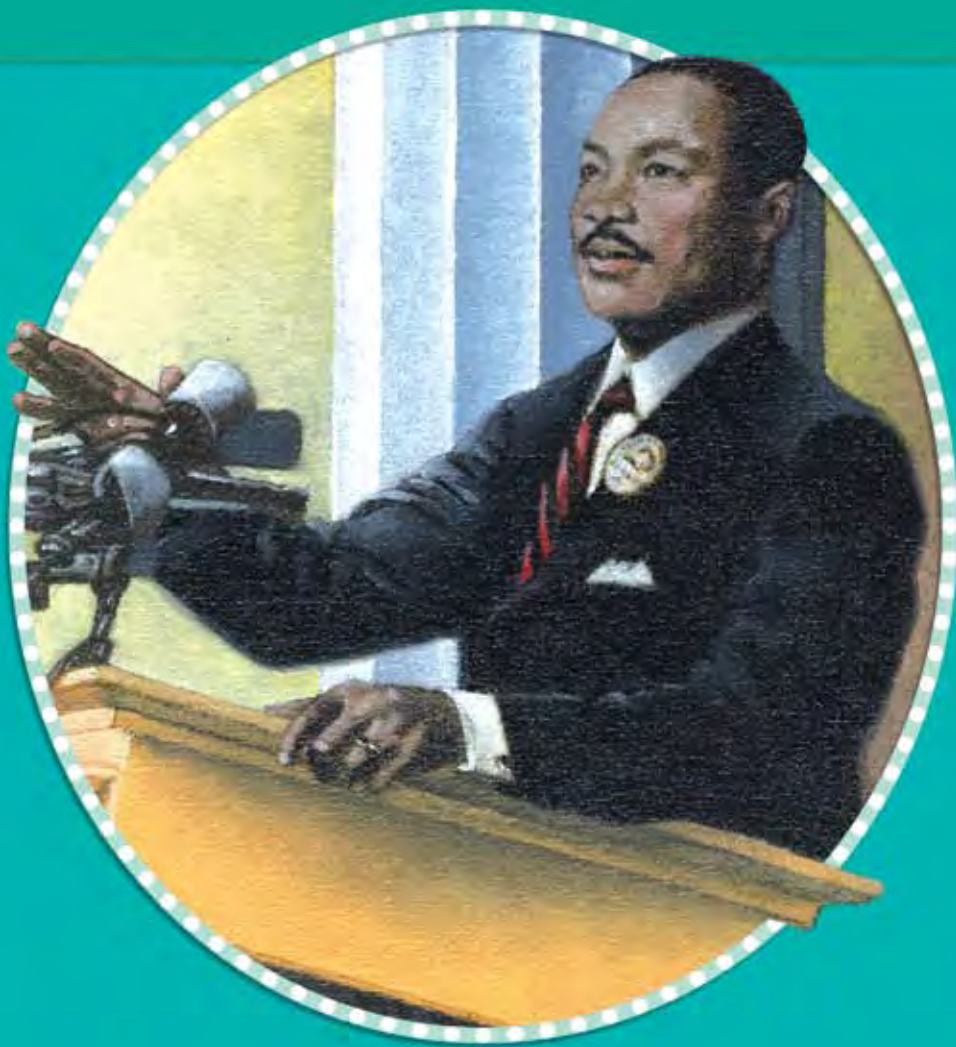


Easy Reader Biographies™

Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Man With a Dream



by Alyse Sweeney
illustrated by Stephen Marchesi

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Guided Reading Level I

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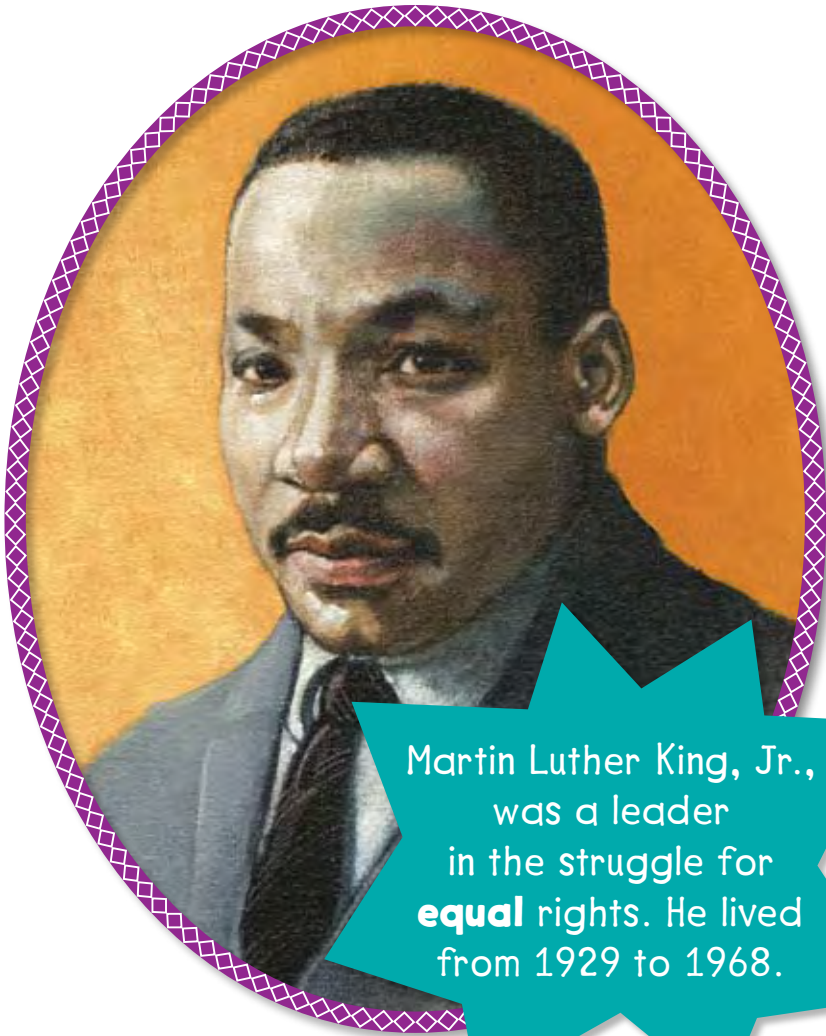
Written by Alyse Sweeney
Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi
Designed by Maria Lilja

