

Using Vitamin L Songs to Enhance and Expand Ithaca City School District Lesson Plans for the Martin Luther King Community Build – for grades K – 5

Dear Teachers, The Vitamin L Project, based in Ithaca, uses music to encourage positive character development. A committee of five area educators has matched Vitamin L songs to most of the existing ICSD K-5 lesson plans that support the MLK Community Build. These songs can be used to expand upon the themes in the lesson plans.

We hope you will use Vitamin L music as an additional resource to enhance learning through the MLK Community Build lesson plans! This document matches Vitamin L songs to specific lesson plans. The songs are from Vitamin L's 4 recordings: "Sing for Dr. King! – Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community," "Walk a Mile," "Everyone's Invited!" "Swingin' in the Key of L," and "Every Moment!" CDs are available to order here. Lyrics are available on this website, under the lyrics link.

Please contact project director Janice Nigro at (607) 273-4175 or at vitaminLproject@hotmail.com with any questions. We would enjoy hearing feedback from you and your students about how you use these songs with MLK Community Build lesson plans.

**Special thanks to Randi Beckmann, Adam Bauchner, Deb Jordan, Lisa Peter, and Alice Wu for their work on this project.*

Lesson: Chaos or Community Word Wall p. 10

Vitamin L songs: **"Family Feeling"** (on the "Walk a Mile" CD) **"The Way You Say It"** (on the "Every Moment!" CD and on the "Sing for Dr. King! – Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community" CD)

In this lesson, students will find words that correspond to chaos and community when they read and listen to texts. These words will be placed on a Word Wall that will grow throughout the school year. Early in the year, there will be an initial discussion on the meaning of chaos and/or community. During this initial discussion, when talking about/defining "community," play the Vitamin L song "Family Feeling."

Reviewing the lyrics...

"Family feeling is a special thing, everybody knows...! Imagine all the joy that it can bring, as the feeling grows!"

CHORUS: "Just think! You've got a whole world of brothers! Just think! A whole world of sisters too! From in your heart, this love will start, Let it spread the whole world through!"

Discuss how a family is like a community. Students can identify the traits of a community in their family: each family member is unique and has different qualities, and each is bound to each other by love and caring (just as in other kinds of communities).

Play the Vitamin L song "The Way You Say It." **Discuss** how, in addition to the words we choose, our tone of voice; volume, and attitude as we speak also create chaos or community. **Role-play** how the way you say it (loudly, softly, rudely, sweetly, etc.) makes a difference.

Learn the simple chorus to this song.

Lesson: Inclusion/Exclusion p. 12

Vitamin L songs: **“Look A Little Deeper”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

Step Up, Speak Out! (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! – Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

In this lesson, the teacher reads the story “Babushka Baba Yaga” and begins a discussion about how it feels to be excluded. The teacher and students will also discuss ways to make sure people are not excluded.

Before reading the story, the teacher can play “Look A Little Deeper” to begin the discussion about inclusion/exclusion.

Discuss the lyrics in the chorus: *“Tell me oh...oh what do you see, When you look at me? Look a little deeper with your heart, Look a little deeper with your mind, Look a little deeper, you may find a piece of yourself in me.”*

(i.e.: young children often make assumptions and judgments about people based on quick impressions. Discuss how students can begin to recognize that a single observation can be misleading and that it is not ok to exclude someone based on what they see or hear...“look little deeper”).

Step Up, Speak Out discusses how to avoid excluding others and speaking up when you witness someone being mistreated.

Lesson: Addy’s Anti-Bias Song p. 14

Vitamin L song: **“Some Rights in This World”** (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! – Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Teach the chorus of the song “Some Rights in This World” following Addy’s Anti-Bias Lesson. Children have learned ways that Dr. King and others helped to make things fair. Play the song, and **ask children** to identify ways in which they have rights.

Lesson: All the Same/All Different p. 16

Vitamin L songs: **“People are a Rainbow”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) **“This Little Light of Mine”** (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

In this lesson, students will explore what they know about themselves, what they look like, and what their interests are. They’ll explore ways in which they are the same as their peers and ways in which they are different. The lesson can be introduced by playing the Vitamin L song “People Are a Rainbow.”

Discuss what the lyrics mean.... what does it mean when it says people are a rainbow?

When the class has completed their pictures of themselves, display the lyrics to the song on a bulletin board with the pictures (i.e.: “Life is a rainbow, so beautiful to see! People are a rainbow, that’s how it’s meant to be!”)

