

## **TEACH PEACE NOW Lesson: The Story of Ruby Bridges**

*The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles

*Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges

*This Learning Packet was created by Pat Stacconi, Maine-Endwell Schools, NY*

**Purpose:** To instill in my students the abilities to listen to others, see others' points of view, think critically, and make moral and safe choices in their lives.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Children will observe and record differences among their classmates while participating in activities and discussion that promote critical thinking and enhance social skills.
- Children will understand the meaning of equality and its importance in each of their lives and will also become familiar with other pertinent vocabulary.
- Students will select a character word that they feel describes Ruby Bridges and then compose a paragraph response supporting that word.
- Children will gain knowledge of Ruby Bridges and her contribution to our society as well as making connections to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. (Point of interest: April 2008 is the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's death)
- Students will communicate their understanding of differences and the effects differences have on our lives through their discussions, writings, and art work.

### **PROCEDURE:**

This is a 3 – 4 day lesson. Each student will receive a learning packet containing the questions and activities to be covered.

#### **Day 1**

Think-Pair-Share Activity: Each students will fill in a chart comparing herself or himself to a classmate. Then the class will create a class chart of all the differences they observed. Teacher will point out that these differences makes us each unique from everyone else.

Guided Discussion: Define the term equality and ask if any of those charted differences makes one person better than another. Provide hypothetical situations in which some class members are given privileges that others cannot participate in. Example: Left-handed children would have to attend a different school than right-handed ones. Emphasize that while we are different, we are all equal and deserve the same opportunities.

Read: *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles. During the reading, the teacher will focus on Ruby's courage and strength of character.

## Day 2

Numbered Heads Activity: To review the story read the day before, the following questions will be presented on chart paper.

- Who was Ruby Bridges?
- What made Ruby so different from everyone else?
- How would you feel if you were Ruby?
- What would you do if you were Ruby in that situation?
- In what ways has Ruby's strength and courage affected our lives today?

Students will be divided into groups of 5 to discuss these questions. Then, each student will be responsible for sharing their thoughts on one of the questions. Teacher will introduce vocabulary words related to the topic ([glossary](#)). Teacher will share and discuss [Norman Rockwell's painting of Ruby Bridges](#).

Writing Activity: Students will brainstorm character words to describe Ruby based on the painting and Coles' book. Each student should choose one word they feel best describes Ruby and will write a short response supporting their opinion.

## Day 3

Think About It Activity: Read the book *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges. Write the questions below on index cards. Make enough so every student gets one of the three questions. Give them to students to reflect on independently. Then, have students with like questions join together to share their thoughts. Questions will be rotated until all groups have had a chance to discuss each question.

- If you could choose one of Ruby's character traits for yourself, what would you choose and why?

- If you were Ruby, would you have continued to go to school or would you have stayed home where you were safe?
- If there was a child who was different from everyone else and wasn't allowed in our school because of that difference, would you do anything to help that child? Why or why not?

Cloze Activity: Using the glossary of terms in their packet, students will complete the cloze sheet.

Viewing Activity: The class will watch the Disney movie presentation of *The Story of Ruby Bridges*.

#### **Day 4**

Timeline Activity: Teacher will briefly discuss the civil rights movement and provide various reference materials and/or web resources. Students will use the information they find to create the timeline and place the events provided to show a chronology of the 1950s – 1960s.

Mural Activity: As Norman Rockwell made a statement through his art, the students will create a class mural to depict what they have learned from this unit. Teacher will remind students of the role of color in showing different emotions and suggest they try to incorporate that into their artwork.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

- Completed work in learning packet will be assessed for student understanding of differences, equality, character, vocabulary, and timelines.
- Teacher will monitor and observe students' participation during discussion activities.
- Writing skills will be assessed by rubric scoring.
- Classroom mural will be assessed for students' ability to convey a message of understanding the objectives taught.