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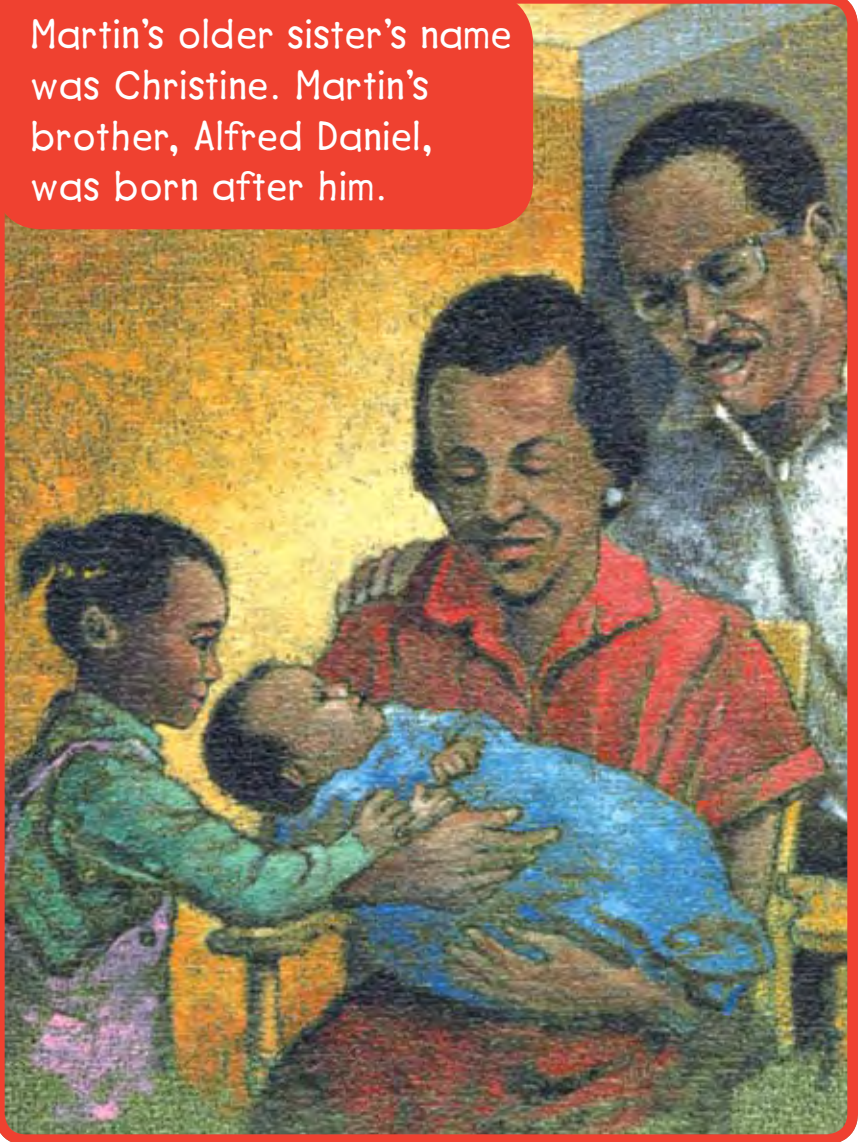
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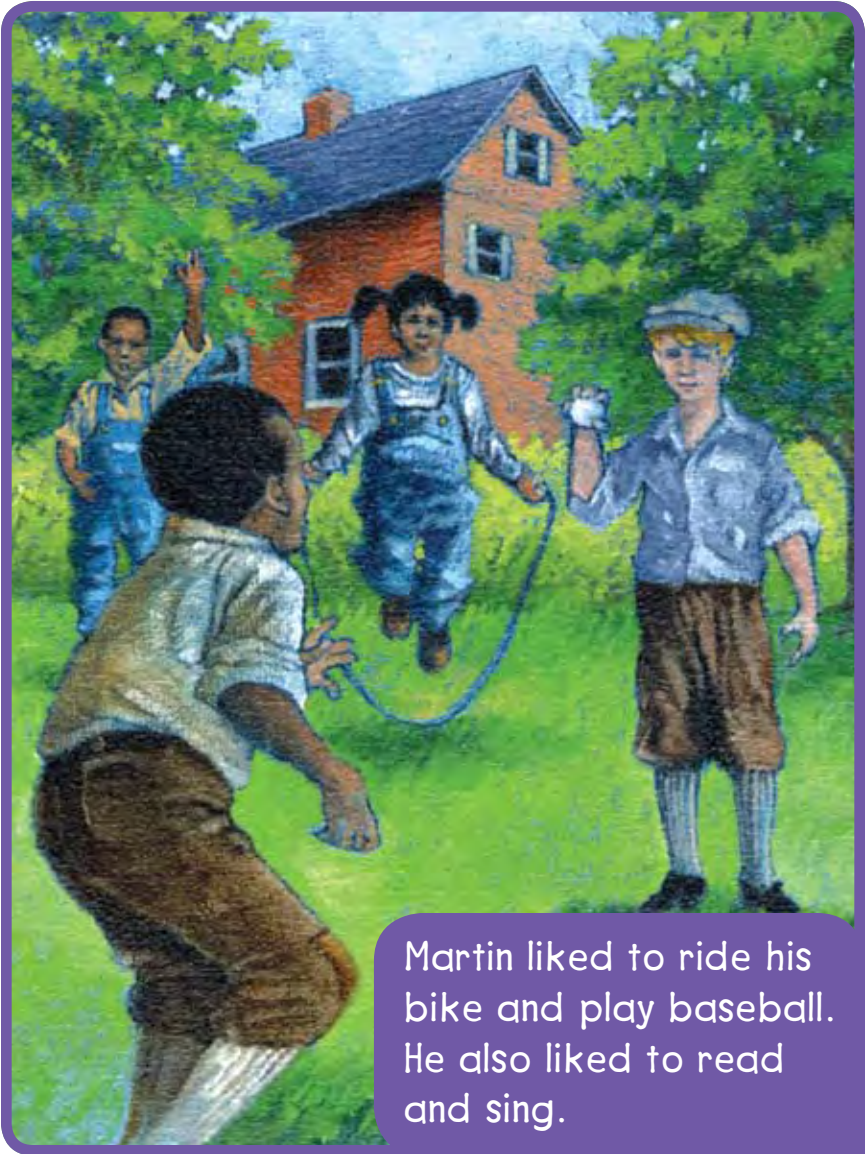
Martin Luther King, Jr.,
was a leader
in the struggle for
equal rights. He lived
from 1929 to 1968.