“This Little Light of Mine” celebrates each person’s worth and individuality and unique characteristics.

Lesson: Empathy for Playground Citizenship p. 21

Vitamin L song: **“Teamwork”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

Following this lesson on empathy and respect, listen to the song “Teamwork.” Then the **students can identify ways** in which they can work together with their friends to solve playground issues.

“Walk A Mile” (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) is about empathy, and can also be used to support this lesson.

Lesson: The Giant Triplet p. 23

Vitamin L song: **“That is a Mighty Power”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

This lesson teaches children about racism, greed and violence. After empowering children to make changes in their world, celebrate this learning with the song “That is a Mighty Power.” After playing the song, **students can identify ways** in which we each have the power to impact the world around us.

“With These Hands” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

further expands on this theme of the power that each person has to make a positive difference.

Lesson: Line Dance p. 35

Vitamin L song: **“Teamwork”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

In this lesson children learn how chaos and community feel by learning to dance together. Play the song “Teamwork” and **ask students to identify** other ways in which we can work together and sense either chaos or community.

Lesson: What Would you Do? p. 37

Vitamin L songs: **“Walk A Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) and **“Step Up, Speak Out!”** (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of other children who encounter challenging scenarios - they will have the opportunity to think about what they would do when faced with different types of discrimination and prejudice.

The song “Walk A Mile” expresses the intention to put oneself in the other person’s shoes and to try to understand what the other person is experiencing.

“Step Up, Speak Out!” discusses what to do if someone witnesses injustice or mistreatment, and how to help.

Lesson: Martin’s Big Words, Lesson II p. 41

Vitamin L songs: **“Everyone Can Be a Winner”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Martin’s Heart” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Martin is Calling” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Part of this lesson has children learn about and think about war and problem solving. The song “Everyone Can Be a Winner” is about non-violent conflict resolution, and it supports that theme in this lesson.

“Martin’s Heart” and **“Martin is Calling”** shows how Martin supported human rights for all.

Lesson: Picturing Martin p. 45

Vitamin L songs: **“With These Hands”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Martin’s Heart” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Martin is Calling” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Some Rights in this World” (on the *“Every Moment”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Students learn about ways in which MLK fought for human rights and how pictures convey important information. Play the song **“With These Hands”** and then **discuss** ways in which we can use our hands to change the world around us.

Students can also compose new lyrics for additional verses for this song.

“Martin’s Heart” and **“Martin is Calling”** show how Martin supported human rights for all.

Students can discuss how they can help others and promote equality.

“Some Rights in this World” presents information about human rights through song, and would work well at any point during this lesson.

Lesson: Dear Dr. King Lesson p. 47

Vitamin L songs: **“Some Rights in this World”** (on the *“Every Moment”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Martin’s Heart” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Martin is Calling” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

In this lesson, students will reflect on the life of Dr. King and what they might ask him if he were alive today. While listening to some readings about Dr. King, the teacher will discuss vocabulary with the class, such as slavery, justice, segregation, civil rights and passive resistance.

After this discussion, play **“Some Rights in this World”** and **discuss** how Dr. King felt strongly that *“I must be free to think my thoughts, And to say what I must say, to believe in what I believe.”* The teacher can **ask students** how these lyrics (and Dr. King’s messages) impact their life today?

“Martin’s Heart” and **“Martin is Calling”** show how Martin supported human rights for all.

Students can discuss how he supported these rights. Teachers can ask students how they can support other people’s rights at school, at home, and in the community.

Lesson: Walk A Mile p. 53

Vitamin L song: **“Walk A Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

In this lesson, the song **“Walk A Mile”** will be pre-taught to introduce the concept of empathy (understanding another person’s perspective). The lesson uses texts about the experiences, oppressions and strengths of African Americans to help students understand the effects of racism. The lyrics to the song can also be displayed in the classroom along with the student’s drawings and written responses about racism.

Lesson: Martin Luther King, Jr. Did Not End Enslavement p. 86

Vitamin L song: **“Here’s to the Hero”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD)

Discuss the figures mentioned in the lesson plan. Look at the lyrics and discuss how this song is appropriate to consider them heroes according to the lyrics.

Vitamin L song: **“That is a Mighty Power”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss how the people mentioned in the books and articles used in this lesson showed that they had a “mighty power.”

