

Lesson Plan: Faith Ringgold And Her Story Quilts

Grade Level - 2-5. Builds skills in art, social studies, and language arts

Concept/Goal: Art can be used to record historical or personal events.

Resources: My Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King by Faith Ringgold (or Tar Beach)

Crayons, Paper, and Glue

Summary: Each student will make a drawing of an important event in the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Once completed, they can be quilted together and displayed to celebrate Black History Month. (Note: this can be changed to another person's life, or even the students' own lives, depending on what's going on in your classroom)

1. Introduce the art piece: (5 min) Start by presenting the artist Faith Ringgold, an American artist who began her career more than 35 years ago as a painter. Today, she is best known for her painted story quilts -- art that combines painting, quilted fabric and storytelling. Share the art piece and show how this quilt tells a story.

2. Reading (10 min) Faith Ringgold has written and illustrated several children's books—many of them based on her own childhood experiences. Read her book entitled, My Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King or Tar Beach. Or you can tailor the book to a story the kids have learned about recently, like the Three Little Pigs.

3. Discuss the story.: (5 min) What parts of the story do you remember? What details do you think need to be included to understand the story?

4. Project: (30 min) Creating the “squares” for the story quilt. You can modify this if you're doing a different story. (While doing the project, you can listen to any music you think works with the theme.)

- Students will be given a slip of paper with a caption from the timeline of Dr. King's life from the back section of Ringgold's book.
- With that event in mind, each student will make a drawing to tell about that event.
- When they are done with their drawing, they will glue their statement of the event to the bottom of their artwork and make a decorative border around their square.
- After all the drawings are done, the children will glue (or tape which would be less permanent) their own drawing in order of when it happened in Dr. King's life.
- The outcome will be a quilt-like design that celebrates Black History Month, the life of Dr. King, and the art of Faith Ringgold.

5. Closure: (5 min) Ideally each student can say something about his or her drawing and explain what is going on, but depending on time you might just have a few volunteers do so.

6. Personal Connection: (5 min) Explain that even though these drawings were to represent the events in Dr. King's life, they could also do this for themselves, to record their own life experiences.

Time Flow: 60 Minutes Total

Back-up Lesson: The students can make a drawing of an important event from their own lives. (If time is tighter, the book reading can be left off.)