Martin Luther King, Jr., lived when there were unfair **laws** in our country. These laws gave African Americans fewer rights than white people. Dr. King worked to change these laws.

Martin's older sister's name was Christine. Martin's brother, Alfred Daniel, was born after him.



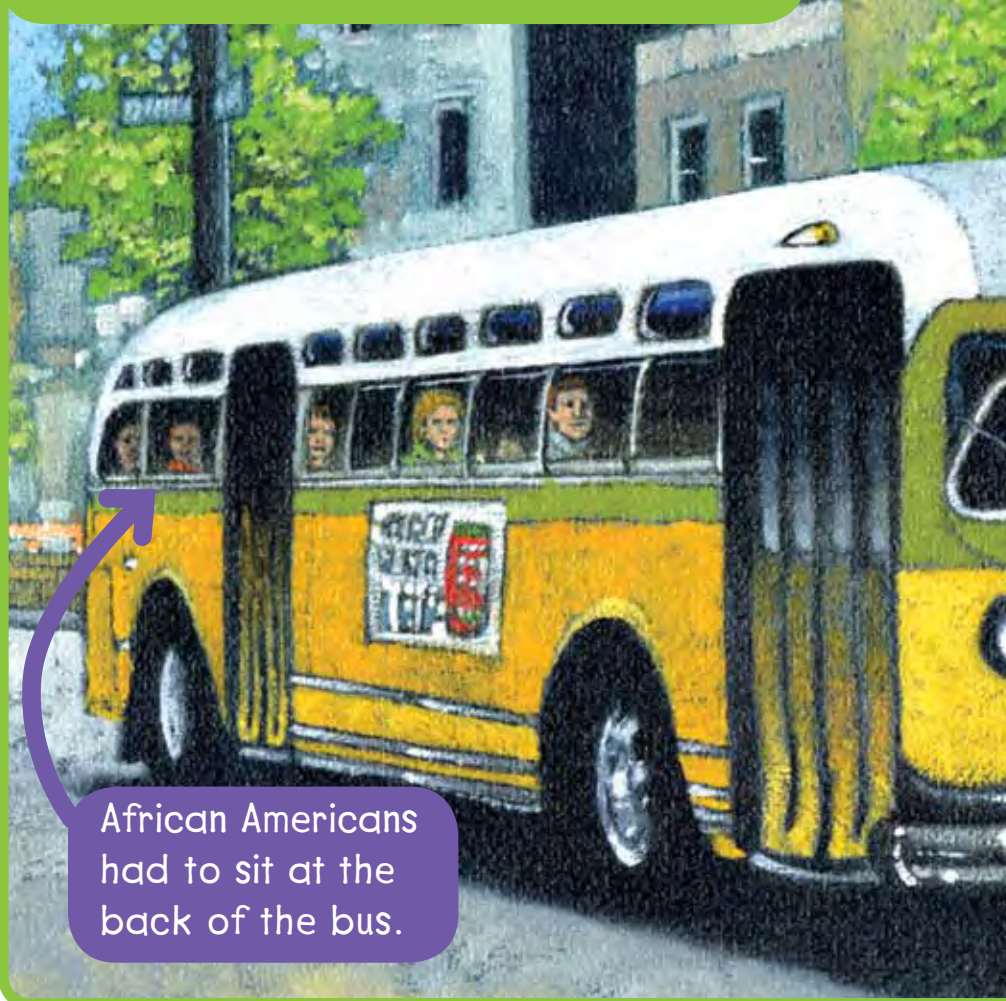
Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. His family called him M.L.



Martin liked to ride his bike and play baseball. He also liked to read and sing.

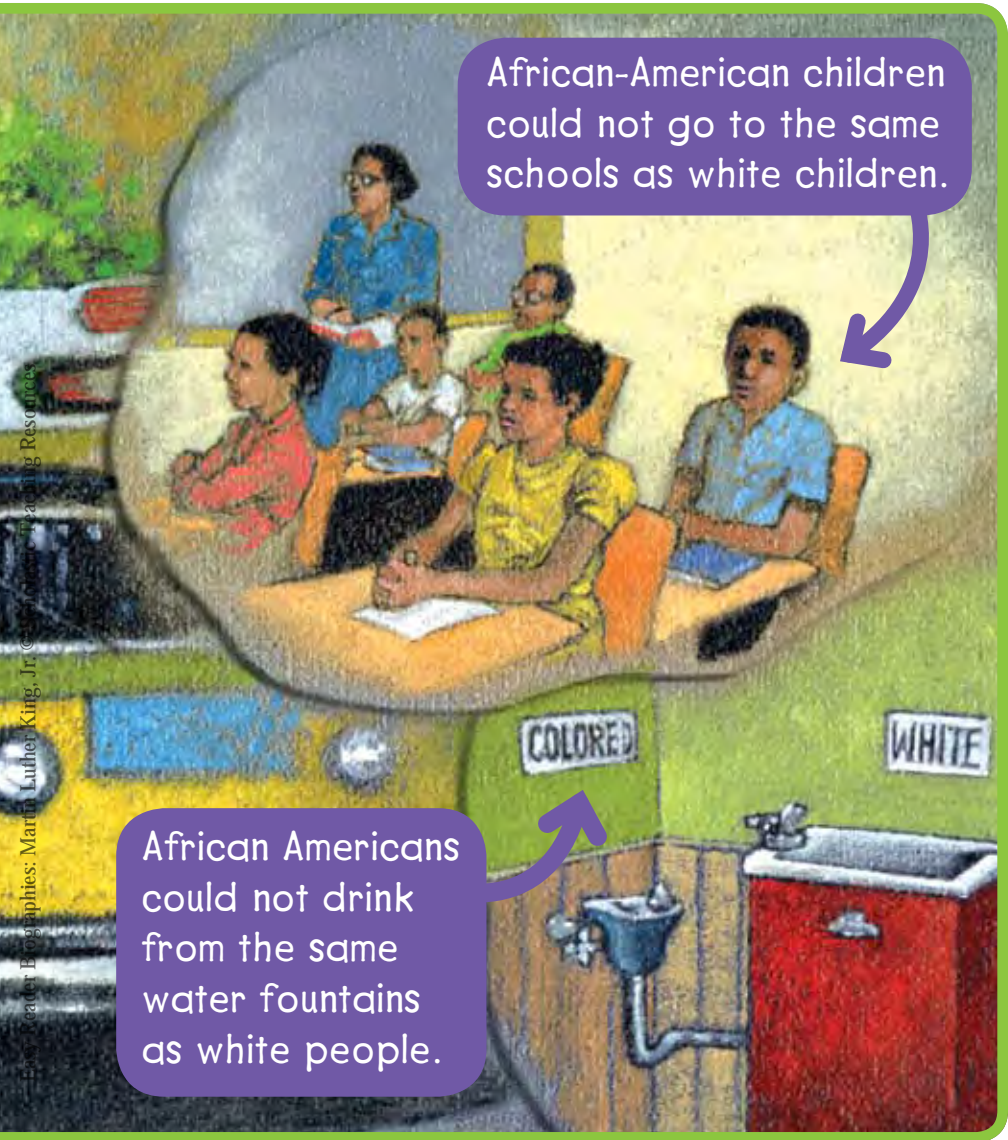
The Kings' house was full of games, stories, and fun. The neighborhood children liked to play there.

