



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

HANDOUT 4

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

1929–1968



Printable Biography

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/printable.aspx?id=1E1:King-Mar&topicid=19485>

Quotes

Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

—Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, December 11, 1964

It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likeable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them and here we love the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. It is the type of love that stands at the center of the movement that we are trying to carry on.

—Martin Luther King Jr., “The Power of Nonviolence,” speech, June 4, 1957

Action

On September 28, 1962, while Martin Luther King Jr. was winding things down at the first fully integrated convention in Birmingham, a white man walked right up to the stage and punched King hard in the face, causing him to fall backward. The white man proceeded to hit King again and again. The crowd surged forward to intervene. But King turned to face his assailant and calmly dropped his arms “like a newborn baby,” according to a witness. King shouted out, “Don’t touch him. Don’t touch him. We have to pray for him.” Other preachers in attendance formed a protective circle around the assailant and advised the crowd that the situation was under control. All the while, King talked quietly to the man, assuring him that he would not be hurt. The man was escorted

off the stage to a private room. After Reverend James Bevel informed the crowd that King was all right and they had weathered a stern test of nonviolence, Bevel got the crowd to launch into “I’m on My Way to Freedom Land” and the auditorium shook with the sound of singing voices. King returned to the stage holding a handkerchief filled with ice to his face (he had also been fortified with two aspirin and a Coca-Cola by Rosa Parks). King told everyone that he and the assailant had spoken calmly in the office and that the man was a member of the American Nazi Party who had been on a mission to attack King. While the head of Birmingham police urged King to press charges against the attacker, King refused to do so.

Adapted from Branch, Taylor, *Parting the Waters* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 653–655.

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