

SILVERDALE

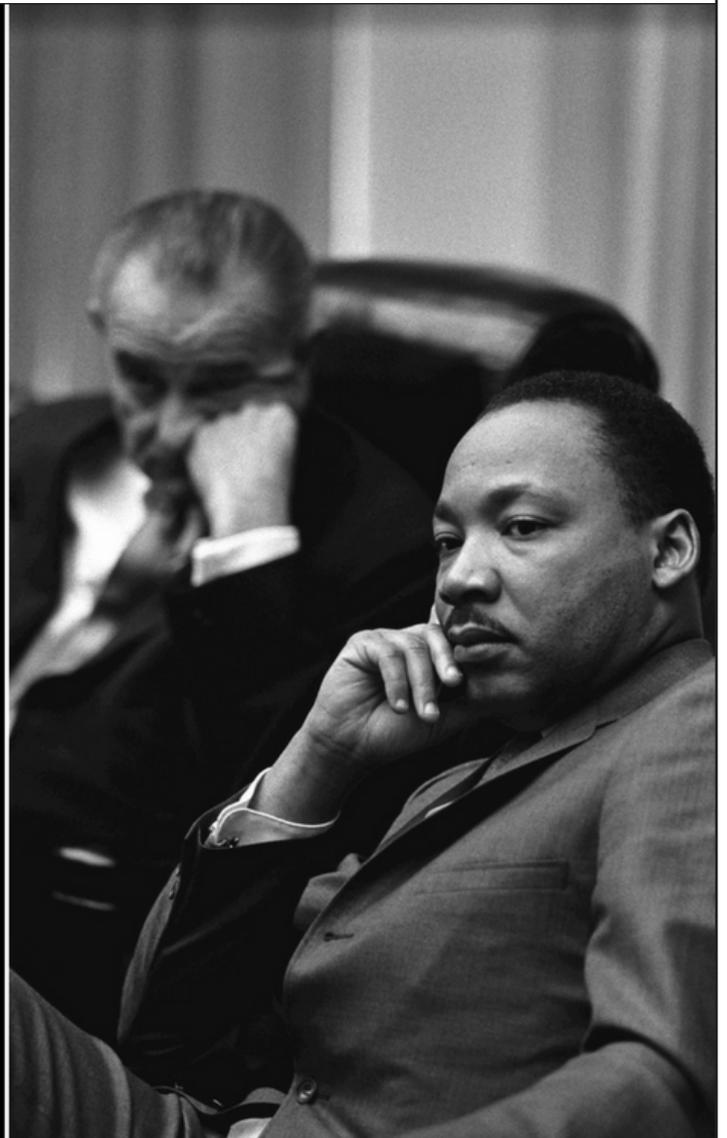
PRESS



presents

MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR.

UNIT STUDY



Introduction

Why Study the Holidays?

Welcome to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit Study! This unit study can be completed any time of the year, though it may be especially interesting around the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

I went to public school from grades K through 12. Some of my fondest memories were celebrating the holidays with my classmates. I remember the parties and crafts. I especially remember the excitement that came with a celebration, break from routine, and a change of pace.

While we did mark the holidays, I do not remember learning much about the rich history behind those holidays. I believe the same is true for many school-age children today. This is a shame because our holiday history really is so rich.

Learning about our holidays is important for children. For younger children, holidays are a way to mark the seasons of the calendar and the progress of time. For children of all ages, holidays bind us together as a nation. They instill in us a sense of patriotism, unity, and togetherness.

I have also heard parents of middle and high school kids lament that when their students phase out of elementary school, holiday celebrations end. I found this to be true during my own schooling. I think this so sad. Holiday celebrations should continue on through the upper grades. For older kids, the holidays can be a time for deeper learning and understanding—and for developing a greater sense of meaning in history.

As a homeschool mom, I know that the holidays can be overwhelming. We do our best to mark them, but it is up to us to invent holiday lessons and come up with fun and creative activities. Sure, we can check out a book or two from the library. But coming up with objectives, lesson plans, and enrichment activities? That's up to us. And that's a good deal of work to pile onto our already busy lives.