These were some of the unfair laws during Martin Luther King's life.

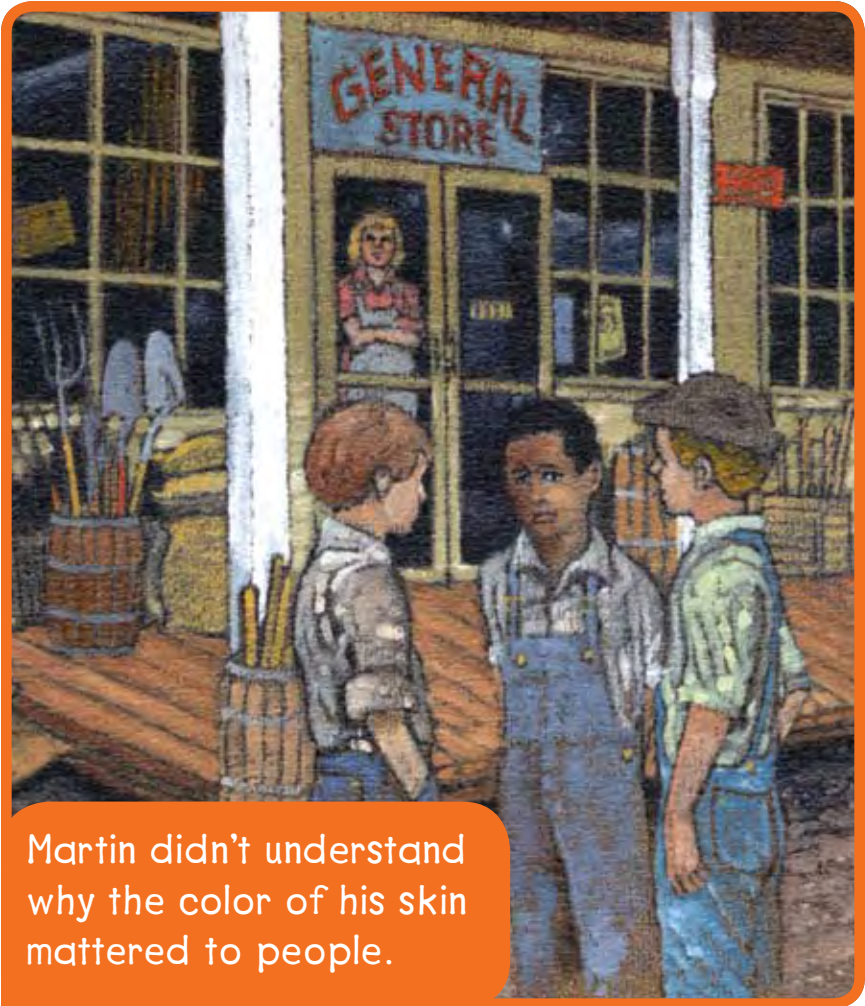


African Americans had to sit at the back of the bus.

At that time, there were unfair laws in the United States. These laws were found mostly in southern states.

