**Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.**

**SUMMARY**
In this activity, children will look at pages from a 1960’s comic book about the civil rights movement and make a list of the “do’s” and “don’ts” of nonviolence into a handy “pocket card.”

**WHY**
“Guided looking” helps children develop critical thinking and the ability to understand the messages suggested in words, pictures, and other media. The guidelines set out in the comic book will also help children with solving problems in their lives and being good members of their communities.

**TIME**
- 30 minutes

**RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP**
This activity will work best for children in 3rd through 5th grade.

**CHALLENGE WORDS**
- basis: starting point or main understanding
- civic: of or relating to a citizen, a city, citizenship, or community affairs
- cruel: meant to cause pain
- integrated: condition in which all members of an organization have equal membership, regardless of background or race
- Jim Crow: laws or customs that limited the freedom and opportunity of people of color through separating white people and people of color
- nonviolence: a philosophy or strategy for change that opposes the use of violence
- sympathize: to share in sadness or suffering

**GET READY**
- Read *Martin’s Big Words* together. *Martin’s Big Words* is a biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity [here](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/mlk/mlk_reading.pdf).

More information at [here](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/mlk/).
Read the Step Back in Time sheets.

**YOU NEED**
- Directions sheets *(attached)*
- Step Back in Time sheets *(attached)*
- Comic book pages sheets *(attached)*
- ThinkAbout sheet *(attached)*
- Pen or pencil
- Coloring supplies (such as crayons, markers, or colored pencils)
- Paper or index card
In 1955, African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama, organized to demand equal treatment with whites on city buses. They chose as their leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a pastor at a church in the community. Dr. King had studied the lives of leaders who made changes through nonviolent protests. Like Mohandas Gandhi, who helped India gain independence from Great Britain without using violence, King believed that the moral power of nonviolence was the strongest force for social changes.

Dr. King used powerful speeches to lead others in marches, boycotts, and other forms of peaceful demonstrations. Nonviolent demonstrators often met with violence and were sometimes arrested for their protests. When these demonstrations were reported in the news, more people learned about the problems of other citizens and began to pay attention to how the demonstrators felt.

Dr. King fought against many kinds of injustice. He believed that all people had the right to go to good schools, get fair treatment at their jobs, and be able to use all public places like buses and restaurants.

Many of the injustices Dr. King protested against were considered customs in the communities where he worked. Many people in the governments of those communities...
communities benefited from these **customs** and made laws supporting them, so Dr. King and his followers couldn’t just work with the local governments to make changes. Instead, Dr. King led **nonviolent demonstrations** and met with members of Congress, U.S. presidents and other national leaders, to talk about problems that needed to be solved.

### Important Dates

- In 1963 about 250,000 Americans of all races came together in Washington, D.C., to protest against racial **injustice** and to demand strong national civil rights laws. At the March on Washington, Dr. King declared, “I have a dream,” appealing to the hopes of all Americans seeking racial **harmony**.

- In 1964, Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in the **nonviolent** civil rights movement.

- In 1968, while he was working on a **protest** in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King was killed by a man who disagreed with his words and actions.

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custom: unwritten law  
demonstration: public display of group feelings toward a person or cause  
demonstrator: person who is part of a demonstration (see above)  
harmony: balanced and peaceful relationship  
injustice: unfair act  
nonviolence: a philosophy or strategy for change that opposes the use of violence  
protest: public demonstration of disapproval

*Images from Martin’s Big Words by Doreen Rappaport. Text © Doreen Rappaport. Illustrations © Bryan Collier. Used by permission of Disney Publishing. All rights reserved.*
For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Talk about comic books:
   - What do the words “comic book” or “cartoon” make you think of?
   - Does anyone in the family read comics in the newspaper, online, or in comic books?

2. Print the comic book pages and ThinkAbout sheet.

3. Use the strategies and questions on the ThinkAbout sheet to help you look closely at the comic book pages.

4. Make a “pocket card” to keep these tips on nonviolent change close at hand. Use one side of the card to list all of the ideas for things you should do or think about, and use the other side of the card for things you should avoid thinking or doing. One side of your card will have “Do’s” and the other side of your card will have “Don’ts.”
   - To make a perfect pocket-sized card, use an index card cut in half or a 3” by 2.5” piece of paper.
   - Take tips from the comic book pages, and write out the ideas in your own words.
   - Use words or pictures to record the ideas from the comic book pages. Can you think of symbols to help you remember how to work nonviolently?

Tip  If you know someone else who might want to learn about nonviolence, make a copy of your pocket card for him or her.
5. Discuss how you might use some of these ideas in small, everyday ways or in big actions for change in your community.

Tip If you are especially interested in taking action on a problem in your community, consider taking a field trip to work with others on that problem. One of the OurStory activity guides includes suggestions: http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/freedom/LunchCounter_Service.pdf.

