

“I Am a Man”
By Mary Reger
Memphis Experiential Trip
June 2010

Abstract

Students will start by defining “Civil Rights”. Next they will look at the sanitation strike in Memphis in 1968. Students will look at photos and documents related to the strike. They will write about the purpose of the strike and their thoughts. They will discuss civil rights and its history. They will also look at what was going on in Champaign-Urbana with civil rights issues. They will also learn that Martin Luther King Jr. came to help the strike and it was in Memphis at that time that he was assassinated. They will talk about what they can do to help in civil rights and will look at what has been achieved over the years.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

Why do workers go on strike?

Why would conditions for African Americans be different than for other citizens in 1968?

What efforts have been made for all citizens of the United States regardless of race to create equal opportunities?

What civil right problems have existed in the Champaign-Urbana area?

What progress has the United States made in providing civil rights for all?

How can we help as individuals to encourage civil rights?

Assessments

In lesson one the students will complete a “studying visual sources” graphic organizer while analyzing a photo of the sanitation workers strike. They will also complete the “studying written sources” graphic organizer while analyzing the document for the sanitation workers strike.

In lesson two students will complete a graphic organizer answering questions about the local newspaper article provided.

In lesson three the students will write a letter to Martin Luther King Jr. telling him how things have changed in the past 42 years since his death towards equal and civil rights for all.

Setting the Purpose

The teacher will write the word “Civil Rights” on the board and have students write a definition and then have a discussion on the meaning of civil rights.

Analysis of local primary sources

Students will read and analyze the newspaper article from the Champaign Urbana Courier, May 1, 1971 and compare it to civil rights issues going on in Memphis.

Ties to national primary source or sources

After analyzing the photo and striking document students will look at photos of Martin Luther King Jr. at the Lorraine Motel the day he was assassinated. They will link this national incident to the sanitation strike.

Annotated list of materials and resources for the lesson or series of lessons

Background Information

The sanitation worker's strike in Memphis:

http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_memphis_sanitation_workers_strike_1968/

Photos, documents, and video

Document for sanitation strike

<http://archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/images/exhibit-1.gif>

I am a Man photo #1

<http://storycorps.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/i-am-a-man.JPG>

I am a Man photo #2

http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/images/15_poor_06.jpg

I am a Man photo #3

http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/images/15_poor_06.jpg

Photo of Martin Luther King Jr. outside his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN

<http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2008/04/02/jackson460x276.jpg>

Photo of the slain Martin Luther King Jr.

http://thestartingfive.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/mlk_jr_slaying.jpg

Centennial staff blames 'Community' for violence-Champaign Urbana Courier, May 1, 1971.
Champaign County Archives, Urbana Free Library, Urbana, IL.

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/lessons/Adrian2007/Adrian07L2/Centennialstaff050171.pdf>

Photo of Martin Luther King Jr.'s room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN taken by Mary Reger June 23, 2010

Photo of the Lorraine Motel sign in Memphis, TN taken by Mary Reger June 23, 2010

Video of the Sanitation Strike in Memphis-some great primary source footage

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBDgH435oaU>

Use this site if youtube is blocked

<http://pumabydesign001.wordpress.com/2009/04/04/i-am-a-man-dr-king-the-memphis-sanitation-strike/>

Graphic Organizers

“Studying Visual Sources” graphic organizer

“Studying Written Sources” graphic organizer

Background Information

Go to

http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_memphis_sanitation_workers_strike_1968/

for background information on the sanitation workers strike in Memphis in 1968.

Lesson 1

Procedures

1. Begin by writing “Civil Rights” on the board. Have students write what they think the definition is. Have some students share their ideas. Come up with a definition as a class. Guide them to the correct definition. Ask them when people started to fight for civil rights and if they can tell specific instances. Discuss their answers.
2. Show the photo of one or all of the sanitation workers strike. Have the students use the “Studying Visual Sources” graphic organizer to analyze the photo. When they are done have them discuss what they wrote and why. Give them a background of the sanitation workers strike in Memphis in 1968. Discuss why the people would go on strike and what good would come out of it. Ask how people organize such a strike.
3. Show the “document for sanitation strike” and have the students complete the “Studying Written Sources”. When they have completed it talk about how this was one way to organize a strike. Discuss how a strike today might be organized. Ask if any students have parents that have been on a strike.

Lesson 2

Procedures

1. Refer back to lesson one and discuss how striking and protesting was one way to rally for civil rights. Ask why conditions for the sanitation workers would have been different for African Americans than for other workers. Talk about why people discriminate and how they get their ideas. Ask what other instances in history the students know about where people were rallying for civil rights. Ask where this goes on. Talk about how it goes on everywhere, even here in Champaign.
2. Give a copy of “Centennial staff blames ‘Community’ for violence-Champaign Urbana Courier, May 1, 1971”. To student pairs. Have them read the article and answer the questions on the “Centennial staff blames ‘Community’ for violence” graphic organizer.
3. Discuss each question when they are done. Talk about how we get many of our attitudes from our parents or the people who raise us. Discuss how many of these attitudes may not be fair or just and ways that we can educate others so there are fewer prejudices and stereotypes amongst us.

Lesson 3

Procedures

1. Ask the class what people have helped to change people's attitudes and stereotypes. Discuss the different things Martin Luther King Jr. did to help in the Civil Rights Movement. Stress how he wanted people to protest peacefully and to not fight back even when people beat the protestors up. Point out that peaceful protestors were not only African American but other races as well.
2. Show the photo of Martin Luther King Jr. outside his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN. Ask if any of the students have seen the photo and if they know when and where it was. Tell them about how one of the times MLK helped in the Civil Rights Movement was to come to Memphis to help lead a peaceful strike and demonstration. Ask if any of the students know what the outcome was. Talk about how chaos broke out at the March 28th march and how MLK had come back to try a totally peaceful march on April 4.
3. Show the photo of the slain Martin Luther King Jr. Have the students write in their social studies journals. Have them describe what they see in the photo and questions they have. Discuss what is happening in the photo. Ask why they think someone killed MLK. Discuss how we can help by having positive attitudes towards all and educating people about civil rights and not using violence.
4. Show the photo of Martin Luther King Jr.'s room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis and in photo of the Lorraine Motel sign in Memphis. Ask if any of the students have ever been to the place in the photo. If they have ask them what it is. Tell them that this is the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where MLK was assassinated, and that now it is the Civil Rights Museum. Ask what value the museum would be. Talk about how it educates people and helps people to understand that all people are important and of value.
5. Show the video of the sanitation workers strike. Ask the students if they saw how the strike ended. Talk about their thoughts on the video.
6. Have the students write Martin Luther King Jr. a letter telling him how civil rights have changed in the last 42 years. You may need to give some background about segregation and Jim Crow laws if the students don't have that knowledge. Give the students the assignment worksheet "Writing a Letter to Martin Luther King Jr."