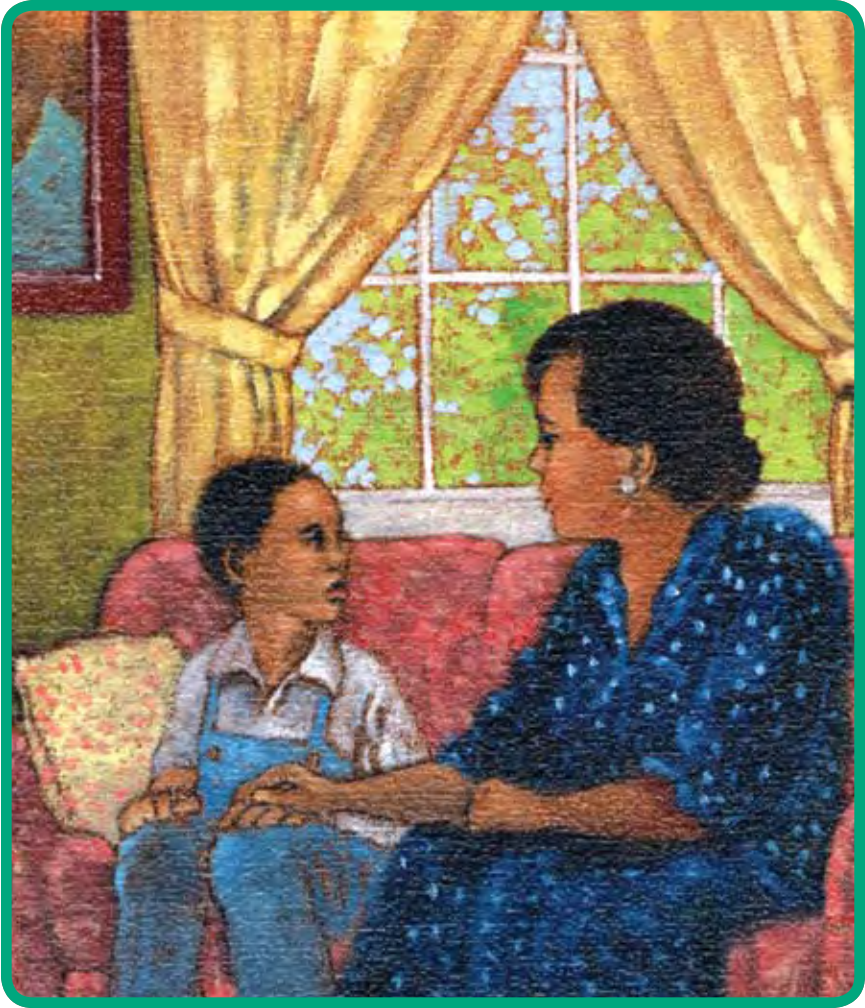


Under these laws, African Americans could not go to the same places as white people. This is called **segregation**.



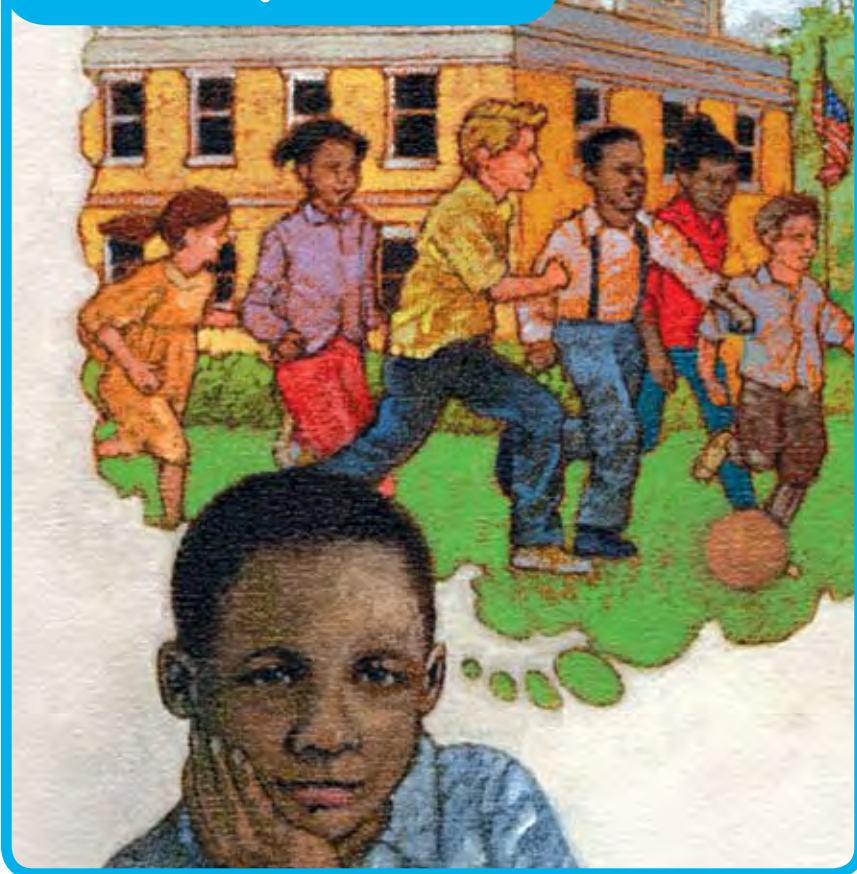
Martin didn't understand why the color of his skin mattered to people.

Two of Martin's friends were white. Martin used to meet them at their family's store. One day they said they couldn't play with Martin anymore because he was African-American.

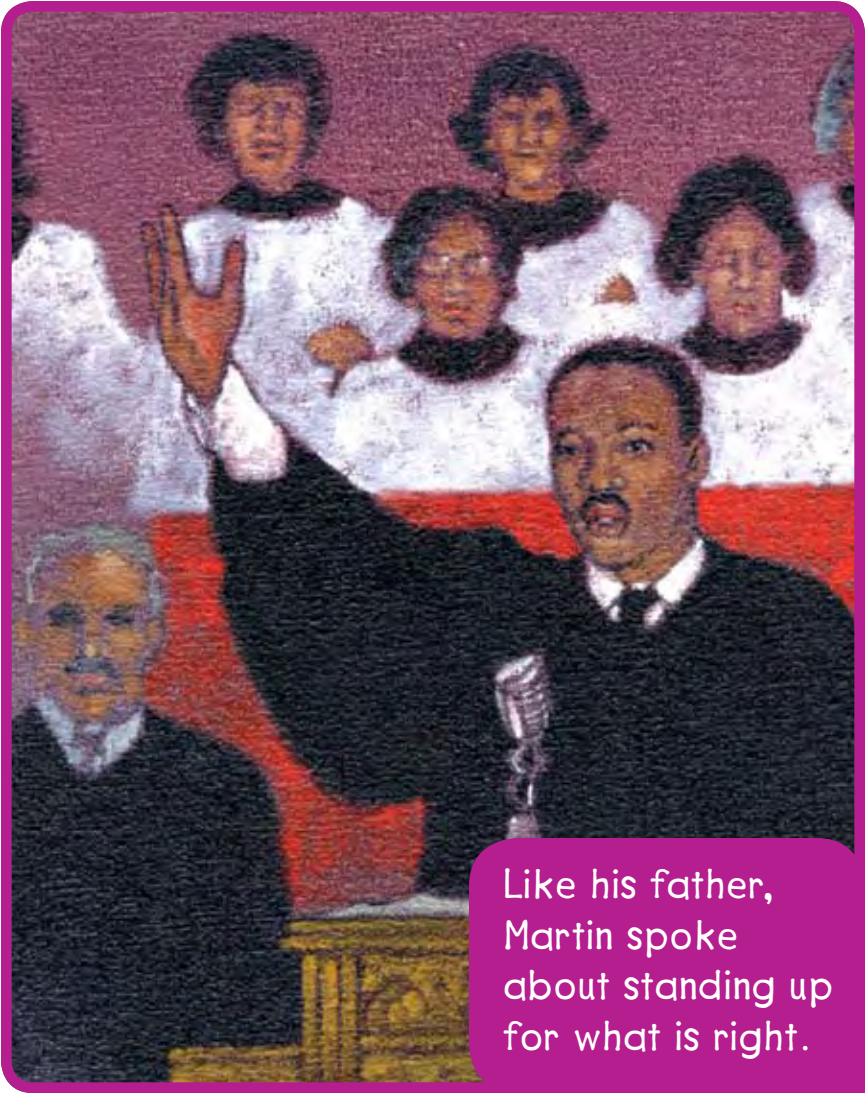


Martin talked to his mother about it. She said that some people didn't understand that everyone is equal. She also said that someday things would get better.

