**HOW MARTIN CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN**

**Video Guide**

**Video #1- The March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom**

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON was held on AUGUST 28,1963 and was an event that was unprecedented in its scope and execution. It was conceived as the brainchild of African American labor leader A. Phillip Randolph who had the idea of creating a sizable march that would bring thousands of people to the nation’s capital, for many years. The march, designed to put pressure on the President, Congress and other national leaders was successful because of some brilliant planning and the involvement of a wide range of people who organized, recruited and sacrificed to make it happen.

Such is the nature of change and progress. In studying history we are often guilty of looking at one event or one person as the focal point, missing the connections that are required to put words and ideas into action

For more background on the march and the events that brought it into being, have you stun

On that day, more than 200,000 demonstrators took part in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in the nation’s capital. The march was successful in pressuring the administration of John F. [**Kennedy**](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/kennedy-john-fitzgerald) to initiate a strong federal civil rights bill in Congress. During this event, Martin Luther King delivered his memorable “[**I Have a Dream**](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/i-have-dream)” speech.

The 1963 March on Washington had several precedents. In the summer of 1941 A. Philip [**Randolph**](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/randolph-philip), founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, called for a march on Washington, D.C., to draw attention to the exclusion of African Americans from positions in the national defense industry. This job market had proven to be closed to blacks, despite the fact that it was growing to supply materials to the Allies in World War II. The threat of 100,000 marchers in Washington, D.C., pushed President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802, which mandated the formation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission to investigate racial discrimination charges against defense firms. In response, Randolph cancelled plans for the march. But he would hold that idea in his mind and wait for a time when things felt right. That time came in 1963 and the world experienced a day and a speech that would change the world forever.

**SONG: This Little Light of Mine**

This song was one of the most used songs in the civil rights movement. It’s a spiritual that rose out of the time of slavery as a community-based reminder that despite being oppressed, that people still could be hopeful and active in the course of their own liberation. This song was very popular as an energizer at mass meetings and at protests and marches and was especially useful at mass meetings(nightly gatherings where organizers would get participants ready for action and keep them committed to movement goals. Sung by everyone, this song was a favorite of Fanny Lou Hamer and the Freedom Singers.

# [How The Civil Rights Movement Transformed 'This Little Light Of Mine'](https://www.npr.org/2018/12/24/679895682/how-the-civil-rights-movement-transformed-this-little-light-of-mine)

[**https://www.npr.org/2018/12/24/679895682/how-the-civil-rights-movement-transformed-this-little-light-of-mine**](file:///Users/reggieharris/Desktop/Desktop%20-%20MyMac’s%20MacBook/WORKSHOPS/Martin:Mountain/How%20The%20Civil%20Rights%20Movement%20Transformed%20'This%20Little%20Light%20Of%20Mine')

**This Little Light Of Mine (Traditional Spiritual)**

This little light of mine... I’m gonna let it shine

This little light of mine... I’m gonna let it shine

This little light of mine... I’m gonna let it shine!

Let it shine... let it shine... let it shine!

Way down in my heart... I’m gonna let it shine! 3X. Let it shine... let it shine... let it shine!

All around the world… I’m gonna let it shine! 3X. Let it shine... let it shine... let it shine!

Not gonna make it shine… I’m just gonna let it shine! 3X. Let it shine... let it shine... let it shine!

**For more background on the historic event, have your students check out these resources.**

**Stanford King Institute**

[The Martin Luther King, Jr.](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/) [Research and Education Institute](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/)

**The March on Washington**

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/mlk-topic/march-washington-jobs-and-freedom-1963>

Following a day of songs and speeches, Dr King addressed the crowd of 250,000 people who has travelled by plane, train, bus, car and other means from across the nation to get to Washington, DC for a day of speeches and inspirational songs. At the end of the day, Dr Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream!” message that spoke to the need for unity and justice and for giving civil rights to all people.

**\*For more backstory on the speech, watch this!** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IB0i6bJIjw>

**Closing Song Of Speech: “Free At Last”**

Listen to this version of the song by Kim and Reggie Harris

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mPQ_hKhrTw>

**Background on the Song**

Back in the time of slavery, fugitives would use songs to communicate and to escape to freedom. Those traveling over the border to a free state or to Canada would often sing the song “Free at Last” in celebration of the end of their journey. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used a quote from this song which he likely knew from his childhood in his father’s church to close his famous speech. The song is another spiritual that was used as a code song to talk about escape from slavery. “Put on my wings and try the air!” meant “take off and run to freedom.” It spoke of taking the responsibility to seek freedom and justice. Obviously, not all people in slavery managed to escape. But songs kept the spirit of the community focused on changing unjust situations and laws and continuing to work together.

“**FREE AT LAST”** (African American Spiritual)

Free at last, Free at last

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

One of these mornings bright and fair

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

I’m gonna put on my wings and try the air

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

Free at last, Free at last

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

If you get there before I do

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

Tell all of my friends I’m coming too

Free at last, Free at last

Thank God almighty we’re free at last

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Discuss the term “freedom” with students. What freedoms were denied to African Americans in slavery? How was that different in 1963? Now?
2. Can you share stories or reflections about The March or perhaps some event like it? Ask your students to interview their parents or other family members who may have participated or watched on TV.
3. Ask students why they think Dr. King closed his speech with THAT song?
4. Discuss Dr. King and his importance to American history with your students.
5. What responsibilities do students think come with having rights and what is important about respecting the rights of others?
6. What events do your students consider as a representation or continuance of Dr King’s
7. dream?
8. What questions or ideas do students have about their efforts to work for the justice, jobs, equality and opportunity for all people today?

**Teacher Reflections:**