As a presidential scholar, I also know that so many of our holidays and traditions are tied to American presidents. That is why I wanted to invent a holiday curriculum with a unique twist—one that uses the American presidency as a window into the holidays.

I also know how important primary sources are to our students' learning. That is why I weave primary sources—like speeches, posters, letters, and photographs—throughout the lessons and activities.

And so I began writing these holiday unit studies—first for my own children, then for families with children of all ages. They have enriched my kids, and they have enriched me. My hope is that they will enrich your entire family as well.

How To Use

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit Study has five lessons. Each of the lessons has a written portion to read aloud with your students. The lessons are written so that students at all grades levels can learn from them and enjoy them together. The lessons also have exercises and activities. Some of the exercises and activities are designed for kids of all ages to do together; others are tailored to the grade levels K-6 or 7-12.

Families can complete the lessons any time they wish, though they should work through them chronologically. If you are timing the unit study around the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday, one suggestion is to complete one lesson per day leading up to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, saving the last lesson to complete on the actual holiday.

The first activity for each lesson includes a timeline, map points, key terms, and video links. At the end of the unit study, there is a special Martin Luther King, Jr. timeline that you can print and fill in as you go. Or if you already keep a timeline in your homeschool, just add the indicated dates to it. I think the timeline is very important for helping students to understand the chronology of King's life and work—and how his protest movements led to changes in the law. At the end, there is also a map of the United States. Please use it to plot the important places of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and work.

Before each lesson, there is a section called, “Introduction and Overview for Teachers.” We recommend that teachers read through this before going through the lesson. This overview includes materials needed, learning outcomes, and a lesson plan.

We include all the materials we possibly can, including primary sources. If an activity requires craft supplies, we try to keep them to a minimum and limit them to things you probably already have around the house. Our goal is to keep it easy for parents. An answer key is also included as a separate document.

In the last lesson, we encourage homeschool families to participate in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service on the holiday. If you are not doing the unit study around the holiday, your family can still do a service project. This may take some planning ahead, but even a small project will make a difference.

And last but not least...have fun, make memories, and learn history!

Jill Summer



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Lesson 1: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Early Life

Introduction & Overview for Teachers

Learning Outcomes

- Understand formative events in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s boyhood through his first job as a pastor
- Define and understand discrimination, segregation, stereotypes, and nonviolent resistance
- Understand the system of segregation in the American South in the first half of the twentieth century
- Evaluate the impact theories of nonviolent resistance had on Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Empathize with the discrimination Martin felt as a young boy (Grades K-6)
- Analyze the Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (Grades 7-12)

Materials Needed

- Part A: Timeline and map (provided below), answer key for terms (provided separately), Internet access to watch videos
- Part B (Grades K-6): Lined copy paper, shoes, camera
- Part B (Grades 7-12): Supreme Court opinion (provided below); answer key (provided separately)

Lesson Plan

- Read Lesson 1 aloud with your students.
- Complete the activities. Part A is the same for all students. Part B is different for grades K-6 and 7-12.