Martin believed segregation was wrong and that all people should be treated the same way.

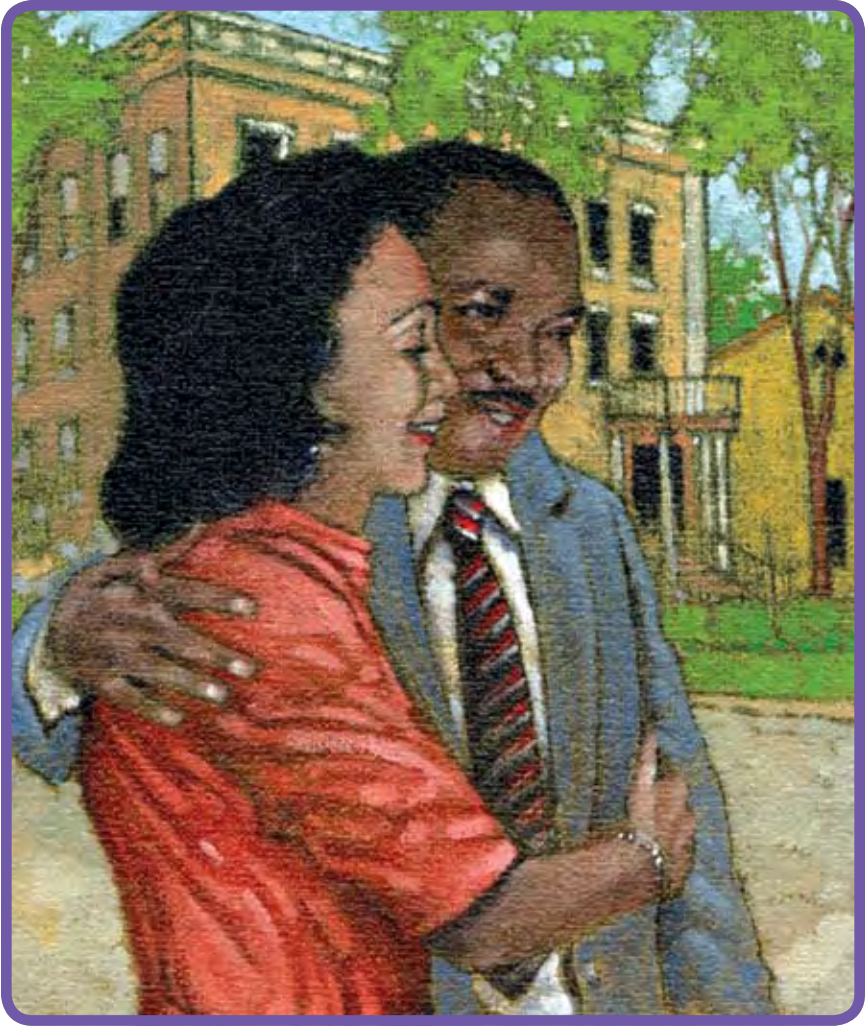


Martin decided he was going to work to end segregation. He told his mother, "I'm going to turn this world upside down."

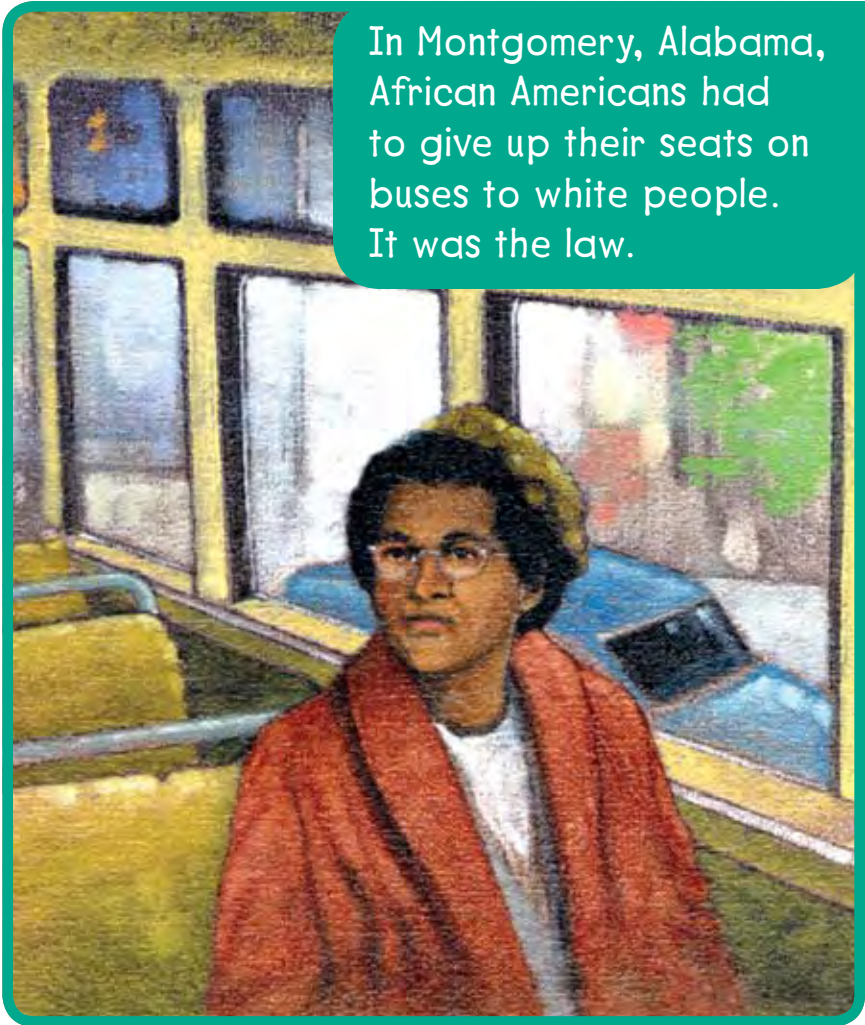


Like his father, Martin spoke about standing up for what is right.

