

# DR. KING'S LEADERSHP AND CHARACTER

**GRADE LEVEL:** Grades 2 and 3

**TOPIC:** The Character and Qualities  
of a Leader

**CONTENT AREA(S):** Social Studies/Civics  
Language Arts  
Reading

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES/QCC

The students will:



- **Social Studies:** List ways to live cooperatively in neighborhoods;
- **Reading:** Identify character's actions, motives, emotions, traits, and feelings;
- **Language Arts:** Use examples from literature to create individual and group stories;
- **Language Arts:** Use available technology to assist in writing; and
- **Language Arts:** Experience traditional and contemporary literature through a variety of media.

## CRITICAL QUESTIONS:

1. How should we describe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s character?
2. How can you illustrate that Dr. King was a great leader?

## **BACKGROUND:**

Build background by helping students make personal connections with their own lives. Ask the following questions to initiate a discussion about leadership: Have you ever wondered why certain students in your class are allowed to lead the line, take messages or serve in leadership roles? Did you feel like you had the choice to become a leader in your class? Have you ever observed the students who are considered the leaders in your class to determine why they are often chosen for special duties?

## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

### **Print:**

Coles, Robert (1995) *The Story of Ruby Bridges*  
Scholastic, Inc. New York, N.Y.

Johnson, C. and Adelman, B. (2000) *KING The Photobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Viking Studio, New York, N.Y.

Rappaport, Doreen (2001) *Martin's Big Words*  
Scholastic, Inc. New York, N.Y.

### **Online:**

[www.thekingcenter.com](http://www.thekingcenter.com).

### **Video:**

“The Boy King”

“The Story of Ruby Bridges”

## **Handout/Attachment:**

Handout 1:	Ballot Sheet
Handout 2:	Character Traits
Handout 3, 4, 5:	King Picture Webs
Attachment 1:	A World Well of Character

## **Hook:**

1. Ask students to think about these questions: Who are the leaders in your classroom? What roles do they play? Why were they selected as leaders? What does it take to be a teacher?
2. Give students a working definition of a leader or brainstorm with them a definition.
3. The teacher will write a sentence starter on the board such as, "The leaders in our class are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. They are leaders because.... Students will finish the prompt on a ballot sheet. (Handout 1)
4. The teacher will collect all of the ballots and tally the number of students who selected the same people as well as initiate a conversation among students about why they chose a specific person.
5. Ask students to discuss the qualities they believe leaders should have.
6. Record the qualities on chart paper. When the chart is completed, display it in the classroom for use later.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **Lesson 1: *The Qualities of a Leader***

1. Introduce the book The Story of Ruby Bridges. Give students background information about her and let them know that she is a real person who is still alive.
2. Read The Story of Ruby Bridges to the students.
3. Have students' facts about her life that makes her someone they would want to be like. Record their facts on chart paper.
4. Show the video version of "The Story of Ruby Bridges."
5. Allow students to add to the chart after seeing the video.
6. Review your qualities chart to see if Ruby Bridges possesses leadership.

### **Lesson 2: *Dr. King: A Man of Great Character***

1. Ask students the following questions, and then pair them to discuss their answers with each other. Have you ever gotten into a fight even though you didn't want to? Did you feel like you had the choice to fight or not to fight? Has anyone ever said anything to hurt your feelings and make you want to lash out at them? What did you do?
2. Select a few students to share their responses to the whole group. Do not make any judgments about students' choices or behavior in the situations they describe. Tell them that they are going to learn about a man named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and what he was like as a boy and how he might have handles a fight.
3. Introduce the book Martin's Big Words and read it to students.

4. Have students discuss facts about young Martin that makes him someone they would want to be like. Record their facts on chart paper.
5. Show the video “The Boy King.”
6. Have students add to the chart in Martin, after seeing the video.
7. Review your qualities chart to see if Martin possessed leadership qualities.



**Note:** *At this point, there should be three charts displayed in the classroom – The Leadership Qualities Chart, Martin’s Chart and Ruby’s Chart.*

8. Use the three charts to introduce the concept of character traits. Use **Handout 2** to help provide a definition of character traits and some examples.
9. Review the words from the book *Martin’s Big Words*, and the words on **Handout 2**. Label a bulletin board as “A Word Well of Character.” Using colored strips of paper, have students write out words and phrases that describe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s character. A sample word well appears in **Attachment 1**.
10. Ask students to select the character traits that most accurately describe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and select a picture of Dr. King from those provided or others available in *The Photobiography of Martin L. King, Jr.*, that most accurately personify the traits identified. (Three pictures have been provided for you with a graphic organizer.) **Handouts 3, 4, and 5**.

