I HAVE A DREAM

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

APPEARING AT THE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

APRIL 4th - 1968

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

P.L.A.Y. (Performance = Literature + Art + You)

Student Matinee Series

2014-2015 Season
DEAR EDUCATORS,

One of the many problems with celebrity (and especially modern celebrity) is how incredibly reductive it is by its very nature. It takes the object of that fame and strips them of their complexities and contradictions, leaving us with a few select images and a handful of easy-to-digest quotes but little appreciable understanding of that person and their work. Fame, in essence, so often robs a person of their humanity. It reduces them to the most skeletal of frames. Such has become the case with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*The Mountaintop* in no way attempts to tell King’s life story. How could you sum up any life in a scant ninety minutes, much less one as eventful as his? The play does, however, invite us to consider his final moments and the ways in which those preceding years shaped his all-too-soon demise. It asks us to take a new look at the assumptions we’ve made about him and his life and to attempt to view those ideas through a new lens. *The Mountaintop* challenges us to reconcile the saintly icon with the very fallible human being – and to think about how the person informed the persona and the other way around.

In a recent conversation with a teacher regarding *The Mountaintop*, he mentioned that he was excited for his students to see this play but worried that they were “MLK’d out” – a concern reinforced by the other educators in the room. His concern was that “they only know him as a person who made a bunch of speeches, went on a lot of marches and whose birthday gives them a day off from school every January. And, honestly, who can blame them?” Again, celebrity has reduced King to as much for students and adults alike.

*The Mountaintop*, then, affords us that rare opportunity to actively reexamine the life of someone who we think we know. It lets us free King from the very limited confines into which we have settled him in the forty-seven years since his death in 1968. And, hopefully, it’ll allow us to grow a little from the experience.

A moment of disclosure before I sign off: as we give this guide to you to utilize as you see fit, it is with full awareness that there is still so much to say about King, the Civil Rights movement, and the extreme connectedness of the two. Our hope is that we’ve given you and your students enough launching points to send you down any number of fascinating and illuminating paths.

As always, we thank you for bringing your students to experience the power of live theatre. We consider it a privilege to be a part of their (re)discovery of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We can only imagine the conversations that will occur amongst your students as a result of their attendance at *The Mountaintop*. And where those conversations may take them.

Sincerely,

Eric Evans
Education Administrator
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**Cover image:** Poster for a planned speech on the night of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death

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For a list of resources used in the creation of this Discovery Guide, please visit [www.gevatheatre.org/programs-for-students/](http://www.gevatheatre.org/programs-for-students/)

**Participation in this production and supplemental activities suggested in this guide support the following NYS Learning Standards:**

- **A:** 2, 3, 4; **ELA:** 1, 2, 3, 4; **SS:** 1, 3, 5

**Answers to quiz on page 3 - 1: D; 2: A; 3: C; 4: C; 5: A; 6: D; 7: A; 8: H**

**“MEMPHIS IS JUST A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THE BIG ONE. MEMPHIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.”** - MLK

Synopsis: Worn out from an exhausting day at the sanitation workers’ strike and following the deliverance of his prophetic “I Have Been to the Mountaintop” speech, Dr. King retires to his room at the Lorraine Motel where he is visited by Camae, a mysterious maid with a much greater mission than delivering his coffee. King must confront his mortality and the future of his people in this powerful, spirited, and vivid exploration of his life and legacy on his final night on Earth.

Royce Johnson as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 39 years old, Preacher and Civil Rights leader.

Joniece Abbott-Pratt as Camae. Twenties. A maid; her first day on the job at the Lorraine Motel.

Genre: Magical Realism – A work of art that embraces magical or unreal elements as a natural occurrence in a realistic environment. Magical realism is what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe. Magical realism asks us to keep an open mind and suspend disbelief.

Playwright: Katori Hall.

“I’m a story collector. I hear a story, and I keep it in my arsenal. It will work on itself in me until it needs to leap out onto the page.” A playwright and performer from Memphis, Tennessee, Hall’s mother, Carrie Mae, inspired The Mountaintop. As a teen, Carrie Mae wanted to attend King’s Mountaintop speech, but fear of violence kept her away. Hall based Camae on her mother as “a way to put my mother in the room with King because I knew she didn’t get a chance on April 3, 1968.”

