

Chapter 5 Citizenship and Leadership

Section 5.2 Leadership Skills



Social Studies Leadership in History

NCSS X E Civic Ideals and Practices Analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy.

Directions Read the paragraph and answer the questions.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta Georgia. His mother and father taught their children to treat all people with respect and Dr. King's father worked hard to break down the barriers among races. Dr. King's involvement with the civil rights movement began at Moorehouse College under Dr. Thurman. He entered the public eye with the arrest of Mrs. Rosa Parks in 1955. Mrs. Parks, an African-American seamstress on her way home from work, was arrested for not giving a Caucasian bus rider her seat. Dr. King and other African-American community leaders wanted to peacefully protest this type of discrimination. The African-American residents of the city were asked to boycott, or refuse to use, the bus company by walking and driving instead. The United States Supreme Court ended the boycott 381 days later by declaring that Alabama's state and local laws requiring segregation on buses were illegal. The boycott was a success, and Dr. King proved that peaceful mass action could bring about change. After this incident, the Civil Rights movement was in full swing, with Dr. King leading the way. A few years later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law. It guaranteed that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination."

1. How do you think Dr. King's upbringing contributed to his abilities as a leader?

2. Why was the boycott of the bus company effective as a protest against discrimination?

3. Why did the boycott of the bus company require teamwork from the African-American community in order to be effective?

4. Why were others motivated by Dr. King's request that they stop riding the buses?

