

2018-19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Contest Theme

Ending Silence

Song writer Keala Settle captured the sentiments of millions when she wrote the following lyrics to the hit song *This Is Me* for the movie *The Greatest Showman*.

*When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
I am brave, I am bruised
I am who I'm meant to be, this is me
Look out 'cause here I come
And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
I'm not scared to be seen
I make no apologies, this is me*

Many in our society feel unwanted peer pressure and the need to fit in. We fall under the microscope of others seeking approval, constantly judging how we look, and whether we meet others' expectations. Sometimes we feel unnecessary self-doubt, angst, and sadness. Occasionally we become quiet, still, and hushed.

Dr. King said, “**Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.**” There are many things that matter in life. This includes being true to yourself, standing up for who you are, voicing what you believe in, and living authentically. What are you no longer going to be silent about? What are you willing to march for? Which street corner are you going to preach from? What banner are you going to carry? How are you going to express yourself? Raise your voice. Now is the time to shout out, *This Is Me*.

Use multi-media, writing, or art to express yourself as you consider the MLK contest theme for this year, Ending Silence. Reflect on the wisdom of Dr. King and one of the final lines of the song *This Is Me*:

*Look out 'cause here I come
And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
I'm not scared to be seen
I make no apologies, this is me*