“I’M BETTA AT CLEANIN’ UP OTHER FOLKS’ MESSES THAN MY OWN. I WAS CALLED TO DO THIS.” – CAMAE
FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Below and at left: Quotes from Katori Hall

“My hope is the audience will be inspired by his greatness, but that they’ll also realize that he is for regular people. I want the audience to come out saying, ‘I can be a King, too. We can all be Kings.'”

“I took a chance. I didn’t know what the road was going to be like. We made the road by walking and I decided to become my dream instead of lying there and dreaming about it.”

“How are we going to change the world? How are we going to pass the baton? Do we even have the baton in our hands? Do we even have the capability to pick it up? I ask those questions a lot when I look at the world today.”

“I wanted to depict not only Dr. King’s triumphs, but also his struggles. He had vulnerabilities and fears. That is a man that provided a fundamental shift in American society. He did this extraordinary thing. But he wasn’t superhuman. It’s important to see the humanity in this hero so we can see the hero in ourselves.”

Unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MLK?

1. King earned his doctorate degree from Boston University in what field?
   A. History  B. Sociology  C. Medicine  D. Theology

2. What early event established King as an important civil rights leader?
   A. The Montgomery Bus Boycott
   B. The “I Have a Dream” speech
   C. The publishing of “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
   D. The championing of Brown v. Board of Education

3. King served as the president of which organization?
   A. Southern Poverty Law Center
   B. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
   C. Southern Christian Leadership Conference
   D. The Congress of Racial Equality

4. Why did Attorney General Robert Kennedy order King’s phones wire-tapped in 1963?
   A. For King’s safety
   B. King sympathized with Fidel Castro after the Bay of Pigs invasion
   C. Kennedy feared King was speaking with communists
   D. Kennedy worried King might turn the Civil Rights movement toward violence

5. Which of King’s actions angered President Lyndon B. Johnson?
   A. His opposition to the Vietnam War

B. His advocating compensation for slavery
   C. His view on “separate but equal”
   D. His trip to India

6. In addition to Civil Rights, what other cause was King supporting at the time of his death?
   A. The Poor People’s Campaign
   B. An end to the war in Vietnam
   C. A strike by black sanitation workers in Memphis
   D. All of the above

7. According to King’s philosophy, what are society’s “triple evils”?
   A. Racism, poverty, militarism  B. Racism, narcissism, sexism
   C. Racism, violence, capitalism  D. Racism, terrorism, communism

8. Which of the following are true about Dr. King?
   A. He was a drinker and a smoker
   B. He was rumored to have been an adulterer and womanizer
   C. He attempted suicide at the age of 12 after his grandmother’s death
   D. He received threatening, harassing letters from the FBI
   E. He was accused of plagiarism in academic papers and speeches
   F. He was accused of having communist ties
   G. All of the above
   H. Only the ones circled above

“I AM A MAN. I AM JUST A MAN.” – MLK
“We all have weaknesses, Preacher King. I’m sho’ you got yo’ own. Just ain’t never let nobody...know.” - Camae

FROM THE DIRECTOR

“The show is clearly about asking everyone to pick up the baton and pass it on. That’s what we’re doing; we’re asking everyone over and over again, how are you going to be a part of this? How are you going to pick up the baton and pass it on?”

- Skip Greer, Director of The Mountaintop

On why students should see The Mountaintop

Many students don’t really know the history behind the emotional weight Martin Luther King was carrying into room 306 inside the Lorraine Hotel on the night before he was killed. This is very helpful in getting them to understand why he is a hero, why we honor Martin Luther King Day, and that there was something more than a speech about the Mountaintop and I Have A Dream.

I find that because he was such an advocate of non-violent protest, I think without really, truly looking into what he did, the non-violence course of action can make it seem as if it was easier somehow than choosing a violent course. In fact, it’s so much harder. When he crossed the bridge in Selma, we frame it now as a peaceful protest. We don’t necessarily think of it as a group of people who walked forward into dogs ready to tear them apart, and wooden clubs that were outlined with barbed wire and razor blades. When you feel that, then it’s a completely different kind of courage that needs to be acknowledged and appreciated. I want students to have a sense of that too, of what he accomplished, who he was, and his ability to move the nation forward, even with all of his own faults.

On the message of The Mountaintop

The trick of the show is to make sure that we take the icon of Martin Luther King, shrink it down to a human size, and expose the humanity of the man. Then build it back up so that the appreciation of the icon is deeper and we become a catalyst in honoring who King was in a new and revitalized way.

