

Ruby Bridges

Reflection and Exploration



Grades K - 5

Objective To reflect on the experience and history of the Ruby Bridges story

Background

Below are several short activities and explorations for primary grade learners. You may choose to do one or all of these activities as you reflect on the play and the historic act of school desegregation.

Activities

1.) Compare and Contrast

Materials: Paper and pencil

With your student, compare and contrast what school was like in Ruby's time and in our time. This could be done as a discussion or by filling out a Venn diagram (with two overlapping circles).

Examples of areas to compare and contrast include:

- How it is determined which school you attend
- How people talk about one another
- How students communicate with each other
- How students treat each other
- Teachers
- Communities
- Class sizes
- Technology
- Police presence in schools

School has changed very recently due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Consider adding a third circle to the Venn diagram to articulate how contemporary "distance learning" is the same and different from school in Ruby's time and as it was for your student before the pandemic.

2.) Create a Timeline

Materials: Paper and pencil

Internet access (optional)

Crayons and markers (optional)

Using what your student learned from the play, as well as internet research if available, create a timeline of school desegregation. This timeline could include dates, people, events, historic images, and even your own illustrations!

3.) Math Exploration

Materials: Paper and pencil

Use basic math and time skills to determine how many years ago Ruby's story took place.

- Do you know anyone who was alive or went to school at the same time that Ruby did? Perhaps your grandparents or aunts and uncles?
- Use your addition and subtraction skills to determine how old your grandparents were when Ruby first went to William Frantz Elementary.

Ruby Bridges was born in 1954 and attended William Frantz Elementary School beginning in 1960.

4.) Interview

Materials: Paper and pencil

Phone or device/internet (if the person you interview does not live with you)

Interview a friend or family member who was alive at the time when Ruby began attending school in New Orleans (1960). Ask them what it was like when they were in grade school. Did they go to a segregated school? Did they ever see people treating students badly because of the color of their skin? How do they feel our country has changed since they were in elementary school? What hasn't changed and still needs to change?

Related primary student activities:

A Time When I Was Brave: Invites students to consider how Ruby might have felt and to make connections to times when they have been brave in their own lives.

Tips for virtual learning

1. Utilize virtual platforms for students to work in groups or share what they have done on their own. Students can create their Venn diagrams and timelines on their computer/device and send it in or screen share.