

Where Blooming Flowers Meet the Sky Pre-Viewing Activity, Grades 7 – 12



In *Where Blooming Flowers Meet the Sky*, Zhuli, a young poet and painter on a deadline is visited by the spirits of three luminaries of the Civil Rights Era: John Lewis, Nina Simone and Malcolm X. They both support and push Zhuli in rising to the challenge. Ultimately, students witness a diverse cross section of leadership and perspective from three very different leaders while also seeing how each of us can draw on our individual gifts to make a difference in our own ways.



John Lewis, the Activist



Nina Simone, the Voice



Malcolm X, the Intellectual

For students grades 7 to 12, there are a couple different steps teachers can take to prepare students:

1) Populating the Movement

Ask students to consider if they know any leaders of the Civil Rights Movement besides Dr. Martin Luther King. After listing any names that come up, address the idea that a movement is a broad effort, often without one single leader or hierarchy.

- Ask students to consider movements or social challenges of today and identify the ways in which different people use different thinking and different tactics to reach similar goals. Tell students that they will meet some of the other great actors in the Civil Rights Era than Dr. King. Encourage them to be thinking about what is similar and different between them and to look for areas where they have common ground.

2) Our Superpowers for Good

Zhuli, the central character of the play, is a young woman of today who uses her artistic gifts to address challenges of injustice. What are our strengths and how can we use them to support issues we care about?

- Ask students to think about social issues that are important to them – anything from civil rights to racial justice, environmental issues, and beyond.
- Next, ask students to consider what their strengths might be when it comes to supporting a cause. Who are the artists, the planners, the speakers, the musicians, the media designers, the helpers, and so forth?