On MLK fatigue

I think the strength of the play is that it can take MLK fatigue, as one teacher has called it, and turn it upside down. I know you’ll come in, you’ll sit, you’ll watch and hear the first lines of the Mountaintop speech in your ears as the lights have gone to black, and you might have a lever that kicks into MLK fatigue. But, then the lights will come up and this guy will walk in and take off his shoes and then smell his feet and go in the bathroom, and suddenly you’re not in that world at all. I believe that’s one reason why Katori Hall wrote the play - to effectively combat that.

On Camae’s story

It’s easier for us to identify and recognize King’s arc because we’re more familiar with it, but Camae’s arc is every bit as fascinating. King has to teach her forgiveness and she has to receive this information from King and understand his perspective so that she can find forgiveness in herself. If King can help her do that, then we’re not King in the story, we’re Camae.

On the audience’s role

I think the play is noble, but it’s also very funny and surprising and contains the kind of emotional catharsis that theatre should have. We want the audience to appreciate the impact of not just the march to the Promised Land that King is talking about, but also what his death meant as a martyr for Civil Rights and the effect it can have on our audiences. If we can do that, then you feel that impulse to pick up the baton and move it on. Even if that simply means walking out of the theatre and talking about it and recognizing what’s around us. Every day, we are confronted with examples of racism - the Department of Justice Reports on Ferguson, the racist SAE fraternity song. The real question is - what do we do about it? Each of us? Every day? How do you pick up the baton? ✦

Above: Mugshot of Martin Luther King, Jr., April 12, 1963, following a non-violent protest in Birmingham, Alabama
MLK: THE PERSON AND THE PERSONA

The boxed quotes over the next two pages are from Tavis Smiley’s book *Death of a King*, a recent biography chronicling King’s final year. How do the quotes contrast with the image that many people have of King? Do they change our perception of him and his work?

Born Michael King, Jr. on January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr., the middle child of Michael King, Sr. and Alberta Williams King, grew up in a secure and loving environment. Martin Sr., a well-known preacher, fought against racial prejudice, not just because his race suffered, but because he considered racism and segregation to be an affront to God’s will. He strongly discouraged any sense of class superiority in his children, which left a lasting impression on Martin Jr.

King skipped the ninth and eleventh grades and entered Morehouse College in Atlanta at age 15, in 1944. Although his family was deeply involved in the church and worship, young Martin questioned religion in general and felt uncomfortable with overly emotional displays of religious worship. This discomfort continued through much of his adolescence, initially leading him to decide against entering the ministry, much to his father’s dismay. But in his junior year, King took a Bible class, renewed his faith, and began to envision a career in the ministry.

In 1948, King earned a sociology degree from Morehouse College and attended the liberal Crozer Theological Seminary. He thrived in all his studies, was valedictorian of his class in 1951, was elected student body president, and earned a fellowship for graduate study. But King also rebelled against his father’s more conservative influence by drinking beer and playing pool while at college.

While working on his doctorate at Boston College, King met Coretta Scott, an aspiring singer and musician, at the New England Conservatory. They were married in June of 1953 and had four children. In 1954, while still working on his dissertation, King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama. He completed his Ph.D. and was awarded his degree in 1955. King was only 25 years old.

On the night that Rosa Parks was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama for refusing to give up a bus seat for a white man, E.D. Nixon - head of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter - met with King and other leaders to plan a bus boycott. King was elected to lead the boycott because he was young, well-trained with solid family connections, and had professional standing.

The bus boycott would last for 382 days and include harassment, violence, and intimidation for Montgomery’s African-American community. Both King’s and Nixon’s homes were attacked. The African-American community, however, took legal action against the city ordinance, arguing that it was unconstitutional based on the Supreme Court’s “separate is never equal” decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. After being defeated in several lower court rulings, the city of Montgomery lifted the law mandating segregated public transportation.

“CAMAE, I WANNA DO ANOTHER MARCH ON WASHINGTON. BIGGER. BETTER. BOLDER.” - MLK
Flush with victory, King, Ralph Abernathy, and 60 ministers and Civil Rights activists founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in January of 1957 to harness the moral authority and organizing power of black churches. They would help conduct non-violent protests to promote Civil Rights reform. King's participation in the organization gave him a base of operation throughout the South, as well as a national platform.

