

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

CREATING A CELEBRATION FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

January 2019

The Situation:

Our family is conflicted about how to celebrate MLK, Jr. day. We agree that we want to educate our kids and keep them inspired by participating in an activity. However, some of the family wants to celebrate by participating in a day of service. Some think if we're going to provide service it should be to our own family and/or elders and/or anyone of us who is sick or shut-in. Then there are those who say they don't like that the only holiday for a Black man was turned into a day of service. Do you have any suggestions on how a family can best honor Martin Luther King, Jr. and celebrate the holiday?

The Fix:



Despite the various ways of thinking within the family about the MLK Holiday, there are at least three areas of agreement:

- 1) MLK Day is right around the corner so time is of the essence.
- 2) The family wants to keep the kids educated and inspired.
- 3) There is no way all family members will agree to participate in a single activity in 2019.

Doug Harris

I suggest setting up a clearinghouse of suggestions for observing MLK Day for family members, and sharing through Facebook, email, or any other social media accounts the family has, with the goal in mind that family members will be able to list plans and see what other family members are doing on that day. Depending on the time and location of the activities posted, family members would be able to participate and support each other, and at the same time pay homage to MLK—whether by attending a service or giving a service. No judgement should be made about one activity being more meaningful than another.

Regarding the elderly and shut-in, I suggest someone (1) take on the task of contacting known elderly and shut-ins, (2) ask them what needs they have that could be met in an hour or two on MLK Day, (3) create a list, (4) share that list with all family, and (5) coordinate who will do what for whom.

Every aspect of this plan is just a way for family members to share and participate in MLK activities of their choosing. For those who choose to do nothing, it's their choice. MLK Day is not new, and they know the drill. Little can be done to convince them to participate. But for those who are enlightened, informed and inspired, this plan will present personal opportunities to do the right thing. If nothing else, it will demonstrate to the young ones that there are multiple family members doing their part to honor MLK.
