

## *Mohandas Gandhi: Changing the World One Step at a Time*

### **A Children's book for grades K-3**

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Mohandas Gandhi was born in India in 1869. He was a happy baby with big ears. His family called him Mohan.

He lived in a white stone house with his parents, two older brothers and one older sister. Being the youngest, he was spoiled by everyone.

Mohan's father was a diplomat, he helped people get along. The people thought he was wise and fair.

Mohan's mother took care of her children at home. She taught them about self-discipline and keeping the promises they made.

“Love is the subtlest force in the world”

Mohan liked exploring with his friends by the sea. They enjoyed climbing trees, spinning tops and playing with balloons.

Mohan had an active imagination. He was afraid of the dark and ghosts, but he tried to be brave.

In school, Mohan was a shy boy. In his early years, he attended a “dust school”. The teacher and students would draw letters and numbers on the sand floor with a stick.

Later in school, Mohan had trouble learning the multiplication tables but enjoyed reading his schoolbooks.

“Learn as if you were to live forever”

He did not enjoy team sports. He did like to take long walks to think about his day.

Mohan always told the truth. But one day his teacher told him to copy his classmate's answer on a test. Mohan knew cheating was wrong, so he made his best guess. He got the answer wrong but he was proud that he did not cheat and had tried his best.

“Truth is what the voice within tells you”

When Mohan was seven years old his family moved to a new city. This was a big change for him. He and his family were treated unfairly because they had dark skin.

Only the British could live in the nice part of town where there were paved roads and beautiful parks. The Indians had to live in a crowded, dirty, noisy part of the town. There

was no running water, the roads were muddy and unpaved, and there were not many places for children to play.

It bothered Mohan that all people were not treated the same. He did not understand why people were treated differently because of their skin color.

“They cannot take away our self-respect if we do not give it to them”

Mohan married a family friend, Kasturbai. Many relatives traveled to attend the celebration. There was lots of food, singing, and gifts.

When Mohan was a young man he wanted to study in England to become a lawyer. His whole family was involved in deciding when he would make the journey.

In England, Mohandas Gandhi became a lawyer and read about other people’s ideas. He believed that every person must fight for their rights peacefully and without violence.

Gandhi traveled to South Africa to continue his work as a lawyer. He was stunned when he was treated badly because of the color of his skin.

He had a ticket to travel in the nicer part of the train but it was reserved for only white passengers. The train operator asked him to move to the back of the train but Gandhi did not think it was fair. He had paid for his ticket and did not want to give up his seat. The train operator threw him off the train at the next stop.

“Whenever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love.”

This is when Gandhi knew he had to find a way to stand up for himself. He wanted to change the unfair laws and the unfair way some people were treated. Gandhi believed that one day everyone would be treated fairly.

“Let us work together for unity and love.”

Gandhi and others refused to obey laws that were unfair. They were beaten, murdered and went to jail but they did not give up. After more than 20 years, the unfair laws in South Africa were changed.

Gandhi also believed that people should care about the earth. He lived in a community called an *ashram* (ah-shrum) where people helped each other. They grew and cooked their own food, and made their own clothes.

“Earth provides enough for every man’s need, but not enough for one man’s greed”

Gandhi returned to India where the British were in control. He continued to fight for the rights of the Indian people. Indians believed they should be in control of India; this is called *swaraj*, (swar-aj) or home rule.

Some Indians believed that they should fight with weapons but Gandhi told them violence was not the answer. Gandhi explained to them how he helped Indians in South Africa change unfair laws without using violence.

Gandhi led marches and boycotts. He made many speeches to the Indian people about using *ahimsa* (uh-him-suh), or nonviolence.

“Truth and nonviolence will never be destroyed.”

After a struggle of 30 years, the British left India. The Indian people had won their freedom from Britain without using violence.

"Nonviolence is a weapon of the strong"

Gandhi continued to help people get along peacefully and accept their differences.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”

Gandhi continued to give speeches and lead people to peace. On January 30, 1948, he was shot and died. Many people were very sad but they continue to live their life like Gandhi.

“We must be the change we wish to see in the world”

## **Timeline of Important Events**

1869 - October 2, Mohandas Gandhi was born in Porbandar, India

1876 - Gandhi moves with his family to Rajkot, India

1883 - Gandhi gets married at the age of thirteen to Kasturba Makanji

1888 - Gandhi sails to England so that he can study law

1891 - Gandhi returns to India and begins to practice law

1893 - Gandhi accepts a job in South Africa

1904 - Gandhi starts the "Indian Opinion" weekly newspaper

1903 - Gandhi decides to open a law office in Johannesburg, South Africa

1906 - Gandhi organizes his first protest against anti-Indian laws in South Africa

1908 - Gandhi is imprisoned in South Africa

1915 - Gandhi returns to India

1922 - After a trial, Gandhi is sentenced to six years in jail

1930 - Gandhi leads the Salt March, a 100 mile march to the sea to make salt

1930 - Gandhi goes to jail for breaking India's Salt Laws

1932 - Gandhi fasts to protest treatment of Untouchables

1934 - Gandhi launches the All Indian Village Industries Association

1942 - Gandhi begins the nationwide "Quit India" movement

1944 - Gandhi's wife dies at age seventy-four

1947 - India gets its independence from the British

1948 - On January 30, Gandhi is killed at a prayer meeting in Delhi

**Questions for discussion:**

*Before reading:*

Share about a time you were treated unfairly.

Share about a time when you were brave.

Share about a time when you stood up for another person.

*After reading:*

How did Gandhi change?

Why is Gandhi important?

What can we learn from Gandhi?

How can we help others?

What can we do to be more like Gandhi?

**Activities:**

- Divide the story into 20 pages, have students illustrate the pages in small groups or one student per page.
- Bind the class book and place it in the classroom library for students to re-read.
- Have students read the class-illustrated book to a younger grade of students.
- Have students act out a scene from the book in a short play.

**Bibliography**

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