In the spring of 1963, King organized a demonstration in downtown Birmingham, Alabama. City police turned dogs and fire hoses on demonstrators, including children. King was jailed along with large numbers of his supporters, and the event drew nationwide attention. However, King was personally criticized by black and white clergy alike for taking risks and endangering the children who attended the demonstration. In a now-famous letter written in a Birmingham prison, King eloquently spelled out his theory of non-violence: “Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community, which has constantly refused to negotiate, is forced to confront the issue.”

By the end of the Birmingham campaign, King was making plans for a massive demonstration on the nation's capital composed of multiple organizations. On August 28, 1963, the historic March on Washington drew more than 200,000 people in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. It was here that King made his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, emphasizing his belief that someday all men could be brothers.

The rising tide of Civil Rights agitation produced a strong effect on public opinion. This resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, authorizing the federal government to enforce desegregation of public accommodations, and outlawing discrimination in publicly owned facilities. This also led to King receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for 1964.

King's struggle continued throughout the 1960s. On March 7, 1965, a Civil Rights march, planned from Selma to Alabama's capital in Montgomery, turned violent as police with nightsticks and tear gas met the demonstrators as they tried to cross the Edmond Pettus Bridge, named for a local politician and former high-ranking member of the Ku Klux Klan. Several other attempts were made before the bridge was finally crossed. The campaign caused King a loss of support among some younger African-American leaders, but it, nonetheless, aroused support for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

From late 1965 through 1967, King was met with increasing criticism and public challenges from young Black-Power leaders. King's patient, non-violent approach and appeal to white middle-class citizens alienated many black militants who considered his methods too weak and too late. To address this criticism, King began making a link between discrimination and poverty. He expanded his Civil Rights efforts to include the Vietnam War. He felt that America's involvement in Vietnam was politically untenable and the government's conduct of the war was discriminatory to the poor.

By 1968, the years of demonstrations and confrontations were wearing on King. He had grown tired of marches, jail, and living under the constant threat of death – by many accounts, he was receiving several death threats a day. He had become discouraged with the slow progress of Civil Rights in America and the increasing criticism from other African-American leaders. Plans were in the works for another march on Washington to bring attention to a widening range of issues. In the spring of 1968, a labor strike by Memphis sanitation workers drew King to the city. On April 3rd, in what proved to be an eerily prophetic speech, he told supporters, “I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.” The next day, while standing on a balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel, Martin Luther King, Jr. was struck by a sniper's bullet.

-KING IS CURSING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS. TEARS ARE STREAMING DOWN HIS FACE. LIQUOR HAS FUELED HIS RAGE. HE SAYS THAT HE'S HAD IT WITH THE FRUITLESS ARGUMENTS ABOUT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES, WITH THE PRESSURES, WITH TRYING TO MANAGE AN UNMANAGEABLE ORGANIZATION. HE SCREAMS, “I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS ANYMORE! I JUST WANT TO GO BACK TO MY LITTLE CHURCH!”

-MORE THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN SCLC HISTORY, THE RANK AND FILE ARE EMBOLDENED TO QUESTION KING'S LEADERSHIP.

-WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WAS AFRAID FOR HIS LIFE, HIS ANSWER WAS CHILLING: “I'D RATHER BE DEAD THAN AFRAID.”

-MANY A’ TIMES I’VE WANTED TO QUIT. TO GIVE UP THE GHOST. ” – MLK

1955 - Bus boycott launched in Montgomery, Alabama, after an African-American woman, Rosa Parks, is arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white person.

1956 - After more than a year of boycotting the buses and a legal fight, the Montgomery buses desegregate.

1957 - At the previously all-white Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas, paratroopers are called by President Eisenhower to restore order and escort nine black students.

1960 - The sit-in protest movement begins in February at a Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and spreads across the nation.

1961 - Freedom rides begin from Washington, D.C.: Groups of black and white people ride buses through the South to challenge segregation.

1962 - Two killed, many injured in riots as James Meredith is enrolled as the first black student at the University of Mississippi.

1963 - Police arrest Martin Luther King, Jr. and other ministers demonstrating in Birmingham, Alabama, then turn fire hoses and police dogs on the marchers.

Medgar Evers, a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People leader, is murdered as he enters his home in Jackson, Mississippi.