Lesson 1: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Early Life

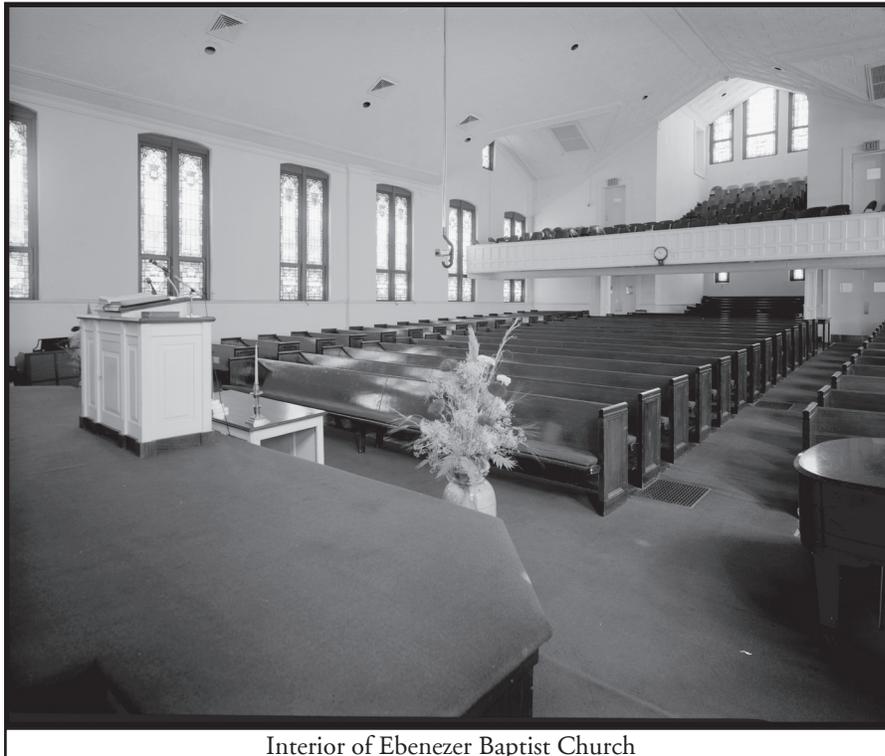
This is the story of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the presidents who helped King get equal justice under law for African Americans.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. Each January, Americans celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Banks and schools are closed. The mail stops, and we pause to honor an American who fought for justice and freedom.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia. His church, Ebenezer Baptist, was just down the street. His father, Martin Luther King, Sr., known as Daddy King, was the pastor of Ebenezer Baptist. Martin's grandfather and great grandfather were also pastors. Daddy King was a big and imposing man, very confident and strong. Martin's mother, Alberta Williams King, was a devout Christian woman and a loving mother.



Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birth Home



Interior of Ebenezer Baptist Church

The King home was warm and welcoming. Peace and harmony filled the walls on Auburn Street. Daddy King was a successful pastor, and he earned a good salary. Young Martin had everything he wanted and needed. Daddy King always put his family first. He provided well for them because he saved and budgeted his money and never lived beyond his means. Because of his father's frugality and industry, Martin did not have to quit school and get a job to help support his family. This was unusual

for black children growing up in Atlanta at the time.

Though peace and love reigned inside the walls of the King house, outside there was trouble. Martin's mother armed her children with dignity and self-respect. But as a black mother living in America at the time, she had to explain the problems of discrimination and segregation to young Martin. **Discrimination** is treating someone differently, as less than someone else. **Segregation** is separating people for unjust reasons, in this case because of the color of their skin.

In Atlanta and throughout the American South, people were segregated by the color of their skin: white from black.

As a young man with black skin, when Martin walked out his door he faced both discrimination and segregation. Everything around him told him he was less than. Everything around him told him he was not equal to. Everything around him told him that he deserved to be treated differently from and less than white people.

Martin's mother told him about slavery, about how black people used to be treated not as people but as property that could be bought and sold, traded, and forced to work under the threat of the whip and without being paid. She told him how slavery ended with the Civil War. But she also told him that after the Civil War, a divided way of living gripped the South.



Texas Restaurants Hung This Sign in Their Windows

Black and white children could not go to the same schools. Black and white people could not eat together at restaurants. They could not watch movies in the same theaters. They could not live in the same neighborhoods. There were “white only” and “colored only” signs on water fountains and bathrooms. The separate schools and lunch counters sent this message to black people: you are not good enough. Holding her little boy in her arms, Alberta King told her son, “You are as good as anyone.”

When Martin was three years old, he played with a little white boy just his age. The boy's father owned a store across the street from the King home. The two boys were good friends. But when they started school, the little boy's father told him that he couldn't play with Martin anymore. Martin was shocked and sad. This was the first time young Martin personally felt the problem that was go-

ing on all around him. Martin’s parents told him that it was his Christian duty to love the little boy’s father.