Vitamin L song: **“Express Yourself”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

Discuss how the figures mentioned in the book and articles expressed themselves and what the repercussions were.

Vitamin L song: **“Martin’s Heart”** (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) discusses Martin’s work on voter registration, and against segregation.

“Freedom Riders Got to Ride” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) also discusses the Freedom Riders work against segregation.

Lesson: Empathy Training p. 112

Vitamin L song: **“Walk a Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss how the song supports the quotation from Martin Luther King, Jr. used in this lesson.

Vitamin L song: **“Look a Little Deeper”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Use this song or the previous one at the beginning of the lesson to **discuss** empathy and how the lyrics of the songs help us to understand what empathy is.

Vitamin L song: **“Step Up, Speak Out”** (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) Students can discuss how this song relates to empathy for others.

“Martin is Calling” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) encourages people to have empathy and to respect other people’s differences.

Lesson: Conflicting Feelings p. 114

Vitamin L songs: **“Look a Little Deeper”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Decisions, Decisions” (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

“Tear Down the Walls” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“The Way You Say It” (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

These songs can be used to set the tone for the lesson to **discuss** how conflicting feelings are illustrated in the lyrics. Also discuss how the songs illustrate the quote used in the lesson by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lesson: Accepting and Celebrating Differences p. 116

Vitamin L songs: **“People Are a Rainbow”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Look a Little Deeper”- (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Use these songs at the beginning of the lesson to **prepare students for discussing differences**. These songs can also be used to discuss how Dr. King’s quote is supported by the lyrics.

Lesson: An Eye for An Eye p. 118

Vitamin L songs: **“Decisions, Decisions”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

“Everyone Can Be a Winner” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Walk a Mile”, (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“A World United” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

These songs can be used to set the tone for the lesson by discussing how the lyrics illustrate that “everyone can be a winner.” **Discuss** how the lyrics support the quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. used in this lesson.

Lesson: Growing Student Peacemakers - Part 1 - Understanding Conflict p.122

Vitamin L songs: **“Walk a Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Jumpin’ to Conclusions” (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

“Talking ‘bout a Putdown” (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Play “Walk a Mile” and **discuss** conflicts and how/when they might occur (not seeing the other person’s point of view, not talking about things, jumping to conclusions without checking it out with the other person).

Discuss resolving conflict – win win vs. “why did we both have to lose?”

Play “Jumpin’ to Conclusions” as an example of conflicts and how people make assumptions and get angry without finding out enough or checking with the other person.

Play “Talking ‘bout a Putdown,” for examples of what kinds of negative behaviors can lead to conflicts and how each of us can make a choice to refrain from using put-downs.

Lesson: Growing Student Peacemakers - Part II - Listening p.125

Vitamin L songs: **“Walk a Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) **“Second Hand Information”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

Play “Walk a Mile,” then **discuss** trying listen to and have empathy for the other person.

Play “Second Hand Information,” which is related to listening or not listening so well, and **discuss** the importance of getting the real story before forming any opinions.

Lesson: Growing Student Peacemakers - Part III - Feelings and Taking Responsibility p. 131

Vitamin L songs: **“Jumpin’ to Conclusions”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD), **“It was a Mistake”** (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD)

Play “Jumpin’ to Conclusions” and relate the discussion to “I messages” and “you messages.” Play “It Was a Mistake,” then **discuss** and relate it to taking responsibility for one’s actions.

Lesson: Growing Student Peacemakers - Part IV - Nonviolent Solutions p. 134

Vitamin L songs: **“Everyone Can be a Winner”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD) **“The Way You Say It”** (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Play “Everyone Can be a Winner” and then **discuss** problem solving and how to find win-win solutions.

Play “The Way You Say It” and **discuss** how it is important to think about how you talk to people and to make sure to say things in positive and constructive ways.

Lesson: Growing Student Peacemakers - Part V - Managing Anger and Aggressive Behavior p. 137

Vitamin L songs: **“Walk a Mile”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Jumping to Conclusions” (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

Play “Walk a Mile” and then **discuss** anger and how to deal with it. **Brainstorm** suggestions of what to do when you are angry.

Play “Jumping to Conclusions” as examples of how people react when they are angry – in this case from insufficient or incorrect information. **Discuss** examples of when this has happened from the student’s lives.