## **CENTERS/EXTENSION IDEAS:**

In small groups:

1. Have the students review the story of Ruby Bridges and write how she exemplified Dr. King's principle number five.

Principle 5: Nonviolence chooses living solutions, not hateful ones.

2. Ask students to write a found poem using *Martin's Big Words*. Go to a center in small groups, review the book, and select their favorite lines from the book to create a found poem.

## **SYNTHESIS:**

### **Before Your Visit:**

1. Take a picture of a leader in your classroom and compare him/her to Dr. King as a child. Compare and contrast two student leaders you know with the little boy King.
2. Have students create a stairway using rectangular strips of paper in varying lengths and colors with the words to create a stairway that best illustrates the characteristics of leaders.

### **During Your Visit:**

1. Tell students to look for clues to things that indicated his character. (Look for pictures on him walking arm in arm with someone, him preaching [good orator], books that he read or wrote, other artifacts.)

## **After Your Visit:**

1. Provide a model of a completed collage.

### An Original Story

Guide students in the creation of a collaborative story about an incident where Dr. King showed love instead of hate.

2. Have students cut out pictures and words to create a collage that best illustrates four of Dr. King's character traits.
3. Select materials to frame the collage from those available. (Teachers can provide strips of cardboard, plastic, flowers, etc. for the frames).
4. Provide tag board or another type of heavy weight paper for mounting the collage.
5. Provide a model of a completed collage.

**Ballot Sheet**

**The leaders in our classroom are \_\_\_\_\_**

**and \_\_\_\_\_. They are leaders because**

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# Character Traits

**Characters:** People one includes in fiction or non-fiction stories.

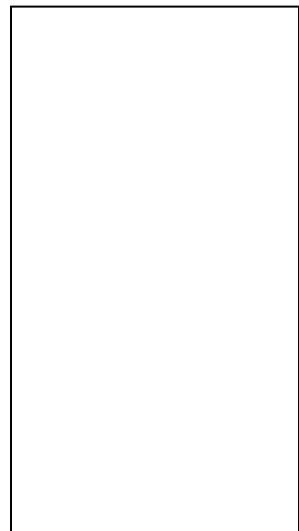
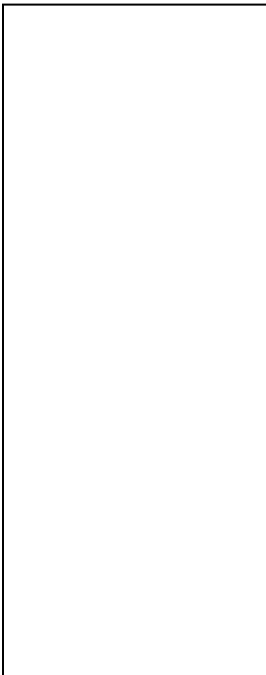
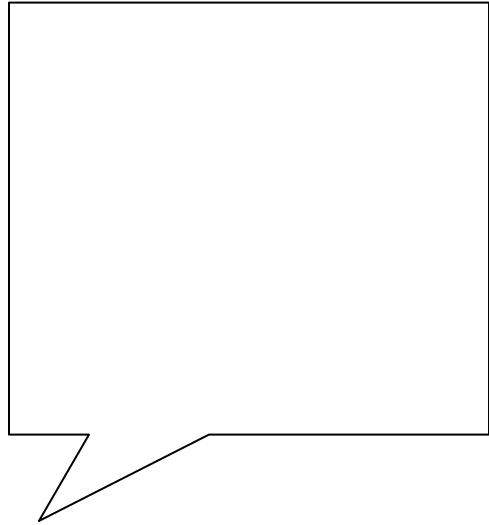
Characters and people in real life have unique qualities called character traits. We can describe character traits using the following vocabulary.

