



Legacy: Dr. King, Honi and Me

Topic

Legacy: Dr. King, Honi and Me, a Personal Legacy Project for MLK Day and Tu B'Shevat

Grade Level(s)

5th-7th

Goals for the Lesson/Activity

- Students will be able to explain the legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King and Honi Ha-Magel, and the relationship to MLK Day and Tu B'Shevat.
- Students will be able to reflect on the meaning of legacy and express the relationship between their values, their actions and their impact on future generations.
- Students will be able to identify key values that are important to them and use their reflections to create a piece of art that shares their personal legacy.

Materials needed

- Source Sheets on Dr. King and Honi Ha-Magel (downloadable)
- Personal Legacy Portrait Worksheet (downloadable)
- Art project materials
 - Construction paper or cardstock
 - Magazines
 - Scissors
 - Mod Podge (decoupage glue)
 - Sharpie/permanent fine tip markers
 - Oil pastels
 - Watercolor paint

Technology needed

- Projector or smart board to show photographs of Dr. King and Honi and to share Legacy definition (optional)

Background for Teachers

Every year the holidays of Tu B'Shevat (the Jewish New Year of the Trees) and the national recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. occur fairly close to each other. Martin Luther King Day always falls on the third Monday in January, and Tu B'Shevat falls on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, which typically falls in late January or early February. As our students get older, it is important to provide new insights into these holidays. For this lesson we take the *tikkun olam* (repair the world) aspects of both of these holidays and bring them together for a conversation and reflection on personal legacy.

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Author: Julie Wohl



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We will use the stories of Martin Luther King Jr. and Honi Ha-Magel (a sage from Jewish tradition whose story is typically told on Tu B'Shevat) as a jumping off point for students to think about legacy and to work out their own ways they want to impact the world.

Who was Honi Ma-Magel/Honi the Circle Maker? Honi the Circle Maker was a Talmudic sage and miracle worker from the first century BCE. He was known as the most pious of his generation, so pious that only he could make the rains come in a time of drought (a story for another time!). On Tu B'Shevat we traditionally tell the story of Honi found in *Taanit* 23a, in which Honi learns the value of planting for the future. In the story, Honi questions a stranger about the purpose of planting a carob tree whose fruit he will never see. Honi then falls into a deep and mysterious sleep. When he wakes up he finds that so many years have passed that he has lived long enough to see the results of planting the tree. Interestingly, in this story Honi does not act as teacher, but learns a valuable lesson from a stranger about paying it forward and planting for future generations.

Who was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his death by assassination in 1968.

Dr. King advocated non-violent civil disobedience and used his message of freedom for all to change the face of American race relations and rights for African Americans. While jailed for protesting in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, King eloquently spelled out his theory of non-violence: "Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community, which has constantly refused to negotiate, is forced to confront the issue."

Later that summer, in August 1963, the historic March on Washington drew more than 200,000 people. It was there that King made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, emphasizing his belief that someday all men could be brothers and would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Description of Activities

1. Welcome students and explain to them that we are going to celebrate and honor two holidays in one. Ask students if they know which holidays are coming up (or recently celebrated, depending on your time frame). Allow students a chance to review the facts of Tu B'Shevat, that it is the new year of the trees, an ecological Jewish holiday, and Martin Luther King Jr Day, a holiday celebrating the civil rights leader and a day of social action.



Legacy: Dr. King, Honi and Me

2. Pass out the downloadable source sheets on Martin Luther King Jr. and Honi Ma-Magel. Allow students a chance to review the information and ask them the reflection questions found on each sheet.
3. Write the word Legacy and the accompanying definition on the board. Discuss its meaning.

Legacy: “Anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor”

4. Under the word Legacy, create a chart with two columns. On one side write Dr. King and on the other side write Honi. Ask students to fill in the chart by sharing or writing down the legacies being passed down by the man in the Honi story and by Dr. King. Your chart may look something like this:

Legacy:

Anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor

Martin Luther King, Jr.	Honi Ha-Magel
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil rights• Non-violent protest (civil disobedience)• The weak can defeat the mighty• Believe in the power of your dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plant for the future• Take care of the environment• Think about those who will come after us

5. You may want to explain to your students that these holidays are very different from each other, but each has an element of *tikkun olam*—repairing the world, and both MLK and Honi are teachers whose lessons involve legacy—the choices we make in our lives can impact the future.
6. Pass out the Personal Legacy Portrait worksheet and ask students to take some time to think about their own personal legacies. What is important to them that they would like to use to impact their communities, or pass down to their own children or grandchildren?
7. Once students have filled out the Personal Legacy Portrait worksheets, they will create a Personal Legacy Portrait using the collage technique described below.

Legacy: Dr. King, Honi and Me

Making a Personal Legacy Portrait

- Have students draw a head and shoulders outline onto construction paper or cardstock, or have students pair up, stand against a wall and trace each other's head and shoulders onto the construction paper/cardstock.
- Using magazines, newspapers or old cards/calendars (anything with a variety of colorful images and words), have students cut out pictures and words that resonate with them, based on their work on the worksheet.
- Have students glue or decoupage the images onto their paper inside the head/shoulders outline.
- Once the images are dry on their paper, students can use permanent markers or oil pastels to add their own illustrations or words.
- Then they can use watercolor paint to fill in, outline or otherwise detail their Personal Legacy Portrait.





Legacy: Dr. King, Honi and Me

Differentiation Options

Knowing that students learn in a variety of ways and modalities, the following options are provided to adjust the above lesson to meet the unique needs of your learners.

For learners who need more assistance

- Using a web based program like Wordle.net or Tagxedo.com, students can type in words that describe them. If they use Tagxedo, they can also choose an image that they think represents them. The words will automatically be generated into an image.

For learners who need extension opportunities

- For additional reflection, students can write a paragraph or journal entry reflecting on the creation of their personal legacy portrait, and the connection between their personal legacy and the lessons imparted by Martin Luther King Jr. and Honi Ha-Magel.