



Raising King Discussion & Writing Guide for Classrooms, Book Groups, Friends, Individuals

Dear Readers: I hope these questions and writing ideas might help you dive deeply into the life and work of Dr. King, as it emerges in these poems. Use this Discussion & Writing Guide any way that helps you. Feel free to share and change these questions. J. Ross

Before Reading:

1. Reflect on what you already know about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. Who taught you about him?
3. Where did you learn about him?
4. How old were you when you first learned about Dr. King?
5. Did those who taught you about Dr. King admire him? Why or why not?
6. What did you think of him when you first learned about him?

While Reading:

Section 1: Stride Toward Freedom

7. What surprised you about Dr. King's life and work in Montgomery?
8. What individuals or moments in the bus protest stood out to you? Why?

9. How did you see Dr. King's Christian faith in the Montgomery Bus Protest?
10. How did you see Dr. King's commitment to nonviolence in Montgomery?
11. How did you see the faith of others in Montgomery?
12. How does Coretta Scott King feel about Montgomery?

Section 2: Why We Can't Wait

13. What surprised you about the violence of 1963?
14. What specific incident stood out to you? Why?
15. How would you describe Dr. King's friendship with Rev. Ralph Abernathy?
16. What strikes you about the "Ten Commandments for Nonviolent Protest required of protesters in Birmingham? (Pages 70-80)
17. What does Dr. King say about "just and unjust laws?"
18. How do you see the role of children in 1963, especially in the Birmingham protests?
19. How did Dr. King feel about A. Philip Randolph?
20. How does Coretta Scott King feel about 1963?

Section 3: Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?

21. How does Dr. King discuss "time" in this section's poems?
22. How might Dr. King understand patriotism in these poems?
23. What does Dr. King mean by "the World House?"
24. What does Dr. King mean by "the giant triplets?"
25. What does Dr. King see as the fundamental choice for Americans?
26. What does Dr. King reveal on the night before he is assassinated?
27. How have you seen Coretta Scott King in these poems?
28. How do "we raise him?"
29. How do "we rise" in these poems?

After Reading:

30. How do you see Dr. King change throughout these poems?
31. What current problems does Dr. King's life and work address?
32. How do Dr. King's triplets (racism, consumerism, militarism) live today?
33. What specific poems relate to American life today?
34. Do you see the values of "Black Lives Matter" in these poems?
35. What makes you angry in these poems?
36. What makes you hopeful in these poems?

37. What other feelings might these poems evoke in you?
38. Can Dr. King's life and work help America today? Why or why not?
39. What do these poems, and Dr. King's life and work, call you to do today?

Ideas for Writing:

Trace Dr. King's ideas about *loving those who hate him*, through two or three poems.

Explore one theme you see in the Ten Commandments for Nonviolence, developed by Fred Shuttlesworth and the Alabama Movement for Human Rights, used in the Birmingham protests. (Pages 70-80)

If you could sit down with Dr. King for coffee, what would you ask him? What would he ask of you?

Who, in America today, would Dr. King lift up as *doing the right thing*?

Who are the most vulnerable people in the "World House" today?

Dr. King believed that nonviolence was oppressed people's "most potent" method for social change. Is this still true?

If Dr. King were to speak to the people at your workplace, what might he say?

Explain your understanding of the final lines of the book's last poem, "Epilogue: Martin Luther King, Jr."

This is how we raise him.
This is how

we rise.

