



## Dear Martin a novel by Nic Stone

**Synopsis:** Dear Martin tells the story of 17 year old, Justyce McAllister, who is racially profiled while trying to help his drunk girlfriend after a party one night. Justyce is an honor student at a prestigious boarding school on the other side of the city where he lives. He is well liked by his peers, teachers and is always there to help a friend. None of that matters to the police officer who puts him in handcuffs. This injustice opens his eyes to how the world perceives black men. As a result, he begins to write letters to Martin Luther King Jr in a journal to explore MLK's teachings in modern America.

Though this is not a true story, it gives the readers a glimpse of growing up black in America. The book's reading level is early middle school, but the content is more appropriate for high school youth. Know your youth and your congregation before offering this book for younger youth in your program.

### Questions for discussion:

As you get started, know that injustice runs throughout the novel, just as it does in life, and it may be difficult for young people to not get weighed down by that to stay engaged. Consider having some sort of hands on project or ask them to look for resilience in each character as they continue to read.

1. On a scale of 1(lowest)-5(highest), how would you rate this book and why?
2. What surprised you?
3. What is something you learned or that you are still reflecting on?
4. Which character did you like most and why?
5. Where did you see resilience in the characters in the book? How did this help them overcome obstacles?
6. Why do you think Justyce began to write to Martin Luther King Jr when he began his journal? Who is MLK Jr to Justyce? Did writing to "someone" help Justyce work out his feelings?
7. SJ (Sarah Jane) talks about the inequity in education in schools within the same city. Do you see inequities in schools in your community? How do you think the amount of resources, consistent and experienced teachers and parent involvement effects students in a school? Do you think there are ways to make schools more equitable?
8. The main character's name is Justyce. How does he experience or not experience justice in his life?
9. Where does Justyce find support in his life? What kind of support might have additionally helped him?
10. Are there parts of this story to which you relate or to which you empathize?