Another time, when Martin was still a small boy, he went shoe shopping in downtown Atlanta with his father. They sat down in empty seats in the front of the store. But the store had a rule that black people had to sit in the back. The clerk told them they had to move, or he would not sell them shoes. Daddy King refused. “We’ll either buy shoes sitting here, or we won’t buy shoes at all,” he said. The clerk would not budge. Daddy King took Martin by the hand and they left the store.

That was not all. Growing up with black skin in Atlanta, Martin could not go swimming until the YMCA built a pool for black people. Martin could not go to a lunch counter where white people were seated and buy a hamburger or soda. He went to school with all black children and no white children. To get to his school, he had to ride a bus all the way across town. Black people had to sit in the backs of the buses, and the front seats were reserved for white people. Even if no white people got on the bus, black people still could not sit in those seats. Every time Martin got on the bus, he vowed that one day he would sit in the front.

But first, young Martin had to get an education. He was a top student in his high school class. He skipped some grades and entered college when he was only fifteen years old. Yet, Martin learned that he was only reading at an eighth-grade level when he got to Morehouse College, a college for young black men in Atlanta. He had a hard time at first, but his college years were exciting.

At Morehouse College, Martin set out to find a solution to the problem that was going on all around him. In college, Martin first read Henry David Thoreau’s essay “On Civil Disobedience.” Thoreau wrote about how he refused to pay his taxes and was sent to jail because he did not agree with the war with Mexico, which would have expand slavery’s territory. Thoreau refused to put his money toward a moral evil. Martin was intrigued by this idea of **nonviolent resistance**, a protest movement to change hearts, minds, and laws without the use of force. His plan for stamping out segregation was starting to take shape.

Martin also felt an urge to serve others. At first, Martin thought he should serve others by becoming a doctor or lawyer. But he decided to follow in his father’s footsteps and become a pastor.

In 1948, Martin entered Crozer Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There, he studied the Bible and read the great philosophers. Martin left with an even greater commitment to



Martin Luther King, Jr. Statue



Gandhi Statue, Indian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

change the souls of men. “A religion that ends with the individual, ends,” Martin believed. He wanted to solve the great problems of humanity—segregation, unemployment, and poverty—by serving others.

At the same time, Martin tried to look and behave his very best. At the time, many people thought African Americans were dirty, rude, messy, late, loud, and always laughing. This is called a **stereotype**, a widely held but all-too-simple view of a group of people. King tried his hardest to avoid fitting into the stereotype. He tried to always be on time for class. He overdressed and kept his clothes impeccably pressed. He kept his room spotless. He shined his shoes to perfection. And rather than be thought of as always laughing, he wore a gravely serious expression.

At seminary, King also learned about a man from India

named Mahatma Gandhi. Through Gandhi’s teaching, King realized that he could apply Jesus’s commands to love one another and turn the other cheek to large groups of people. King was also fascinated by how Gandhi used nonviolent resistance, especially in his famous Salt March. At the time of Gandhi’s Salt March, Britain ruled India. Gandhi opposed British rule, just as the American colonists once did. In 1930, Gandhi led thousands of Indians on a 240 mile march to the sea to protest Britain’s Salt Acts, which prohibited Indians from collecting and selling salt, a staple in their diet. Britain forced Indians to buy salt from them and made them pay a heavy salt tax. Just as Gandhi believed that love and nonviolent resistance could fix the salt problem in India, King believed that love and nonviolence could fix the race problem in America. (India finally gained independence from Britain in 1947.)

After seminary, Martin earned a Doctorate in Theology from Boston University. There, he learned even more about justice and nonviolent resistance. Martin also experienced discrimination in Boston. He had trouble finding a place to live. He went to place after place where there were “for rent” signs. But when the owners discovered Martin was black, they told him the rooms had already been rented.

In January 1952, Martin met his future wife, Coretta Scott. A friend gave Martin her number and they first talked over the telephone. On their first date, Martin found out that Coretta cared about the segregation and discrimination as much as he did. Martin told Coretta that she had a good mind, and he wanted a wife who understood him and was as dedicated as he was. "Coretta is going to be my wife," Martin soon told his mother. They were married in June the next year.

After graduating from seminary, Martin and Coretta returned to the South. He was offered a job as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, the setting for the opening act of a movement that would shake America.



Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King

Lesson 1 Activities

Part A (All Grades): Timeline, Map, Key Terms, Videos

- Plot the following dates on your timeline:
 - o 1929: Martin Luther King, Jr. is born
 - o 1948: King graduates from Morehouse College with B.A. in Sociology
 - o 1951: King graduates from Crozer Theological Seminary
 - o 1953: King and Coretta Scott are married
 - o 1954: King is appointed pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
 - o 1955: King earns his Ph.D. in Theology from Boston University

- Plot the following points on your map
 - o Atlanta, Georgia
 - o Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - o Boston, Massachusetts
 - o Montgomery, Alabama

- Define the following key terms:
 - o Discrimination
 - o Nonviolent resistance
 - o Segregation
 - o Stereotype

- Watch the following videos related to the lesson
 - o *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)—This was the case that authorized the system of segregation practiced in the historical South
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj54KP16Ilw>

 - o Mahatma Gandhi—his practice of nonviolent resistance influenced King
<http://www.history.com/topics/mahatma-gandhi/videos/mohandas-gandhi>

 - o Martin Luther King, Jr.—Pastor—impressions of King as a young pastor
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr/videos/martin-luther-king-jr-pastor>

Part B (Grades K-6): Shoe Activity and Copywork

This activity is based on the story about Daddy King and the segregated shoe store.

- First, re-read the definition of segregation and this passage from the story:

“Segregation means separating people for unjust reasons or on the basis of color. When Martin was still a small boy, he went shoe shopping in downtown Atlanta with his father. They sat down in empty seats in the front of the store. But the store had a rule that black people had to sit in the back. The clerk told them they had to move, or he would not sell them shoes. Daddy King refused. “We’ll either buy shoes sitting here, or we won’t buy shoes at all,” he said. The clerk would not budge. Daddy King took Martin by the hand and they left the store.”

- Second, have students copy the above paragraph on a piece of lined paper. Younger students may just copy one sentence—either the definition of segregation or the quote from Daddy King would work well.
- Third, gather all of the shoes in your house. Separate them into piles by color: put

red shoes in one pile, black shoes in another, brown shoes in another, and so on.

- Fourth, talk about the activity with your students. What did they learn about segregation? Imagine the shoes were people of different colors. How would they feel if they weren't allowed to mix together? Would it make them feel inferior, mad, or sad? What would they know about the shoes of different colors?
- Fifth, take a picture of the shoe activity. If you can, print the image on your home printer and paste it below your copywork passage.

Part B (Grades 7-12): Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

Read the following excerpt from the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). This case is important because the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation was allowed under the U.S. Constitution. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the presidents he worked with fought hard to dismantle this system of segregation—and make it illegal.

“MR. JUSTICE BROWN delivered the opinion of the court.

[1] This case turns upon the constitutionality of an act of the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana, passed in 1890, providing for separate railway carriages for the white and colored races. Acts 1890, No. 111, p. 152.

[2] The first section of the statute enacts “that all railway companies carrying passengers in their coaches in this State shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races by providing two or more passenger coaches for each passenger train, or by dividing the passenger coaches by a partition so as to secure separate accommodations: Provided, That this section shall not be construed to apply to street railroads. No person or persons, shall be admitted to occupy seats in coaches other than the ones assigned to them on account of the race they belong to.”

[3] By the second section, it was enacted “that the officers of such passenger trains shall have power and are hereby required to assign each passenger to the coach or compartment used for the race to which such passenger belongs; any passenger insisting on going into a coach or compartment to which by race he does not belong shall be liable to a fine of twenty-five dollars, or in lieu thereof to imprisonment for a period of not more than twenty days in the parish prison, and any officer of any railroad insisting on assigning a passenger to a coach or compartment other than the one set aside for the race to which said passenger belongs shall be liable to a fine of twenty-five dollars, or in lieu thereof to imprisonment for a period of not more than twenty days in the parish prison; and should any passenger refuse to occupy the coach or compartment to which he or she is assigned by the officer of such railway, said officer shall have power to refuse to carry such passenger on his train, and for such refusal neither he nor the railway company which he represents shall be liable for damages in any of the courts of this State...”