250,000 people attend the March on Washington, D.C., urging support for pending Civil Rights legislation. The event was highlighted by King’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

1964 - Four girls are killed in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Three Civil Rights workers - James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner - are murdered in Meridian, Mississippi.

President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965 - Malcolm X is murdered. Three men are convicted.

Civil Rights activists march on Selma, Alabama as part of Voting Rights movement.

President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The act authorized federal examiners to register qualified voters and suspended devices designed to prevent African-Americans from voting.

1966 – The Black Panther Party is formed.

1967 – Thurgood Marshall is the first African-American appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

1968 – Martin Luther King, Jr., in town to support sanitation wokers on strike, is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, unleashing unrest in more than 100 cities.

The Poor People’s March on Washington, planned by King prior to his death, takes place.

**“FOLKS ‘FRAID OF GETTN’ BLOWN UP. CHURCHES AIN’T EVEN SAFE FOR US FOLKS.” – CAMAE**
“Ann Emo, the Costume Designer for The Mountaintop, spent a lot of time researching very specifically what a maid at the Lorraine Motel would have worn in 1968. She contacted several museums in Memphis but, surprisingly, no one seemed to know, have one of the actual uniforms, or even a photo that would detail what exactly a Lorraine Motel maid wore that year. She was able to find one small photo from the aftermath of the assassination, with a maid in the background, but it wasn't enough to get a good sense of the particulars, so Ann based Camae's costume off research images from other maids of the time period in Tennessee. We ended up purchasing a maid's uniform from a modern uniform supply company (because maid uniforms haven't changed too much over the years) and tailoring it to fit the actress's body and also the style of the period. We also ordered Camae a period name tag.

Ann also did very specific research for King's costume, as well. She was after his iconic look, but not an exact replica of what he wore. She wanted to make sure she captured his style and a sense of how he had spent the day prior to what we see onstage. On April 3rd, the day the show takes place, King was sick. He wasn’t feeling well, he slept in his bed with his clothes on, he woke up to give the Mountaintop speech, and he was exhausted. His costume needs to reflect that. We needed him to look somewhat rumpled, not freshly pressed. In King's day, a dress shirt would have been made from 100% cotton, but modern dress shirts are usually a blend of fibers and have been chemically treated to encourage them to be wrinkle-resistant. We needed a modern shirt that would behave like a period shirt so King could look bedraggled. We ordered a few different types of shirts and are playing with them in rehearsal – trial and error – to see what works best. For the rest of King's clothing, we were able to pull from stock and alter the suit the designer selected. It was important to Ann that his suit not be flat. She wanted him to have some visual interest and was able to achieve this through picking a suit that had some texture to it.

Something people may not realize is that everyone in the costume shop reads the scripts. We need to become familiar with the nuances and small details of the story. The script mentions that King has a hole in his sock. It’s up to us to make sure that hole is in the socks we provide for him. His shoes are also described in a particular way: as heavy-soled marching shoes. This detail guided us in working with Ann to select shoes that looked like nice dress shoes, but also had some weight and substance to them. Camae also mentions her Press n’ Curl hairstyle. The actress playing Camae has very short, natural hair. It would have been unusual for a black woman of that time period to have natural hair, so it was clear to us that we needed a wig for this character.

The one piece in the show we needed to custom design and build from scratch was Camae’s apron. The apron must be completely accurate in terms of style and dimensions for the time period (and proportional to the actress’s body), but with big pockets to fit the many items that are called for in the script. The apron is a challenge because it must be the proper balance of what the designer wants and needs it to look like to fit the time period, how the script needs the apron to function, how the actor feels and moves in the apron in terms of comfort and function, and it still needs to look proportional on her despite it containing many items within its pockets. The top layer of the apron is gathered to hide the fullness of the items inside of it. The top layer also features patch pockets, that look like small, shallow pockets but deeper pockets are actually hidden behind the patch pockets.”

