

Thinking About Equality

In honor of Martin Luther King's Birthday, we've been reading several books about his life and the Civil Rights Movement. The children have reflected on topics of fairness, friendship and equality. We began by reading The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson about two girls who develop a friendship despite being separated by a fence and racial divisions.

As the mother tells her it is not safe on the other side of the fence:

Mark: **Why wasn't it safe on the other side of the fence?**

Ruby: **I think this story is from a long time ago because there's no more fences in the world.**

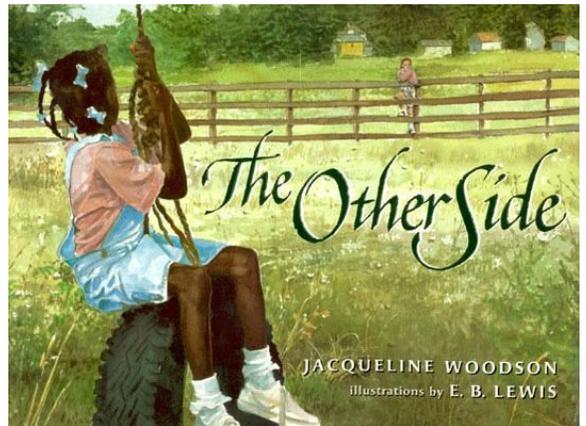
Jacob: **But there are still fences. I saw a fence in New Jersey.**

Ruby: **I don't mean there's no more anymore, just not like that one.**

Hal: **Why is the fence not safe to climb over?**

Ruby: **Because it's made out of wood and sticks.**

Miles: **Because this one was real a long, long time ago.**



Tallulah: **Maybe the people who made the fence didn't want other people to go on the other side.**

Miles: **They played together by sitting on the fence, because one girl lives on one side and one girl lives on the other side.**

Ruby: **They're next to each other, did they climb over the fence? They did.**

Miles: **They all became friends.**

One of the girls in the story suggests knocking the fence down.

James: **This is a good idea, because you don't need it, it's for nothing.**

Ruby: **They should, because they want to play with each other. They're saying they want to knock down the fence so they can play with each other.**

Zoe: **It keeps them apart so it's a good idea to knock it down.**

Miles: **Then if somebody who lives on one side wanted to go over to the other side they can.**

Ruby: **We don't have fences like that, because this one is all around the city and it blocks them away.**

We then read, Happy Birthday Martin Luther King by Jean Marzollo. The children shared their feelings on what life was like during Martin Luther King's lifetime and demonstrated a true sense of justice and equality.

Has anyone heard of Martin Luther King Jr. before?

Miles: **Martin Luther King said to treat everybody the same.**

After hearing that some buildings and water fountains were only for certain people:

Jamie: **It's not fair, you need to share the places where you go.**

Ruby: **They need to share places of where they go, you can't just have it all to yourself.**

As we read that now all children can go to school together:

Ruby: **It's important so you can see all your friends together.**

Upon hearing about MLK's dream:

Ruby: **That would be fair and nice.**

Jamie: **If they be nice then you'll be nice.**

Ruby: **I think this is a good day to read the story because today is his birthday.**

What made MLK special?

Anthony: **He made everybody nice.**

Zoe: **The people were having fights.**

Tallulah: **He helped people be fair.**

Miles: **He talked to them on lots of days, a thousand people, and told them that they had to be nice.**

Ruby: **He's checking on people and trying to make it fair to other people.**

Do you think it was nice to live back then? Why is it better now?

Tallulah: **Cause he changed it.**

Hal: **Why were things not fair?**

Zoe: **It was mean that people with the light skin could go in the front, but people with the dark skin had to go in the back. The black people couldn't go everywhere together but the light people could.**

Anthony: **No, that's not right. Everybody can go everywhere, everyone can go different places. He's making everyone to be nice. You can let somebody go anywhere and play with each other.**

Miles: **It's nice to let people share everything and not nice not to let people.**

