or other differences. Dr. King's work changed the world. The holiday takes place on the third Monday in January near or on King's birthday, January 15.

## WHO CELEBRATES?

America celebrates equality for all people on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Some states call the day Civil Rights Day or Equality Day.

## ORIGIN

Throughout American history, different races were even segregated, or kept apart by race, on buses, schools, and other public places. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. Many people refused to ride the buses. It helped end segregation on buses there. In 1963 King led the March on Washington, D.C. Over 200,000 people gathered to listen to his "I Have a Dream" speech. King's protests brought new civil rights laws to America. These laws gave all people the rights to have freedom and equal treatment under the law. Dr. King was shot and killed in 1968. Many people wanted to honor his life. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan created a national holiday in King's honor. The first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was celebrated on January 20, 1986.

## TRADITIONS

Many people volunteer in their communities on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. They help the homeless and care for people in need. Some cities hold parades in King's honor. Many people attend special services at their churches on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. They pray for peace and give thanks for King's work. People also celebrate King by visiting places built in his honor. Many cities have monuments dedicated to him. Children study King in school and learn about his achievements. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a day to honor equality and remember King's work for civil rights.



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**IDENTIFY:** Use the word bank to identify each description.

|         |                                                   |                |             |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| boycott | civil rights                                      | discrimination | segregation |
| January | Reagan                                            | Equality Day   | monuments   |
|         | 1. The act of treating someone unfairly           |                |             |
|         | 2. Kept apart based on race                       |                |             |
|         | 3. The rights of all people to equal treatment    |                |             |
|         | 4. When people refuse to buy or do something      |                |             |
|         | 5. Month Martin Luther King, Jr. Day occurs       |                |             |
|         | 6. President who made a holiday in honor of King  |                |             |
|         | 7. Many have been built in cities in King's honor |                |             |
|         | 8. Another name for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day   |                |             |

**MULTIPLE CHOICE:** Choose the best answer.

9. Why is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day mainly celebrated on the third Monday in January?
- A. To remember the day that Dr. King died.
  - B. To remember the day Dr. King was born and his impact on America.
  - C. To remember the day Dr. King gave his famous speech.
10. How did Dr. King help get buses desegregated in Montgomery, Alabama?
- A. He led violent protestors against the bus company.
  - B. He gave his "I Have a Dream Speech" that motivated many people.
  - C. He led a peaceful boycott on the bus system.
11. Why did the author mainly write this passage?
- A. To inform the reader about the holiday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
  - B. To entertain the reader with the story of a great man.
  - C. To persuade the reader to learn more about Martin Luther King, Jr.