[4] The information filed in the criminal District Court charged in substance that [Homer] Plessy, being a passenger between two stations within the State of Louisiana, was assigned by officers of the company to the coach used for the race to which he belonged, but he insisted upon going into a coach used by the race to which he did not belong. Neither in the information nor plea was his particular race or color averred. The petition for the writ of prohibition averred that petitioner was seven-eighths Caucasian and one eighth African blood; that the mixture of colored blood was not discernible in him, and that he was entitled to every right, privilege and immunity secured to citizens of the United States of the white race; and that, upon such theory, he took possession of a vacant seat in a coach where passengers of the white race were accommodated, and was ordered by the conductor to vacate said coach and take a seat in another assigned to persons of the colored race, and, having refused to comply with such demand, he was forcibly ejected with the aid of a police officer, and imprisoned in the parish jail to answer a charge of having violated the above act.

[5] The constitutionality of this act is attacked upon the ground that it conflicts both with the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, abolishing slavery, and the Fourteenth Amendment, which prohibits certain restrictive legislation on the part of the States.

[6] 1. {In this section, Justice Brown reasons that the Louisiana Law is not a form of slavery and therefore does not violate the Thirteenth Amendment}

[7] 2. By the Fourteenth Amendment, all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are made citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside, and the States are forbidden from making or enforcing any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, or shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, or deny to any person within their jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws....

[8] The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but, in the nature of things, it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power. The most common instance of this is connected with the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, which has been held to be a valid exercise of the legislative power even by courts of States where the political rights of the colored race have been longest and most earnestly enforced...

[9] So far, then, as a conflict with the Fourteenth Amendment is concerned, the case reduces itself to the question whether the statute of Louisiana is a reasonable regulation, and, with respect to this, there must necessarily be a large discretion on the part of the legislature. In determining the question of reasonableness, it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort and the preservation of the public peace and good order. Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable, or more obnoxious to the Fourteenth Amendment than the acts of Congress requiring separate schools for colored children in the District of Columbia, the constitutionality of which does not seem to have been questioned, or the corresponding acts of state legislatures.

[10] We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. The argument necessarily assumes that if, as has been more than once the case and is not unlikely to be so again, the colored race should become the dominant power in the state legislature, and should enact a law in precisely similar terms, it would thereby relegate the white race to an inferior position. We imagine that the white race, at least, would not acquiesce in this assumption. The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two

racess. We cannot accept this proposition. If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits, and a voluntary consent of individuals. As was said by the Court of Appeals of New York in *People v. Gallagher*, 93 N. Y. 438, 448, "this end can neither be accomplished nor promoted by laws which conflict with the general sentiment of the community upon whom they are designed to operate. When the government, therefore, has secured to each of its citizens equal rights before the law and equal opportunities for improvement and progress, it has accomplished the end for which it was organized, and performed all of the functions respecting social advantages with which it is endowed."

[11] Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane...

[12] The judgment of the court below is, therefore,

Affirmed."

1. What did the first section of the Louisiana law state [paragraph 2]?
2. What did the second section of the Louisiana law state [paragraph 3]?
3. Who was Homer Plessy? Was he white or "colored"? What happened to him [paragraph 4]?
4. Did Plessy do the right thing by sitting in the section for white passengers? Did he do the right thing by refusing to move?
5. What parts of the Constitution were at issue in this case [paragraphs 5 and 7]?
6. What does Justice Brown reason the Fourteenth Amendment was and was not intended to do [paragraph 8]?
7. Do you agree with Justice Brown that the separation of the races does not imply the inferiority of one race to another? Why or why not?
8. Do you agree with Justice Brown that the Louisiana law is reasonable and does not violate the Fourteenth Amendment? Why or why not?
9. In paragraphs 10 and 11, Justice Brown says that prejudices cannot be overcome by legislation. Do you agree? What would have to change in order for the races to come together based on natural affinities?
10. Do you think that the Constitution has the power to put races on the same plane socially?