Lesson: Alliances strengthen and pave the road to progress – We Need Everyone! p. 143

Vitamin L songs: **“Teamwork”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD) **“Family Feeling”** (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD) **“With These Hands”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Freedom Riders Got to Ride” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD) gives examples of how the Freedom Riders helped build alliances by joining together for a common purpose to get things done as equal partners.

These Vitamin L songs all have to do with teamwork and building community. They can be used to introduce the ideas in this lesson. The song “With These Hands” is particularly good for doing this parachute activity.

Three lessons: If you lived at the time of MLK (Unit Plan) p. 146

If you lived at the time of MLK 1 p. 148

If you lived at the time of MLK 2 p. 151

Vitamin L songs: **“Some Rights in this World”** (on the “Every Moment!” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Tear Down the Walls”** (on the “Swingin’ in the Key of L” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Endurance”** (on the “Walk a Mile” CD) **“That is a Mighty Power”** (on the “Walk a Mile” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Look a little Deeper”** (on the “Everyone’s Invited!” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“People are a Rainbow”** (on the “Walk a Mile” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Martin’s Heart”** (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Martin is Calling”** (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Freedom Riders Got to Ride”** (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Step Up, Speak Out”** (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD)

These Vitamin L songs all relate to having rights and creating more unity, as well as the value of diversity. They can be used to **discuss** what life was like at the time of MLK and what people did to try to improve things, and what each of us can do now to help make the classroom, the community, and the world better.

Notes on suggestions for the remaining lessons:

These songs can be used in the beginning, middle, or end of the MLK lessons. Because they are related thematically, rather than directly, they are useful for getting the kids to think about the lessons’ themes as they relate to their lives or experiences, outside of the specific context of MLK. Most students in the older elementary grades can handle reading and comprehending the lyrics, so teachers should be prepared with the words on handouts, chart paper, or on white/black boards. In many cases, focusing on a few lines from a song is sufficient, while in other cases all the words can be used. In all cases, students should have several opportunities to hear the song, and opportunities to sing it. **Lyrics are available at vitaminL.org, under the lyrics link.**

Lesson: Who am I p.157

Vitamin L songs: **“I Want to get to Know You”** (on the “Walk a Mile” CD) **“Look a Little Deeper”** (on the “Everyone’s Invited!” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) **“Who am I?”** (on the “Every Moment!” CD)

Discuss how who you are is more than what people can see or think they know.

“This Little Light of Mine” (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) ties into individuality and how each person has their own special talents.

Lesson: With Liberty and Justice for All p.160 Vitamin L song: **“Some Rights in this World”** (on the “Every Moment!” CD and on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD) This song can further the discussions generated from this lesson about what liberty and justice for all really means.

“Martin’s Heart” (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD)
“Freedom Riders Got to Ride” (on the “Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” CD)

These two songs also help students think about these topics.

Lesson: Examining the ICSD Student Conduct Manual p. 163

Vitamin L songs: **“Some Rights in this World”** (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Rules” (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD)

Discuss: How do rules protect your rights? Why do we need rules? What rights to children have?

Lesson: More than speeches - A theory of nonviolence (5th grade version) p. 166

Vitamin L songs: **“Maybe We can Do the Same”** (on the *“Every Moment!”* CD)

“Decisions, Decisions” (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD)

“Here’s to the Hero” (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD)

“Step Up, Speak Out” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss: How can you “fight back” without fighting? Who are every day heroes?

Lesson: Everyday Mathematics-Big Numbers and The Census p. 182

Vitamin L songs: **“Look a Little Deeper”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“Tear Down the Walls” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss: When we look at people in categories, do we lose their individuality? Do we build walls between them? How do we want to choose to be about this?

Lesson: Give it All You Got p. 186

Vitamin L songs: **“With these Hands”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Endurance” (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD)

Discuss: What are we capable of? What are the benefits of hard work? Why is it important not to quit?

Lesson: "I Have a Dream" Wordle p.189

Vitamin L songs: **“Tear Down the Walls”** (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“People are a Rainbow” (on the *“Walk a Mile”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss: How are people all the same and also all different?

Lesson: What is Power? p. 193

Vitamin L songs: **“That is a Mighty Power”** (on the *“Everyone’s Invited!”* CD and on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

“With these Hands” (on the *“Swingin’ in the Key of L”* CD)

“Step Up, Speak Out” (on the *“Sing for Dr. King! - Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community”* CD)

Discuss: What is power? What power do children have?

