

## **CITY OF IRVING 2022 MLK ESSAY CONTEST WINNER**

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"I've Been to the Mountaintop" is a speech of hope. It's hope for the Civil Rights movement, hope for African-American people, hope for the future. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech is about the future of the Civil Rights Movement. Mr. King's last speech was centered on hope for the freedom of dark-skinned individuals. He gave this inspiring speech a day before his assassination. The metaphor of the mountain (I've Been to the Mountaintop) means that when they are climbing up the mountain, the hard work that they are doing continues. The top of the mountain symbolises the goal. He has "been to the mountaintop" means that he has seen the outcome of the movement, and he believes there will be a light at the end of the tunnel. "Only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars." is one of the most meaningful quotes in the speech. This means that even if it seems like there is no hope for something, there will always be a way to make things right. Dr. King mentions in this speech that God asked him where he would have liked to exist in the timeline. His mind travels through the milestones in history. For example to the Renaissance, and to the Greeks and the Roman empire. In each milestone as his mind travels back to the present, he acknowledges the good deeds people have done for mankind, like the inventions the Romans built that we still use today, famous people from the Greek times discussing issues in reality, Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, and so on. But he asks to live a few years in the second-half of the 20th Century, which is the time when segregation is taking place. This is where the quote "Only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars" comes in to play. Because this is such a dismal time, he wanted to come to that time to help out and to find the stars in the dark, and to reach the light at the end of the tunnel. Because he knew how the mountaintop would be and how it would look. He saw that the mountaintop had equality, blacks and whites all together. That was his last wish for the world. Dr. King had lots of faith in us, and we have to honor him by doing our best to reach the stars and to reach the peak of the mountain. As Dr. King said in the speech, we have to maintain unity and work together to make that happen. Lots of people are working very hard to end racism and segregation, and we have changed greatly since the time blacks and whites were kept apart. We need to reach for the mountaintop, even if we are too short. Dr. Martin Luther King had faith in us and God, so we need to honor his efforts. Treat everyone equally. Reach for the mountaintop!