

MLK Day Craft

Nearly half a century ago Martin Luther King inspired our nation with his dream of equality and dignity for every single person, and we remember him with a national holiday. For your second grader it can be easy to think of it as just another “fun” day off school, but in keeping with social studies curriculum, this is also a great time for parents to explain the special day... and to keep King's powerful message alive as well!

Here's a craft project drawn from King's “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963, when he said, “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.”

These are big words for any American, let alone one who is seven years old. You'll want to explain that decades ago, before your child was born, laws in many parts of this country required that people of different colors had to eat at different tables, drink from different water fountains, attend different schools...and it was UNFAIR! And even though laws have changed, we must all work together to respect all people of all races and walks of life.

As you're talking, here's a project to keep little, and big, hands busy.

What You Need:

- Sheet of posterboard (22x26) in a strong color, such as green, blue, or red—whichever you might like on your dining room table!
- Pack of round coffee filters for a coffee maker (You'll use about 8)
- Liquid watercolor in red, blue, and yellow
- 3 “bingo” bottles (plastic squeeze bottles with foam at the end--but if you don't have these specialty supplies, you can also use kids' watercolor paint brushes!)
- Piece of oak tag
- Plastic table covering
- Black Sharpie marker, or gold or silver metallic marker
- Glue stick
- Scissors

What You Do:

1. Start by trimming your posterboard along its length, so that the total dimensions are 10”x26” (you may want to make the piece a little shorter or wider, depending on your table).
2. Now set up a painting area on a table. Lay down a protective covering first, and spread out eight round coffee filters (each one will be 7-8 inches across when flattened). Using two bingo bottles for each one, saturate the filter with color and let the primary colors “dance” into one another to create new colors.
3. While the filters are drying, take out your oak tag, and mark out two shape templates, each approximately 6” tall by 5” wide—one of the outline of a boy, and one with the outline of a girl. When the paint has dried, help your second grader cut out 4 boys and 4 girls. Glue them onto the posterboard, alternating boys and girls, in an oval, with heads facing the center, and an open space in the middle.
4. In the middle of the posterboard, have your child write King's famous words, “I have a dream!” Around the four corners of the posterboard, making a frame, have your child use the metallic marker to copy some of King's words from his speech. You'll want to use your judgment here—a



comfortable young writer may be able to manage quite a few; for others, it's okay to pick a short passage. What's important is that you create a family piece that marks his legacy.

5. For best results, take your posterboard to a copying store and have it laminated. You can pull the table mat out year after year as your family celebrates Martin Luther King Day, and as your child's understanding deepens. Eat together at the table—and celebrate our nation's commitment to its most enduring dreams.

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