

# Fear and Confusion

Carol Guevara

When I was about 12 or 13, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot. In my school, the Black kids rioted and started beating up the white kids. They were angry at white people because James Earl Ray, the man who shot Dr. King, was white. A group of Black kids approached me and asked me

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if I was a “cracker.” They were cursing me out and shoving me until I said, “No, I am Mexican American.” My heart was

beating so fast; I started to sweat and almost peed my pants. I was shaking and really scared. They wouldn't let me leave.

It seemed like hours had passed until finally the gym teacher came out and said, “Hey, what's going on here?” The kids took off running and I was crying. The gym teacher took me to the office where my brother and two sisters were waiting for me. Was I glad to see them!

I guess I was very lucky that day, for nothing happened to me besides feeling scared. It was much worse for other people in my school and outside that night with people rioting.

Looking back on this event, I realize that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a good role model, not only for Black people, but for all people—just like Gandhi and Cesar Chavez. Dr. King stood up not only for his own people, but for everyone. He spoke for people who couldn't speak for themselves. The Black students who were rioting that day were hurt and confused about the situation, especially the younger kids who didn't really understand. They were saying: “Why? How could this happen?” Dr. King said shortly before he was killed, “A riot is the language of the unheard.” This is because of the conditions that were lived at the time: for example no money and a lack of



education. People didn't feel heard so they lashed out and rioted. They wanted to get even with anyone who was white and in their way. I do not hold a grudge against the kids who did that to me. I always forgive people who do bad things because deep down inside I know we are all scared. It's going to take some time, but some day we will all overcome to become one.

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## Racism or Bullying?

**In the stories on pp. 12-13, were the black students behaving in a racist way toward white students? Read the definitions on the previous page to help you answer the question.**

**Explain this Martin Luther King quote in your own words: “A riot is the language of the unheard.”**