FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + −

MLK: POWER AND NON-VIOLENCE

This segment comes from **EPISODE 1: WAR + PEACE**

From Jesus' command to "love your enemies" to the idea of "holy war" is a giant leap. Yet from the Old Testament through to the Crusades and the inquisitions, Christian history is full of violence. Has Christianity been a major contributor to war? How have the followers of a crucified leader managed to get things so wrong? And what difference has it made when they have followed his example of peace-making and non-violence? This segment looks at the life of Martin Luther King Jr, an example of someone whose non-violent resistance was anchored in the teachings of Jesus.

🔑 THEME QUESTION

Place a mark on this line for where you think Christianity falls on the scale between violence and peace. Then, share your response with the class.

Violence ○————————————|————————————○ Peace

💡 ENGAGE

1. How do you feel when you have no power?

2. How do you change something that is clearly wrong?

3. Brainstorm all the words and images that come into your head when you think of the word "protest".

4. Is there any cause that you'd be prepared to fight for even if it cost you your life?

5. What observations can you make about the following images of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States?

6. Draw a picture that symbolises one or some of the injustices facing African Americans before the civil rights movement.

👀 UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE

▶ **WATCH the segment: "MLK: Power and non-violence"** (cpx.video/mlk1)

1. List three significant events in Martin Luther King Jr's life.

2. What would you expect a demand for civil and economic rights to look like? What did it actually look like under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr?

3. According to the documentary, how was Martin Luther King Jr's approach to the battle for civil rights "shaped by his faith and his understanding of the profound ethic of love at its centre"?

4. How could Martin Luther King Jr continue in the fight for civil rights in America even though "he knew ... he was not going to die in bed"?

5. Imagine you were in the crowd that assembled at Martin Luther King Jr's house after it was firebombed. How would you have reacted when he told you and those with you to "go home"?

6. Miroslav Volf says that the idea of grace is at the very heart of the Christian faith. He describes grace as showing generosity towards others without seeking anything in return, and forgiving and seeking reconciliation when you've been wronged. Volf says that if this idea is put into practice, "you'll have a major contribution to a peaceful world".

   a. What is your reaction to these ideas?

   b. How did Martin Luther King Jr "play in tune" with Jesus by embodying this idea of grace?

   c. How could putting this into practice bring about "a major contribution to a peaceful world"?

📖 BIBLE FOCUS

READ Isaiah 40:4-5 and Amos 5:24.

1. What would an exalted valley and a mountain that has been brought low look like?

2. Draw and label the image from Amos 5:24.

3. What do you think Martin Luther King Jr was trying to say when he used these verses in his famous "I have a dream" speech?

READ Romans 12:17-21.

4. Does this passage indicate that we are not to care about justice (focus on v.19)?

5. What does this passage teach about violence and peace?

6. What is one commandment in this passage that particularly stands out to you?

7. Imagine a personal situation where good could overcome evil.

APPLY

1. What are some examples of inequality and oppression in Australia today?

   a. Make a poster for one issue that you think is important.

   a. What would be a Christian response to this issue?

2. Imagine you had the opportunity to give your own speech titled "I have a dream". What would your speech be about?

3. Do you know anyone who you think embodies the idea of "grace that gives"? How close are you to following their example?

EXTEND

1. Listen to and read the transcript of Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a dream" speech (cpx.video/dream). Write a two-page evaluation about the ways in which his Christian faith influenced the content of the speech.

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