<b>Honest</b>	<b>Wild</b>	<b>Energetic</b>	<b>Humble</b>
<b>Light-hearted</b>	<b>Messy</b>	<b>Cheerful</b>	<b>Friendly</b>
<b>Leader</b>	<b>Neat</b>	<b>Smart</b>	<b>Adventurous</b>
<b>Expert</b>	<b>Joyful</b>	<b>Impulsive</b>	<b>Hardworking</b>
<b>Brave</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Loyal</b>	<b>Timid</b>
<b>Conceited</b>	<b>Bright</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Shy</b>
<b>Mischievous</b>	<b>Courageous</b>	<b>Dreamer</b>	<b>Bold</b>
<b>Demanding</b>	<b>Serious</b>	<b>Lazy</b>	<b>Daring</b>
<b>Thoughtful</b>	<b>Humorous</b>	<b>Patriotic</b>	<b>Dainty</b>
<b>Keen</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Fun-loving</b>	<b>Pitiful</b>
<b>Happy</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Popular</b>	<b>Cooperative</b>
<b>Disagreeable</b>	<b>Rich</b>	<b>Successful</b>	<b>Lovable</b>
<b>Simple</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Prim</b>
<b>Fancy</b>	<b>Dark</b>	<b>Lazy</b>	<b>Lovable</b>
<b>Plain</b>	<b>Light</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	<b>Prim</b>
<b>Excited</b>	<b>Handsome</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Proper</b>
<b>Studious</b>	<b>Pretty</b>	<b>Simple-minded</b>	<b>Ambitious</b>
<b>Inventive</b>	<b>Ugly</b>	<b>Proud</b>	<b>Able</b>
<b>Creative</b>	<b>Selfish</b>	<b>Busy</b>	<b>Quite</b>
<b>Thrilling</b>	<b>Unselfish</b>	<b>Tireless</b>	<b>Curious</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>Self-confident</b>	<b>Gentle</b>	<b>Reserved</b>
<b>Intelligent</b>	<b>Respectful</b>	<b>Imaginative</b>	<b>Pleasing</b>
<b>Compassionate</b>	<b>Considerate</b>	<b>Fighter</b>	<b>Witty</b>

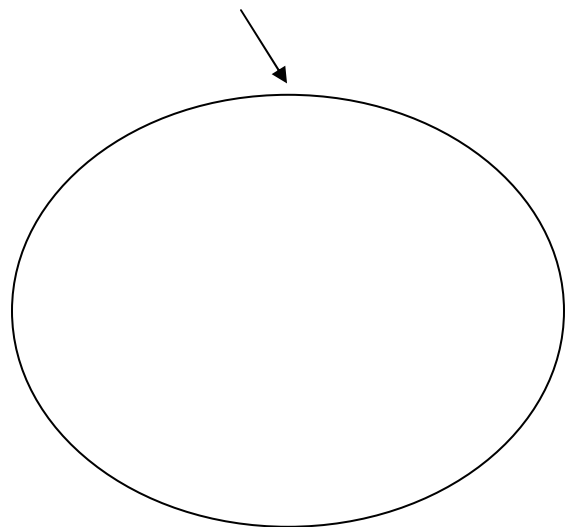
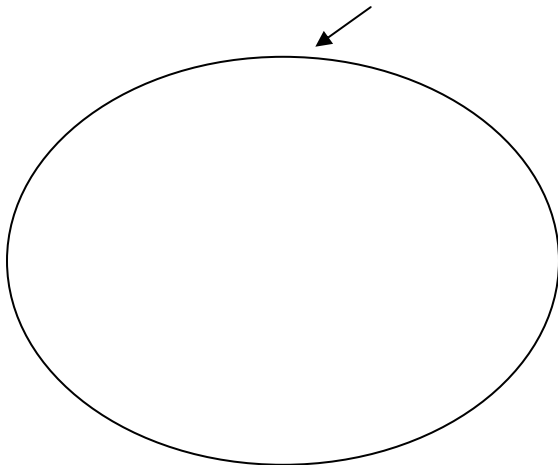
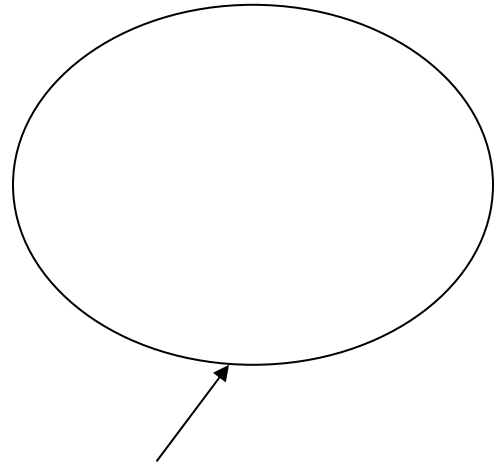
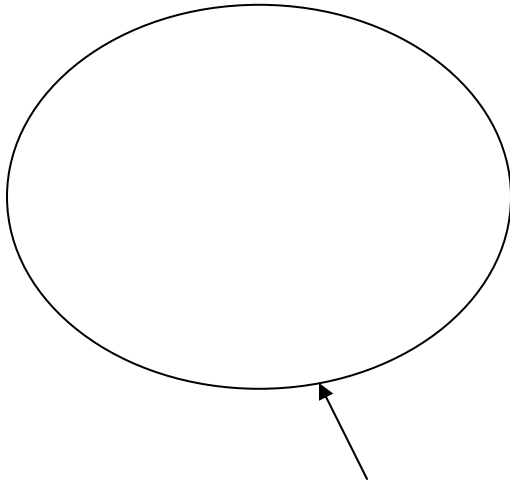
## HANDOUT 2. CHARACTER TRAITS

