

For the Classroom

A Singing Game to Honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

~ Holly Koteen-Soulé

Last January I asked myself the question, “If I still had a kindergarten class, how would I choose to share the legacy of Martin Luther King with the children?” I continued to live with that question during the WECAN Conference as early childhood colleagues began discussing which kinds of situations required explicit responses from teachers and which lessons could be most effectively brought implicitly, through stories, puppet plays or circles. What began to feel right to me was to bring his message through movement. So, I started working on a singing game that began with the words, “I had a dream.”

I had a dream,

And this is what I saw,

We lived in a house

That was big enough for all.

The project benefited from a long gestation and the encouragement of several colleagues. The verses were partnered with a Mood of Fifts song and last

summer the Sound Circle Early Childhood teacher education students helped me finalize the gestures and the movements. What we discovered as we practiced the game was significant. There is a point when the two travelers are knocking on the door of the house: “Knock, Knock, Knock, may we come in?” The circle answers: “Lots of windows and a lovely door. Please come in, there’s always room for more!”

When the children in the circle say, “Please come in,” everyone steps back. This action makes the circle bigger. It is not a picture of opening the door and letting someone in, but rather of making the “house” bigger. We all delighted in experiencing how simply stepping back opened up the space and illustrated so eloquently and powerfully the whole gesture of what we were trying to share.

I am delighted to offer this singing game with *Gateways* readers, to honor Dr. King and to honor all of you who have worked so tirelessly and selflessly to support your children and families in the last two years. Many blessings on our continued journey together.

I Had a Dream

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I. I had a dream
and this is what I saw.
We lived in a house
that was big enough for all,
Where you can be you
and I can be me,
Side by side, working joyfully.

*one step forward and arms swing forward as well
one step back and arms swing backward as well
make gesture of peaked roof
open arms widely
clap hands against neighbors on “you” 2 times
clap own hands together on “I” and “me”
repeat movements from lines above*

II. I had a dream, and this is what I saw,
We lived in a house big enough for all.
*Brothers and sisters, all kinds of friends,
Side by side, from beginning to end.

Repeat movements from Verse I