



**TACOMA
ARTS LIVE**

A Time When I Was Brave

<i>Grades</i>	K – 3
<i>Objective</i>	To connect Ruby’s moment of courage with students’ own experiences (social emotional learning/empathy)
<i>Materials</i>	Images of Ruby Bridges being escorted by federal marshals Paper and pencil and/or crayons/markers

Background

A developmental approach to Civics begins with young students’ emerging sense of self and other, as well as giving vocabulary to feelings and concepts of fairness and unfairness. In this activity, young students imagine themselves in Ruby’s circumstances, naming emotions Ruby might have felt, then think about a time when they felt those emotions in their own life. After documenting their own experience, they compare the emotions they felt in the moment with emotions they felt after the experience was over.

Lesson Procedure

1.) Project an image or newsreel of Ruby Bridges being escorted by federal marshals past angry crowds. (Images are available at the end of this study guide, or you can search online)

Share the following with students:

“This is Ruby Bridges when she was six years old. What do you see in this picture?”

Encourage students to look at the details: facial expressions, body language, clothing, surroundings, ages, heights and ethnicities of the people in the picture.

2.) Context:

- After charting what students have noticed, offer some background. The following paragraph contextualizes Ruby’s situation in age-appropriate language.

“Ruby grew up at a time when our country was just beginning to make schools more fair. New rules – or laws – made sure that all kids could attend classes together. But some people at that time did not want different kids sharing the same school. They wanted their kids to have their own schools. They argued that kids who were different, who maybe had a different skin color, or spoke another language should have to go to other schools. They would shout and scream, threaten others with violence and even throw garbage or spit on kids who were different from their own kids. As a young black girl, Ruby started going to a school where white families had sent their kids. Many of those families could not accept sharing their school with a kid who had a different skin color. They could not accept a school that welcomed all kids. When Ruby tried to go to school, there were such big crowds of angry people that wanted to stop her that she had to be protected by law officers. It would be months and months before Ruby was able to enjoy being at school with many different kinds of kids.”

3.) Name emotions, listing them out:

- How do you think Ruby felt in this situation? Name some different types of emotions – or feelings – she might have had as she walked past those angry crowds into the school.

4.) Connect to personal experience:

- Can you think of a time when you felt the same emotions Ruby was feeling? (Review emotions listed in class discussion).
- Invite several students to share out or to share in partners

5.) Document personal experiences:

- Challenge students to either illustrate or write about the time when they felt the same emotions they identified for Ruby.
- Depending on literacy levels, students can write multi-sentence paragraphs, draw a picture of the experience and/or dictate their stories.
- If drawing the experiences, encourage students to caption their images with short sentences such as “One time when I felt _____ was when....” or at least to label the drawing with the specific emotions.

6.) Reflection

- Invite students to share verbally or by doing a “gallery walk” around the classroom to see each other’s work.
- Afterward, ask students to share (and name) the emotions they felt after they got through the experience they illustrated or wrote about. Contrast the emotions felt in the moment with those felt after the fact.

Extensions

1.) Mount the original drawings/writings with a follow-up statement. “When I was experiencing _____ I felt _____, but after I got through it I felt _____”

2.) Transition from reflection on the past to projection on the future:

- “Ruby was really brave by walking past angry crowds to attend a new school. This is the way she got through a scary situation to make our community better.”
- “One way I could be brave to make our community better is....”



Ruby Bridges on school steps with U.S. Marshals

Image Source: U.S Department of Justice