- Janice Ferger (Draper) and Katherine McCarthy (First Hand) in the Costume Shop

“WELL, AS YOU CAN TELL ...
I AIN’T YO’ ORDINARY OLE MAID.” – CAMAE
“When you’re dealing with a set that is rooted in actual, historical realism – something that existed, and photos of it still exist – sometimes you just can’t find those things: the bedspread, the curtains, the upholstery of the chair, the furniture – anymore. The bedspread, a very close replica of the original bedspread in terms of color and texture, was made by Actor’s Theatre of Louisville for their production, and we’re using it in ours as well. The curtains we’ll likely have to dye to the color the designer wants them to be, and the upholstery of the chair has to be made because you simply cannot go pick up that print at the fabric store. The furniture is another thing we had to recreate. Because the style of furniture that was in the motel room at that time isn’t widely available, and because the scale of our stage versus the motel room is different, we built the furniture to look like the originals, but with different proportions. You’ll notice the artwork hanging in the room is either a reprint of the exact artwork that was in room 306, or very close to it. We were also able to recreate, to some extent, the newspaper that King was reading on the day before his death. The newspaper from April 3rd was found in the shooter’s motel room so, based on a photo of that newspaper, we were able to retype a portion of the newspaper from that day. With the chair’s upholstery we’re working with the costume shop to create it. There’s a lot of interdepartmental cooperation that goes on.”

- Hillarie Shockley (Props)

“Some of the reference photos from the actual motel room are clear enough that we know what the upholstery of the chair looked like. We were able to find the right color swatches, but not the right pattern and not in upholstery fabric. We found 100% cotton in a plain, off-white color. So, we purchased that and we’re cutting it into strips and dying it to match the various color swatches. From there, we’ll take the strips and sew them together to create stripes that will form the base of the upholstery fabric.”

- Jessica Pautler (Costume Craftsperson)
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions & Activities: Before You Go

• Create a list of everything you know about Dr. King prior to seeing The Mountaintop. What knowledge and resources have contributed to what you know about him?
• Read the texts of or listen to several of Martin Luther King's speeches. Do any of his speeches address both race and poverty? Is there a connection? Are his thoughts on race and poverty still relevant today? If so, how?
• Read or listen to King's 1968 Memphis sanitation strike speech. What message did you take away from this speech? Have we come closer to racial equality and economic justice? What changes still must be made in our society? Are these changes feasible?
• Again considering the “I Have Been to the Mountaintop” speech and being aware that King will die the next day, what truths did he unknowingly reveal?
• In a group, draft a list of qualities we look for in our leaders both as public figures and as ordinary people. Which of these qualities did Dr. King possess? Are there any he did not? Which of these qualities do you possess? Are there any you’d like to work on for yourself?
• Consider what sources you use to gather information about public figures, their professional lives, their beliefs, their work, and their personal lives. Are some of these sources more reputable than others? Do you tend to seek out information that is easier to access and more prevalent, or do you like to dig deeper to discover things that might not be as widely known?
• If you learned something unexpected about the personal life of a public figure whose work you admire, do you think it would alter your respect or support for them? Why or why not?
• What inequalities directly affect you, your family, your peers, students in your school, or citizens in your community? How do you think these inequalities compare to what people face in the rest of Rochester? In the rest of New York? In the rest of the nation? In the rest of the world? What can you, as an individual, do about this?

Questions & Activities: After the Show

• Refer to the list you made before the show that details everything you knew about Dr. King. How would you describe your previous image of Dr. King? What have you learned about him?
• After learning more about Dr. King, as an ordinary man with human qualities and faults, was your opinion of him altered? In what way? When you think of King now, what comes to mind?
• As you watched the play, did any clues suggest to you that Camae might be more than a motel maid? Were you able to suspend your disbelief and make the leap into the play's magical world?
• The Mountaintop’s director, Skip Greer, says: “This is as much Camae’s story as King’s. Camae is all of us; we all understand the history, we all understand the rage, but how can we make our way to forgiveness? We’re the ones who are afraid of disappointment when we look into God’s face when we get to the end of this, if we haven’t found some way to contribute to a larger good.” Now that you’ve seen the show, do you agree with him? Why or why not? Do you think the play was King’s story or Camae’s story?
• How did Camae show us that our human traits might make us better angels?
• Consider the image of God that Camae describes for us. How does this view compare or contrast to the image of God that you are most familiar with? Did you like this perspective? Were you able to accept it within the context of the play? Why or why not?
• At the end of the play, Dr. King turns his attention toward the issues of poverty and the Vietnam War. If Dr. King were alive today, what current, relevant issues might attract his attention?
• What specific things can you, as an individual, do to follow in King’s footsteps, pick up the baton, and change the world?
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* Spamalot  * A Christmas Carol
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For more information, call (585) 420-2035.