Martin worked hard in school. He studied religion. His studies helped him find peaceful ways to fight segregation. In 1948, he became a **pastor**, like his father.



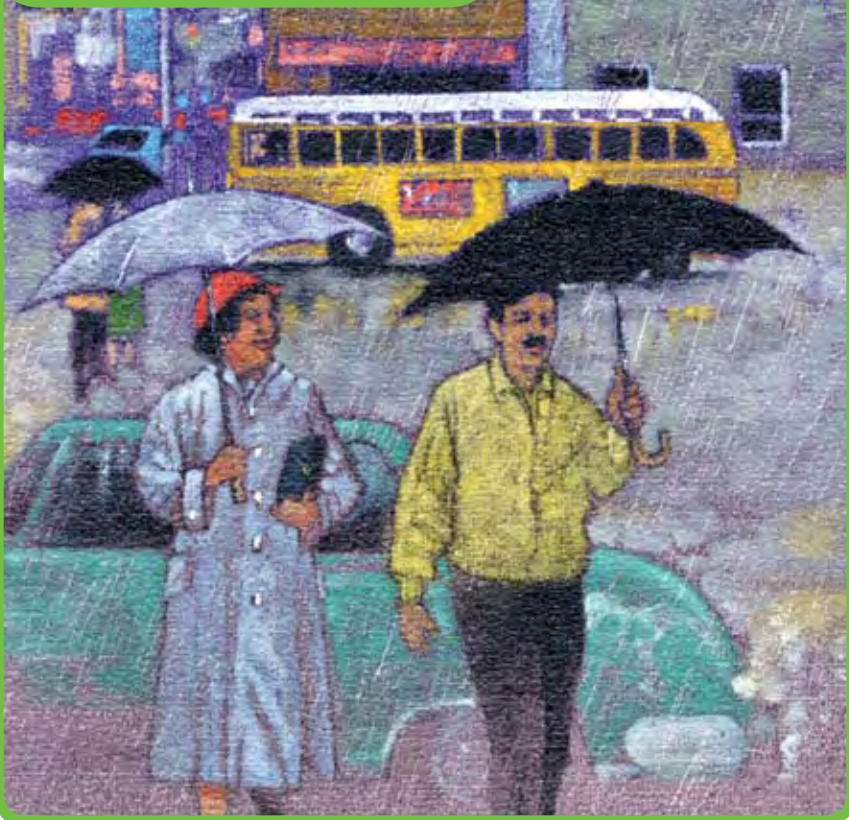
In 1951, Martin went to Boston University. While he was in Boston, he met his future wife, Coretta Scott. They later moved to Alabama. There Dr. King worked as a pastor.



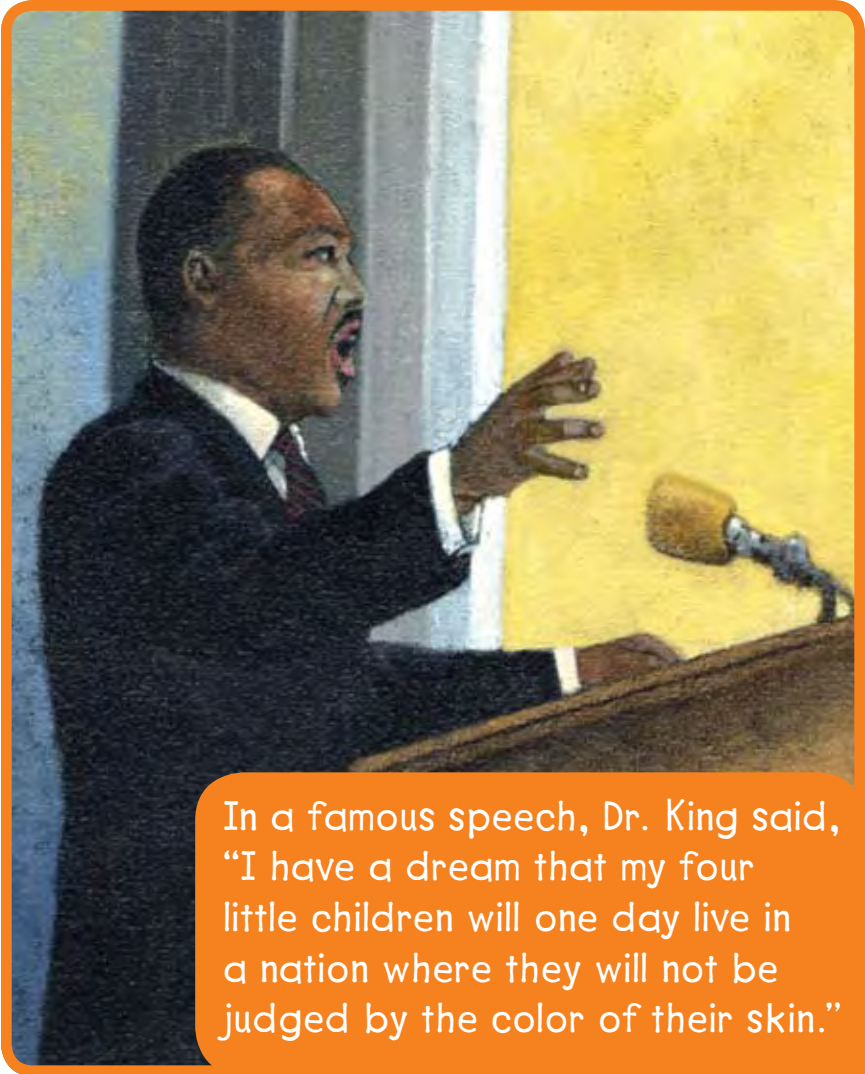
In Montgomery, Alabama, African Americans had to give up their seats on buses to white people. It was the law.

In 1955, a woman named Rosa Parks wouldn't give up her seat on a bus to a white person. She was taken to jail. After that, African-American leaders planned a bus **boycott**.

Many African Americans walked instead of taking the bus.

