

CIVICS IN LITERATURE

★★ *January Lesson Plan* ★★

GRADES
K-4

**“LIFE’S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS,
‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?’”**

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The National Constitution Center is pleased to introduce our new *Civics in Literature* initiative, a brand new program designed to enhance and build upon current civic education curriculum through children's literature, and other famous historical text. Help your students build their basic civic knowledge and understand their role as active citizens. Each month, we will share a reading list and suggested activities that correspond with a specific civic holiday and enhance learning.



AUTHOR

Anne Spector

Anne Spector is an educator whose career has taken her into classrooms from first grade to 3rd year law students. She has taught in both the School District of Philadelphia and the School District of Cheltenham Township where she also served as a Central Office Administrator. Mrs. Spector holds an undergraduate degree in psychology, a teaching degree in Secondary English, a graduate degree in Reading, and Elementary and Secondary Principal Certification.

Throughout Mrs. Spector's career she has dedicated much of her time to developing and implementing programs that promote student voice and citizenship education through a marriage of literacy and civic literacy. With a team of educators that includes her writing partner Elaine Scarpino, Anne is helping to create the *We the Civic Kids* program for elementary students, grades K to 5. Her work in this field began over twenty years ago when she collaborated with Temple University's LEAP program (Law Education and Participation) to help in the development of law-related education material. She continued her work in elementary civic education by creating a K to 4 program known as *Let's Take Two...Two Steps Back, Two Minutes to Think, Two People to Solve a Problem*.

After retiring from Cheltenham, Anne joined the staff at the National Constitution Center as the Director of PennCORD, First Lady Marjorie O. Rendell's Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy. Through her work with PennCORD Mrs. Spector created S.T.A.R. Force (Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly), a K to 6 program that married literacy and civic literacy as a way to teach basic civic knowledge, promote public action between and among our youngest citizens, and provide practice in democratic deliberation.

Mrs. Spector embraces the notion that...*reading is our first freedom*. She is thrilled to be able to bring this philosophy to children and their teachers across the country through materials that highlight children's literature with lessons that connect young minds to complex concepts and build student voice.

READING LIST

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen
by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

I Have a Dream
by Martin Luther King, Jr. with
illustrations by Kadir Nelson

More Than Anything Else
by Marie Bradby

The Royal Bee
by Francis and Ginger Park

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

FEATURED BOOK AND ACTIVITIES

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

Uncle Willie works in a soup kitchen. When his nephew has a day off from school, he asks his uncle if he can join him at the soup kitchen.

Activity #1: The brick building that houses the soup kitchen in the book is described as old and kind of run down. What could you and a group of your friends do to help change the way people see it? Why do you think that might be important?

Activity #2: Uncle Willie tells his nephew that they fed 121 people at the soup kitchen. Then he says, “That’s a lot of citizens.” Why do you think Uncle Willie called them citizens? Share some ways you have modeled active citizenship.

Activity #3: To celebrate Dr. King’s birthday, many people choose to do something with other people from their community that makes a difference for one, some, or all the people there. Do you think every school-aged student should be required to volunteer for a project or activity on MLK Day of Service? Why or why not?

Activity #4: Review the list of volunteer activities below. Choose one from the list that you might like to try. Then write or draw what you would do and be prepared to share why you think you might like it.

- Help decorate the local post office, train station, or community building with pictures that you and your friends draw.
- Help clean up a local park or vacant lot.
- Sing songs, present a play, or work on a project with senior citizens.
- Organize a book drive and collect new or gently used books. Then plan how to distribute them to needy children.
- Join others to paint rooms in a community building that need to be freshened up.
- Organize and collect for a food drive and arrange to take what you collect to a local food bank.

Whether planning a field trip, looking for innovative ways to enhance classroom instruction or seeking a deeper understanding of American history and active citizenship, the National Constitution Center is an educator's ultimate civic learning resource.

Learn more at

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

THE MUSEUM OF *We the People*

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