For more activities and information about Martin’s Big Words and Dr. King, visit http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/mlk/.
Try using one or two of the strategies (listed below) to help you get the most out of the comic book pages. Then, when you’re done, talk about one or two of the questions (also found below).

**Looking and Reading Strategies:**

- List any unusual words or phrases. When you’re done reading together, use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

- Make a list of any activities you see happening in the comic book’s pictures.

- Look closely at the pictures. Describe the feelings, words, or thoughts you think might connect to the people in the pictures.

**Looking and Reading Questions:**

- Is there a hero in this comic book? What does he or she do to be a hero? Could you be like that hero?

- What is the one thing that you think you will remember most from these comic book pages? Why?

- The instructions in the comic book were written many years ago, but can you think of any problems in your community that you could solve using these instructions?

- Did you notice that the comic book pages mention God? Take a close look at the box at the bottom of the last page. Who made this comic book? Why would they include God in the story? Also, think about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. What was his job in Montgomery, Alabama?

**Tip** Check the Step Back in Time sheet for more information about Dr. King.
HOW THE MONTGOMERY METHOD WORKS

In Montgomery we used this nonviolent Christian action to get Jim Crow off the buses. It can be used anywhere, though, against any kind of evil. Here is how it works.

First, remember that you can do something about the situation. Not just the government, or some big organization, but you. God says you are important. He needs you to change things.

The second thing is much harder. God loves your enemy, too, and that makes him important to you. You have to see him as a human being, like yourself. You have to try to understand him and sympathize with him.

To see your enemy as a human being you have to stop seeing him as your enemy. Even when he does cruel, heartless things to you, he is a child of God. He is your brother, even when he hurts you.

Whites only.
Hardest of all, you have to help your enemy to see you as a human being. He has to see you as a person who wants the same kind of things he wants: love, a family, a job, the respect of his neighbors.

It will be easier for him to see you this way if you act like a brother. So, even when he tries to hurt you, you must not strike back. Even in your thoughts you must not strike back. You must go on loving him. Like the schoolgirl in Little Rock, you must say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This does not mean giving up, though. It is wrong for this brother of yours to treat you as though you were not a human being, and it would be wrong for you to help him treat you this way. You have to do something to stop him.

He is a human being and so he can treat you badly only because, somehow, he is afraid of you. If you try to stop him by using violence and by "getting even," he will be sure he is right in being afraid of you. If you show him love, though, you start to take away the reason for his fear and you make it harder for him to go on hating you. Here's how to go about it.
First, decide what special thing you're going to work on. In Montgomery, it was buses. Somewhere else it might be voting, or schools, or integrated churches. Don't try to deal with everything wrong at once.

Second, be sure you know the facts about the situation. Don't act on the basis of rumors or half-truths. Find out!

Third, where you can, talk to the people concerned. Try to explain how you feel and why you feel as you do. Don't argue - just tell them your side, and listen to theirs. Sometimes you'll be surprised to find friends among those you thought were enemies.

Next be sure you are ready. Join with others who feel the way you do. Have someone with experience come in to tell you how to get ready. Try practice situations as we did in Montgomery. Make sure you can face any opposition without hitting back, or running away, or hating.

When you are ready, then go ahead, and don't turn back no matter how hard the way or how long the struggle. When my friend the Rev. Ralph Abernathy found himself about to be put in jail in Montgomery, he prayed, "God, I'm afraid to go to jail. I've never been in jail before. If I go, God, will you go with me?"
AND GOD ANSWERED; 
*RALPH, YOU GO AHEAD TO JAIL, AND WHEN YOU GET THERE, YOU’LL FIND ME WAITING THERE FOR YOU.* THAT’S HOW IT WILL BE WITH YOU, TOO. WHEN THE GOING GETS HARDEST, IF YOU REMAIN TRUE TO CHRISTIAN LOVE, YOU’LL FIND GOD WAITING THERE FOR YOU, HOLDING YOU AND SUPPORTING YOU, GIVING YOU A VICTORY FAR BEYOND WHAT YOU HAD HOPED.

This booklet is published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, whose thousands of members throughout the world attempt to practice the things that Jesus taught about overcoming evil with good. Additional copies of “Martin Luther King and The Montgomery Story,” at quantity rates, and other printed material on this subject, may be obtained by writing FOR, Box 271, Nyack, N. Y.

Ed King Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution
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**OBJECTIVES**
Students will be better able to:

- Describe tactics of the nonviolent civil rights movement.
- Draw upon visual and verbal data for information.

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**
- Effectively summarizes major tactics of nonviolence.

**STANDARDS**

**NCHS History Standards**

**K-4 Historical Thinking Standards**

4A: Formulate historical questions.

4B: Obtain historical data.

5A: Identify problems and dilemmas.

**K-4 Historical Content Standards**

4D: The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy.

**IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

**21st-Century Skills**

**Learning and Innovation Skills**

- Creativity and Innovation
Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy