



## **The Proud Family: “I Had a Dream”**

### **A Disney Channel Episode for Cable in the Classroom**

#### **Ages 8-13**

#### **Program Synopsis:**

Penny and her classmates are unapologetically bored as they face the arrival of yet another “Black History Month.” Although their teacher, Mr. Webb, warns them that they “won’t have a future” if they “don’t understand their past,” they are unimpressed. After class, annoyed by their assignment and absorbed in their complaining, they are oblivious to the janitor working in the hallway. Blithely walking through his freshly cleaned floor, they run from his scolding, laughing. Penny slips, however, and falls, not only onto the floor but also into a dream.

On what appears to be the next day, strange things happen at school. Why is Penny’s black teacher now a janitor? Why is everyone horrified when Penny speaks to her friend, Zoey, a white girl? Why are all the black students sitting in the back of the class, using old, tattered textbooks? And why does the calendar say it is 1955?

Penny’s incredulity and her insistent questioning cause her to get sent home from school. Through an act of kindness towards Zoey, the two girls become close, talking openly about racial segregation. When they return to school, they sit together, refusing to separate. One by one their classmates join them, marching hand in hand out of school. Met by protesters and police, Penny seizes the moment, reciting portions of Dr. Martin Luther King’s stirring “I Have a Dream” speech. Waking from her dream, Penny tells her friends and family how different things would be today if no one had fought for Civil Rights. Having seen the past, Penny now appreciates its importance, and can at last understand her teacher’s admonition.

#### **Objectives:**

##### **The student will:**

- Understand the concept of racial segregation and learn its impact on day-to-day life in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Be motivated to investigate the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.
- Hear the words of Dr. Martin Luther King’s stirring “I Have a Dream” speech and learn more about his life and accomplishments.

#### **Preview Questions:**

- What is segregation?
- What is integration?
- What is discrimination?
- In the United States, is it legal to discriminate against someone on the basis of their race? Was it ever legal to do so?



- In the United States, is it legal to have schools, restaurants, or other public facilities set aside for people of a certain race? Was it ever legal to do so?
- How would you feel if you were told not to talk to someone or enjoy their company simply because you were not of the same racial background?

**Post-Viewing Questions:**

- Why were Penny and her friends so annoyed about Black History Month?
- Why did their teacher, Mr. Webb, think it was so important? [Because “if you don’t understand your past, you won’t have a future.”]
- What aspects of their lives did Penny and her friends take for granted?
- In what important ways was the 1955 Proud family different from the modern-day version?
- What types of racial discrimination did Penny experience in her 1950s dream sequence?
- What famous civil rights leader was Penny quoting when she made her speech?
- Where and when did Martin Luther King, Jr., actually deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech [At the March on Washington in August 1963.]

**Vocabulary:**

- What were some of the conflicts you observed in the story?
- What do you think are some of Vicky’s inner conflicts?
- How does Vicky resolve her inner conflicts?
- Who was your favorite character in the story—and why?
- How much of the story do you think was fantasy? How much of it could have been fact?
- Several of the characters changed during the story. Who do you think changed most?  
Be specific in describing the changes you observed.

**Vocabulary:**

cease and desist  
colored  
culturally biased  
injustice  
insolence  
integration  
segregation

Use a dictionary to define each word or term above as it was used in the program.

On a piece of graph paper, arrange the words in a crossword puzzle. Assign numbers to each entry and create a list of clues.



## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Activity #1: Martin Luther King, Jr.**

*Key Questions: Who was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Why are his accomplishments important to us?*

**Brainstorm:** Ask students what they know about Martin Luther King, Jr. On the board, write down student answers to the following questions:

- Who was Dr. King?
- What is he most famous for?
- What did he believe in?
- What were his goals?
- How did he try to accomplish those goals?

Discuss student answers, emphasizing Dr. King's contributions to the Civil Rights movement in America. Explain that he believed strongly in nonviolent protest to achieve goals of equal opportunity in jobs, housing, and education. That he organized many protests and marches.

Provide books and Internet access (see Resources section, below) so students can research the life and accomplishments of Dr. King. Working individually or in teams, students should find out the following:

- Date and place of birth.
- Major accomplishments.
- At least five interesting facts about his life.
- One example of his courage.
- One example of how his actions have an effect on us today.
- A short quote from one of Dr. King's books or speeches.

Have students choose one of the following ways to showcase what they have learned:

- Make an illustrated timeline of Dr. King's life.
- Role-play an interview with Dr. King.
- Choose an event or major accomplishment from Dr. King's life and write a newspaper article about it.
- Write a letter to Dr. King from the point of view of Penny Proud, thanking him for working to end segregation and acknowledging specific contributions.
- Create a series of postage stamps honoring Dr. King, each depicting an important event or aspect of his life.

**EXTENSION:** Have students read biographies of other civil rights, leaders, activists, or role models, such as Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Ruby Bridges, Thurgood Marshall, or others.



## **Activity #2: Straight to the Source: Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" Speech**

*Key Questions: Where and when did Martin Luther King, Jr., deliver his famous "I Have a Dream" speech? What important concepts did he communicate?*

In this episode of *The Proud Family*, Penny quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., using the stirring language and imagery of his most famous civil rights speech.

Locate the complete text of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, either in a book, such as:

*Words That Built a Nation: A Young Person's Collection of Historic American Documents*, by Marilyn Miller (New York: Scholastic, 2000).

or online at:

<http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/dream.html>

or:

<http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>

Print out or photocopy the speech. Give each student a copy. Explain that Dr. King delivered the speech on August 23, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. King had helped organize a huge, nonviolent protest march to focus public attention on civil rights. More than 250,000 people attended the event, called the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

As a class, focus on these three sections of the document:

- (1) Read the first sentence aloud: "Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation." Discuss with students:
  - Who is the great American King refers to?
  - Why does he mention President Lincoln?
  - What was the Emancipation Proclamation?
  - Did the act of freeing slaves mean that they enjoyed equal freedoms in America?
- (2) Read the "When will you be satisfied?" section of the speech. Have students work in teams to list the types of civil rights Dr. King refers to. For each, ask the group to discuss and decide whether, today, we should "be satisfied" about each example. Why or why not?
- (3) Read the section of the speech that begins ". . . I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream." Continue reading through to the phrase, ". . . where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."
  - Ask students to describe Dr. King's dreams in their own words.
  - Which parts of the dream have come true?
  - Which parts do they think have not yet come true?

[For a geography lesson utilizing Dr. King's speech, see the activity below]



### Activity #3: What Happened Then (1955)?

Key Question: What was happening half a century ago?

Grab a glimpse of life in 1955, the year Penny Proud visits in her dream/nightmare. Have students do a little research and then fill in the blanks:

Back in 1955 . . .

- It cost \_\_\_\_\_ cents to mail a letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was president of the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ won the Academy Award for Best Picture.
- Jonas Salk made a major contribution to world health with this important medical breakthrough:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The \_\_\_\_\_ beat the New York Yankees to win their first World Series championship.
- \_\_\_\_\_, an African-American civil rights activist, was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat on a public bus so a white man could sit down.

Answers:

1. 3 cents
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower
3. On the Waterfront
4. A vaccine to protect against polio.
5. Brooklyn Dodgers
6. Rosa Parks

Internet resource: <http://www.infoplease.com/year/1955.html>

### Activity 4: Timeline—Sort It Out

*Key Questions: When did important milestones occur in the struggle for civil rights? What was their significance?*

In the “I Have a Dream” episode, Penny Proud’s time travels lead to a curiously scrambled chronology. She’s a 21st-century kid in a 1950s world reciting her own version of a speech Martin Luther King, Jr., actually delivered in 1963. Help students sort out—and understand--the correct sequence of events by having them create a Civil Rights timeline.

Start with these key civil rights events:

- 1896** Plessy v. Ferguson: U.S. Supreme Court upholds the concept of "separate but equal" public facilities.
- 1947** Freedom Riders



- 1954** Brown v. Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education: In a landmark case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.
- 1955** Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to sit in the back of a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama.
- 1955-56** Montgomery Bus Boycott: Blacks boycott all city buses to protest Jim Crow laws.
- 1957** The Civil Rights Act of 1957 is passed, establishing the Commission on Civil Rights.  
The “Little Rock Nine” integrate a previously all-white high school.
- 1961** “Sit In” at a Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, S.C.
- 1963** Civil rights marchers in Birmingham, Alabama, are met by police with high-pressure fire hoses and attack dogs.  
250,000 people attend the “March on Washington,” where Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers his famous “I Have a Dream” speech
- 1964** Civil Rights Act of 1964 is passed, banning discrimination and funding school desegregation.
- 1965** Voting Rights Act of 1965 is passed. It banned discriminatory voting registration practices.

Assign an important civil-rights event to each student, pair of students, or small groups. Use the list provided for suggested events, or choose others that relate to your Social Studies curriculum.

Attach a length of butcher paper to the classroom wall. Choose a span of years that accommodates the events you have assigned, and mark off sections in five-year spans. (You may want to involve students in measuring and marking the timeline as a way of incorporating hands-on math skills in the activity.) Have students locate and list their “name” of their event on the timeline.

Have students research key facts about their event. On a separate sheet of paper and using complete sentences, have students answer the following questions:

- When did it occur? List the exact date, or a date range.
- Who was involved? Provide the names, birth and death dates, and information about the people who were instrumental in the event.
- What happened? Describe the event, document, or court ruling in detail.
- What was the impact at the time? Be sure to include various points of view, if people were divided or in disagreement about its value or importance.
- How does it affect us today? Explain what the long-term effects of the event have been. How would things be different if that milestone had never occurred?

After they have done their research and answered the questions, have students summarize their event in the form of a newspaper headline, with a title, subtitle, and dateline. Instruct students to write their headlines neatly on a 3-by-5-inch index card. On a separate index card, students can provide an



illustration. Attach the cards in the appropriate place along the classroom timeline, using colored yarn and thumbtacks to indicate the precise location, if necessary.

Encourage students to add to the timeline additional information and dates gleaned from their research. For example, they could add the birth dates of important figures, the dates when civil-rights organizations were founded, and so on.

Internet resources:

Timeline of the Civil Rights Movement

<http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/tm.html>

#### **Activity #5: That Was Then, This Is Now**

*Key Question: What can we learn about race relations in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s from people who were students at the time?*

Let students gather first-hand accounts of race relations in mid-century America by having them talk to people of older generations. By conducting a short, focused interview, students can learn key details and compare their information with one another. Photocopy and distribute Handout #1 to students. Have students choose an adult to interview. The person must be at least 55 years old and must have spent his or her childhood in the United States. The interviewee should be a friend, neighbor, or relative who the student is comfortable with. Students can conduct the interview in person or over the phone.

After students have conducted their interviews and filled in their logs, discuss the results as a class. Where did the people who were interviewed grow up? (Locate on a map or globe). Did their experiences vary geographically? What were the similarities and differences among various responses?

[For a related creative writing activity, see Language Arts, below]

#### **Activity #6: Picturing Segregation / Picturing Integration**

*Key Questions: What is segregation? What is racial integration? How do they affect us in everyday life?*

Discuss with students the terms “segregation” and “integration” as those words relate to the civil rights movement in America. Read the dictionary definitions and facilitate a class discussion in which students provide examples of racial segregation and integration.

Provide magazines, scissors, glue, and construction paper and instruct students to each create two collages: one showing people engaged in everyday activities, but separated along racial lines; the other showing people of variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds working, studying, and enjoying leisure activities together. Display the finished collages in the classroom.



## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Activity #1: Eyewitness to History

*Key Question: What would it have been like to watch history in the making?*

After learning about a civil rights leader such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, or others (see Social Studies Activity #1, above), have each student choose one important event in that person's life and write about it from the point of view of an anonymous eyewitness, a bystander, or some other participant in the event, either real or fictional.

Examples:

- MLK's "I Have a Dream Speech," from the point of view of a college student lost in the crowd of 250,000 people.
- Rosa Parks' refusal to "move to the back" of the bus, from the point of view of the bus driver or a white passenger.
- Ruby Bridges' first day of school, from the point of view of a National Guardsman sent to protect her.

Students work in pairs to brainstorm what the event would have been like for the bystander. Next, one student of each pair writes a short paragraph describing the event. The other student then adds details to the description. With one person acting as the famous subject and the other role-playing the eyewitness, students role-play to elicit even more details, quotes, about the event. Finally, students collaborate on a finished piece in the form of a newspaper article.

### Activity #2: The True Story of . . .

*Key Question: What are the most interesting aspects of my interview with an "everyday American"?*

Build on the interview conducted as part of Social Studies Activity #5, above. Have students review the information they gathered from the interview (see Handout #1). Then have them write a short story, newspaper article, or first-person account incorporating the real-life experiences of the person they interviewed.

## GEOGRAPHY

### Activity #1: A Range of Mountains

*Key Question: What mountain ranges and states are mentioned by Dr. King in his "I Have a Dream" speech, and where are they located?*

Martin Luther King, Jr., used imagery that encompassed the entire United States in his stirring "I Have a Dream Speech." First King quoted the patriotic song *My Country 'Tis of Thee*: "my country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountain side, let freedom ring" Then he echoed and expanded on those lyrics with these lines:



And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire!

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York!

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that.

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi!

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

For each of the phrases above, have students (1) identify the mountain range, (2) identify the state and its capitol, and (3) locate the mountain ranges, states, and capitols on a map. If your state or region is not mentioned, encourage students to write their own phrase to add to the list, following the style of those used by Dr. King.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Activity #1: African-American Contributions**

*Key Question: In what ways have the achievements of African-Americans benefited the lives of all Americans?*

When Penny tells her teacher and classmates about African Americans who have made valuable contributions to science, industry, and politics, those folks from the fifties dismiss the possibility. Penny specifically mentions G. A. Morgan, Dr. Daniel Williams, and Lonnie Johnson, real-life high-achievers your students can investigate using the library, encyclopedias, classroom resources, and the Internet. Have each student choose one person to research; then have students create a drawing or collage showcasing the inventions and medical breakthroughs of their subject.



**Garrett Augustus Morgan (1877-1963)**

An inventor who was granted four U.S. patents in the early 1900s. His inventions, which included helmets and gas masks used by firefighters and the first automated traffic signal, enhanced public safety.

Find out more about G.A. Morgan at:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/morgan.html>

Take a look at the patent for his traffic signal, including an illustration, at:

[http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/morgan\\_patents.html](http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/morgan_patents.html)

Draw a picture of Morgan’s automated traffic signal (be sure to include labels). Create a collage or illustration showing what busy intersections might look like without traffic signals.

**Dr. Daniel Hale Williams (1856-1931)**

In 1893, this pioneering doctor performed the first successful open-heart surgery.

Read more about Dr. Williams at:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/williams.html>

<http://www.bet.com/articles/1,,c13gb1723-2389,00.html>

<http://www.gibbsmagazine.com/DrWilliams.htm>

**Lonnie G. Johnson (1949- )**

While experimenting on heat pumps, this rocket scientist who worked at NASA’s famed Jet Propulsion Laboratory invented the Super Soaker®, a water gun that washed away the competition.

<http://mit.edu/invent/iow/johnson.html>

Find more black inventors at:

[http://www.bccns.com/history\\_inventions.html](http://www.bccns.com/history_inventions.html)

**HANDOUT 1: INTERVIEW LOG**

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF INTERVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON INTERVIEWED: \_\_\_\_\_ RELATIONSHIP \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS: Where did you go to school? (Ask for the location, not the name of each school) What was the approximate racial/ethnic makeup of each school?

ANSWERS:

	<i>Location</i>	<i>Racial/ethnicmakeup</i>
Elementary School		
Middle or Jr. High		
High School		



QUESTION: Did you have friends whose racial or ethnic backgrounds were different from your own? Was that typical or unusual?

---

---

QUESTION: How would you describe the relations between various racial groups? Was there interaction among people from different groups? Was there tension between them?

---

---

QUESTION: Can you provide an example or story that will convey some aspect of racial/ethnic relations in your elementary, middle, or high school?

---

---

QUESTION: In comparison with the way things are today, would you say that racial/ethnic relations changed since you were in school? If so, in what ways have things changed? Why do you think changes (if any) have occurred?

---

---

Use the back of this sheet to write additional information or anecdotes]

## RESOURCES

### INTERNET

#### **National Archives and Records Administration Milestone Documents**

[http://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?page=milestone\\_documents](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?page=milestone_documents)

Complete transcripts, photographs of, and information about one hundred key documents in U. S. history from 1776 to 1965, including the Emancipation Proclamation, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, the 13th, 14th, and 14th Amendments to the Constitution.

#### **Great Civil Rights Speeches**

<http://www.pbs.org/greatspeeches/teachers/foot1.html>

Contains links to speeches by prominent African Americans, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

#### **African American Odyssey: The Civil Rights Era**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>

#### **From Slavery to Civil Rights: A Timeline of African-American History**

[memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/civilrights/nonflash.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/civilrights/nonflash.html)



### **Civil Rights Timeline**

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/movement/Seatimeline.html>

### **Oral histories of young Civil Rights workers:**

[http://www.ssecinc.org/less/Fset\\_ls\\_free.htm](http://www.ssecinc.org/less/Fset_ls_free.htm)

### **The Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project at Stanford University**

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>

### **Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

[http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about\\_king/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/)

### **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

<http://www.drmartinlutherkingjr.com/mlkbio.htm>

Biography, photographs, and audio recordings of speeches

## **BOOKS**

The Civil Rights Movement in America From 1865 To the Present, by Patricia and Fredrick MicKissack (Chicago: Children's Press, 1987).

The Day Martin Luther King, Jr. Was Shot: A Photo History of the Civil Rights Movement, by James Haskins (New York: Scholastic, 1992).

... If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King, by Ellen Levine, illus. by Anna Rich (New York: Scholastic, 1994).

I Have a Dream: The Story of Dr. Martin Luther King, by Margaret Davidson (New York: Scholastic, 1986).

The March on Washington: Journey to Freedom, by L. S. Summer (Childs World, 2001)

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the March Toward Freedom, by R. Hakim (Brookfield, Ct.: Millbrook Press, 1991).

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace, by Patricia and Fredrick MicKissack (Hillside, NJ: Enslow, 1991).

Martin's Big Words, by Doreen Rappaport, illus. by Bryan Collier (New York: Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2001).

The New York Public Library Amazing African American History, by Diane Patrick (New York: Wiley, 1998).

White Socks Only, by Evelyn Coledman, illus. by Tyrone Geter (Martin Grove, Ill.: A. Whitman, 1996).

Words That Built a Nation: A Young Person's Collection of Historic American Documents, by Marilyn Miller (New York: Scholastic, 2000).