## GLOSSARY

**Civil Rights** – Those rights which are considered to be unquestionable; deserved by all people under all circumstances, especially without regard to race, creed, color or gender.

**Equality** – The equal treatment of people regardless of social or cultural differences.

**Integration** – The act of creating equal opportunity regardless of race.

**Prejudice** – Refers to prejudgment: An unreasonable hostile attitude, fear or hatred towards a particular group, race or religion.

**Racism** – The belief that members of one race are superior to members of other races.

**Segregation** - The act of causing separation from others; a parting.

**Desegregation** - The process of ending racial segregation.

## The Story of Ruby Bridges: Writing About Character

**What words might you use to describe the character of Ruby Bridges?**

**Task: Think about what happened to Ruby Bridges as a six-year-old growing up in Louisiana in the 1960s. Think about how she handled herself throughout that time. Choose a Character Word that you think best describes Ruby Bridges. In a well-written paragraph, explain your opinion.**

**In your response be sure to include:**

- Correct paragraph form
- An interesting topic sentence ("hook" the reader)
- The Character Word that you have chosen
- Details and examples from Ruby's life to support your choice of word
- A good concluding sentence

Criteria	Points Possible	Points Earned
Correct paragraph format	5	
Interesting introduction	5	
At least 3 supporting details	15 (5 each)	
Good organization of ideas	10	
Concluding sentence	5	
Correct spelling of priority words	10	
Mechanics (capitalization, punctuation)	10	
Neatly written cursive	5	

Total points possible 65

## **The Story of Ruby Bridges: Think About Questions**

1. Why do you think some of the white families kept their children in the school and other white families did not?
2. Why do you think some people were against integration?
3. How would you have felt if you were Ruby Bridges?
4. Do you think what happened to her was fair or unfair? Why?
5. How would you feel if you were the only student who could not eat in the cafeteria or go out on the playground?
6. Ruby was six-years-old. Do you think that is too young to play a major role in fighting for justice?
7. Do you think her parents should have allowed her to face violence in order to integrate the school? What do you think your parents would have decided?

### CLOZE ACTIVITY based on Ruby Bridges

#### Word Box

\_\_\_ equality                      \_\_\_ racism                      \_\_\_ segregation  
 \_\_\_ prejudice                      \_\_\_ civil rights                      \_\_\_ integration  
 \_\_\_ desegregation

In America in the 1960's many believed that all people deserved to be treated with \_\_\_\_\_ and that whether their skin was black or white should not matter. However, at that time there was a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ in the world and some people even felt that \_\_\_\_\_, the belief that one race is superior to another, was correct.

Many brave Americans joined together to fight for the \_\_\_\_\_ of others. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks both worked to create an end to \_\_\_\_\_, the practice of separating people by race.

Dr. King was a very effective speaker and a peaceful leader. Even as a 6 year old girl Ruby Bridges made a difference by being a part of our history and the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ of the public schools!

It goes to show that anyone can make a difference! You just have to try!



## Lesson: The Story of Ruby Bridges - Timeline Activity

1. Draw a time line for the years between 1950 and 1965
2. Carry out research using the provide materials and then write them in the correct order on your time line.

<b>May 1954</b> U.S. Supreme Court outlaws school segregation.	<b>April 1968</b> Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.
<b>November 1960</b> Ruby Bridges and 4 other black girls integrate two public schools in LA.	<b>December 1955</b> Rosa Parks is arrested in Montgomery, Alabama.
<b>June 1964</b> One thousand civil rights volunteers come to Mississippi.	<b>October 1967</b> Thurgood Marshall is sworn in as the first black Supreme Court Justice.
<b>August 1963</b> 250,000 Americans join the March on Washington. MLK Jr. gives his "I Have a Dream" speech.	<b>February 1960</b> Four black students sit in at a "whites only" lunch counter in North Carolina.
<b>July 1964</b> President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.	<b>March 1965</b> Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama is completed.