This list by no means a complete list of possible traits, it serves only as a resource for teachers.

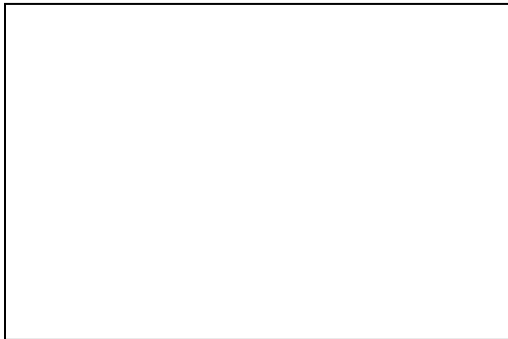
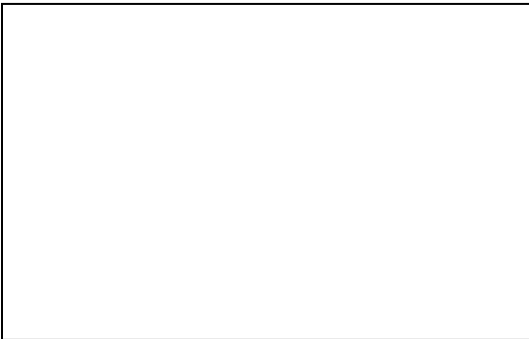
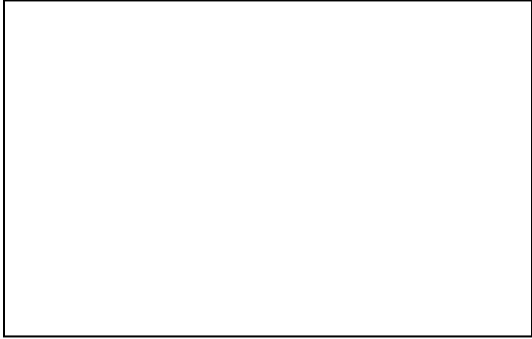
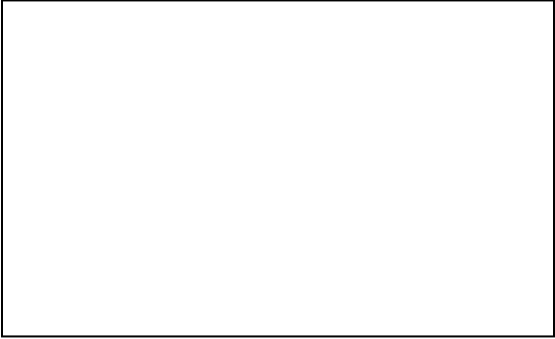
**My Own Words Attest to My Character  
Martin L. King, Jr.**



**Handout 4**



**Martin Luther King, Jr.  
A Man of Great Character**



## A Word Well of Character

Love **Peace** Freedom

**Courage** Together

Prayer

Love is the key!

Kindness

**Faith**

Respect

**Hope**

**I have a dream!**