

Ruby Bridges & Rosa Parks: Acts of Courage



"The Problem We All Live With" by Norman Rockwell (1964)



Rosa Parks, Montgomery Alabama (1955)

THEME:

In the 1950s and 1960s there were many laws that treated African Americans differently than whites. Many people knew this was unfair. They were part of the Civil Rights Movement. Ruby Bridges and Rosa Parks were people who made a difference during that time.

RUBY BRIDGES

In 1960, Ruby Bridges was 6 years old when she became the first African-American child to integrate a white Southern elementary school. In kindergarten, she was one of many African-American students in New Orleans who were chosen to take a test determining whether or not she could attend a white school. Ruby Bridges' parents were informed by officials from the NAACP that she was one of only six African-American students to pass the test. So, little Ruby was enrolled into William Frantz Elementary School. Every day for many months, she had to face angry mobs of parents who refused to send their children to school with her. But, she was brave!

ROSA PARKS

In the 1950s, city busses in the South were divided into three sections: a section for White people to sit in, a section for Black people to sit in, and a neutral section. The neutral section was used whenever it got too crowded in any of the other sections. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks got on a Montgomery, Alabama city bus after work. She and a friend had to sit in the neutral section because the back of the bus, where Black people sat, was too crowded. On that day, she was told to give up her seat to a White man, but she refused. Her actions sparked a revolution!

BUILD KNOWLEDGE:

1. Before students are able to write, you may need to build their *background knowledge* on the concepts of **segregation** and **civil rights**. The following resources can be found at a library or online:

***This is the Dream*, by Diane Z. Shore & Jessica Alexander** (Harper Collins, 2006): By using powerful verse and gorgeous illustrations, this book offers a simple look at the complicated issue of Civil Rights.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE (CONT.):

2. Please use the following link from *Scholastic, Inc.* to access a fantastic teaching guide and slide show about Ruby Bridges. <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/ruby-bridges-and-civil-rights-movement-slide-show-teaching-guide-kindergarten-grade-2>

This teaching guide provides in-depth historical background to accompany the slide show about Ruby Bridges, her role in desegregating public schools in New Orleans in 1960, and her place in the broader civil rights movement. It also provides a broad look at the Civil Rights Movement.

3. Though several books are available about Ruby Bridges and Rosa Parks, the following are excellent resources for read-alouds:

***The Story of Ruby Bridges*, by Robert Coles** (Scholastic, 1995) This beautiful picture book, illustrated by Coretta Scott King Award-illustrator George Ford, and written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Coles, tells the true story of six-year-old Ruby Bridges.

***Rosa*, by Nikki Giovanni** (Holt, 2007) A Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King Award Book, this book is a celebration of Rosa Parks' courageous action and the events that followed in 1955.

SAMPLE WRITING ENTRIES — PLEASE NOTE THESE ARE SAMPLES! Entries should not just be a book report. Student essays should make a personal connection to the person they have chosen to write about.

Example - Write about Ruby Bridges. Tell what you have learned from her experience integrating William Frantz Elementary School.

Example - Write about Rosa Parks. Tell what you have learned from her experience of not being afraid to stand up for what is right.

Write your response neatly on an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper.

SAMPLE ART ENTRIES —

Draw a poster (9 x 12) showing how we should treat others. You may use pictures and words.

Draw a poster (9 x 12) showing how to stand up for what is right. You may use pictures and words.