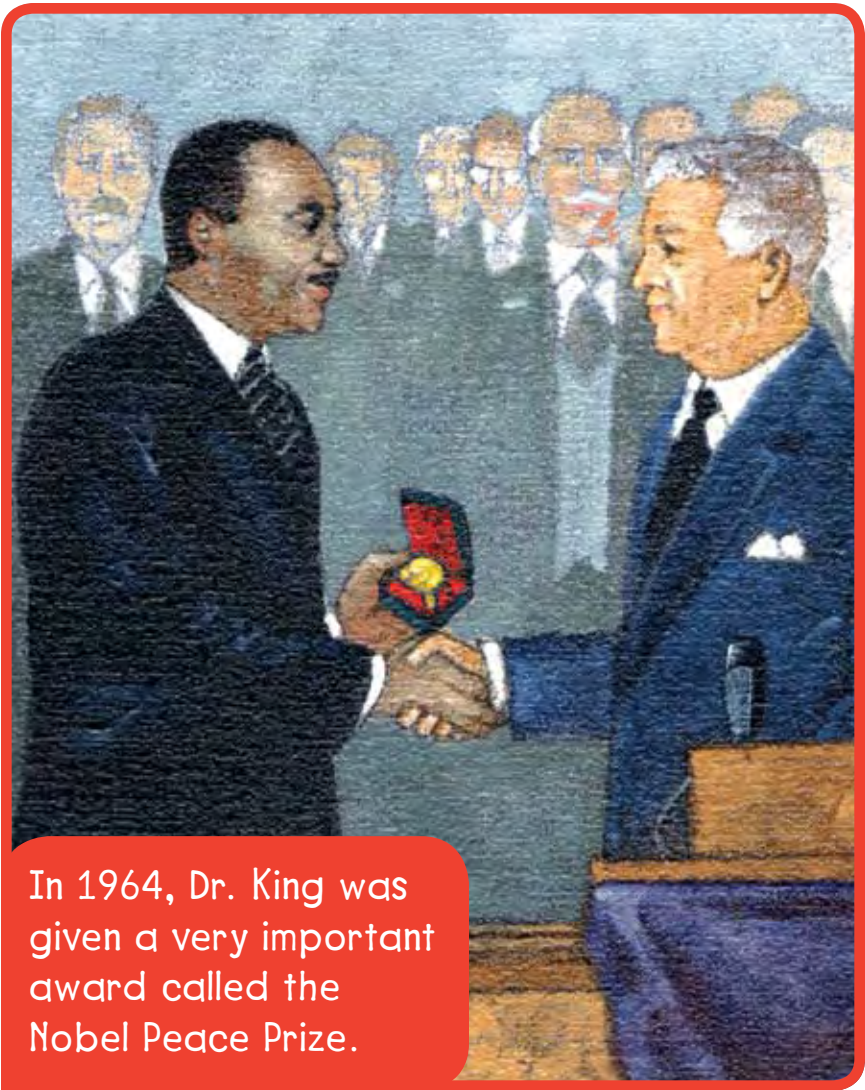


Dr. King led the boycott. For months, most African Americans did not ride the bus in Montgomery. After one year, the law was changed. Now all people had the right to sit anywhere on the bus.



In a famous speech, Dr. King said, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin.”

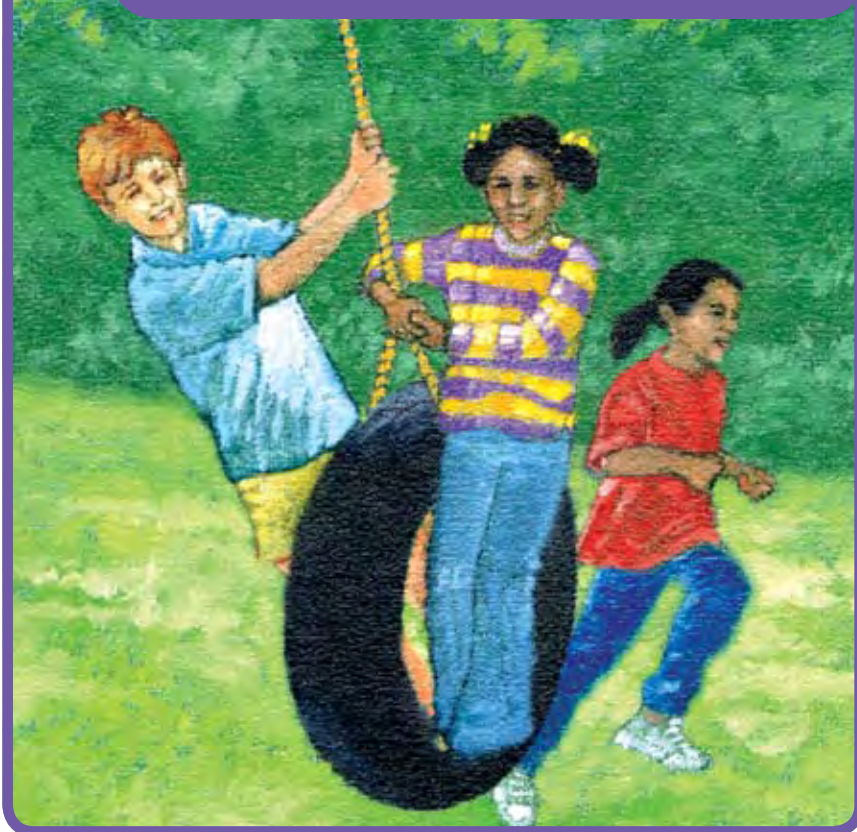
The **protest** had worked! Dr. King led more peaceful protests. He led peaceful marches. He gave speeches about people living together peacefully.



In 1964, Dr. King was given a very important award called the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. King was admired around the world. He was given many awards for his work. Millions of people **mourned** when he was killed on April 4, 1968.

Our country remembers Dr. King and his dream. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day is a national holiday in January.



Today our country is a better place because of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King helped change the laws. He taught people about fairness and kindness. Thank you, Dr. King.

Glossary

boycott (noun) a group's refusal to deal with a business or person, in order to bring about change

equal (adjective) the same as someone or something else

law (noun) a rule made by the government that people must follow

mourned (verb) felt or showed sadness after a loss, such as a death

pastor (noun) a minister or priest in charge of a church

protest (noun) an action taken against something to show disagreement

segregation (noun) the separation of people based on race, religion, or another reason

