

Ruby Bridges

Post-Show Discussion Questions

K – 12



In a live setting, the performance is followed by a facilitated dialogue. Here are post-performance questions you can choose to use to conduct conversations with your own students.

Typically, we ask at least three questions, one that tracks common understanding of the events in the play, one that connects to personal experience, and one that connects to a broader historical/civics context. Questions are organized as such below.

With the question of civil rights and public safety at the forefront of public life this year, we also encourage teachers of older students to consider the advanced questions to help students make connections to the present day.

Main Questions

1.) How would you explain Ruby's experience in your own words?

ALTERNATE 1a.) What about this story stood out to you the most?

2.) Imagine you were in Ruby's situation: You are different from the other kids at your school and instead of accepting you, the kids and parents rejected you/told you to go away. How do you think you would feel? What would you do?

ALTERNATE 2a.) If you had been in Ruby's shoes, what would have been most challenging for you? How would you have responded?

3.) In Ruby's time, many of the families didn't want their kids going to school with children who were different. That behavior is not only unfair, it also prevents us from learning from each other. Think about your own school community. What can you learn from people who are different than you?

ALTERNATE 3a.) When we push away people who are different than us, everyone loses something. What can we learn from each other when we are part of a group with many different people?

ALTERNATE 3b.) Segregation is the separating of people by certain characteristics like race or ethnicity. Integration is the blending of people who are different from each other. What are the benefits of Integration?

Advanced Questions

4.) During the Civil Rights Movement, activists worked to change discriminatory laws and create equal access. While new laws have ended some types of legal discrimination that does not mean that prejudiced actions have come to an end. Ruby's generation addressed one type of challenge, but your generation faces other challenges. Where are the civil rights issues of your generation, today? How can you address them?

- 5.) Court rulings and activism of the 50s and 60s began putting an end to legal segregation. Schools began to become more integrated. But, during your school career - the last two decades - segregation has begun to increase. This time it's not legal segregation but "de facto" - or informal - segregation.
- a. What do you think are some of the factors that have increased segregation in the past 20 years?
 - b. What do we as an American democracy lose, as we self-segregate?
 - c. This is not Ruby's issue. This is your issue. Your time. What can you do to bring attention to this or change it?