Asset Building Champions

CHAMPION YEAR



Book of the Month
Title: Ruby Bridges This is Your Time
Author: Ruby Bridges
Publisher: Random House Children's Books

Key Phrase
Be a World Changer

BOOK SUMMARY

This is the extraordinary story of Ruby Bridges, the first Black child to integrate a New Orleans school following the 1954 Supreme Court case Brown vs Board of Education, which ordered school districts in the South to end the policy of racially segregated schools. In 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges walked through an angry crowd and into school, changing history. In *This is Your Time*, civil rights leader, Ruby Bridges writes a letter to the reader recounting her experiences as a child being escorted to class by federal marshals to integrate the all-white public school system. Ruby's impassioned words, filled with love and grace, serve as a moving reminder that "what can inspire tomorrow often lies in our past." This book tells the story of Ruby's courage and remind us all that the struggle for justice continues.

GOALS

- Students will be a *world changer* by standing up for the rights of others.
- Students will respect differences, accept others, and celebrate diversity.
- Students will understand that stereotypes lead to discrimination.
- Students will build bridges and encourage dialogue about racism and biases between different groups.

KEY IDEAS

Project Cornerstone has had a Ruby Bridges book in its curriculum since 2008. For some, talking about race, discrimination, stereotyping, differences, and biases has felt uncomfortable, but we have learned that they continue to be important to discuss with our youth. We ask our students to be *UPstanders* so we need to provide the tools to allow them to identify racism. Research has shown that students who are exposed to these conversations grow up healthy and resilient. Here are some tips to help adults read and discuss Ruby's story.

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- Students will ask questions and make comments. Respectfully listen.
- Respond decisively to any inappropriate remarks. Be gentle in your response.
- Don't judge, instead ask clarifying questions like "What made you say that?" Give students time to process and think critically.
- If needed, provide a non-stereotypical example to counter a misconception. Also state why the question was inappropriate.
- Structure discussions about discrimination by relating it to a child's sense of fairness. Frame it with the question, "How would you feel if …."
- Reinforce remarks or actions that demonstrate understanding and compassion (empathy).
- Timely discussions on current events around biases may surface.

The Ruby Bridges books are written by Ruby Bridges herself and contain historic facts and the reflections and observations of her first-grade self. As we work to build better and more positive communities, we must identify and talk about the issues in order to change systems of oppression. Valarie Kaur (author and activist) said "We can't solve a problem we don't have the courage to name." Learning about history in its entirety encourages critical thinking, fosters dialogue, and builds empathy and compassion. Reading and discussing this story is the prerequisite to justice.

Before Your Lesson: Review lesson plan, collect materials needed, and read the book at least once - you can watch a video reading of the book online to prepare.
Contact Teacher:

- welcome feedback from last lesson *I Wish You Knew*
- set time and date for next reading
- ask what the class has done for United Against Hate Week (Nov 13-17)

Prepare Parent Letter and send this out as soon as the classroom lesson is over: create a short personal email to send to every parent and attach parent letter

CONVERSATION STARTERS

4-5

Stereotypes, Biases, and Prejudice
Materials: handout or slide of scientist (Gladys West), astronaut (Sally Ride), and farmer (Jimmy Carter)

This activity will help students learn the definitions and vocabulary needed in this lesson.

- **Stereotypes** are a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. Define it as a generalized idea about a thing or person. For example: All flowers are yellow.
- **Prejudice** is having an opinion or some ideas about someone based on appearance without really knowing that person. Prejudice can also be an idea about someone or something that is formed before having evidence of its truth.
- **Biases** are systematic patterns of thinking that can lead individuals to favor or disfavor certain groups, individuals, or ideas over others without objective or rational justification.
- **Discrimination** is when we act on negative opinions or attitudes and deny people fair treatment based on our prejudice. Discrimination is bullying someone with words, exclusion, and physical attacks.

To get the conversation started, let students answer the following question without saying anything. Ask students, "When you imagine a farmer, a scientist, or an astronaut, what do they look like?" Have them describe what they look like. Then, show the pictures on the appropriate

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slide without indicating the role they each have. Say "Look at these pictures and identify the scientist, astronaut, and farmer." Let the students make their guesses and reason for their choices. When they are done, identify the photos and the actual roles. What is the word for judging someone you don't know by the way they look? (Prejudice-prejudging) Ask:

- If they have ever used appearances to prejudge someone?
- How would it feel to be judged by your appearance alone?
- What biases came out by asking these questions?
- What is a stereotype?
- What is discrimination?

Tell them that the book today talks about stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and biases.

READ THE BOOK

4-5

Read the book: *Ruby Bridges This Is Your Time*

Remember we said earlier that this is a true story and took place in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1960. Ruby is alive, still writing books and through her foundation, trying to find a pathway to peace and an end to racism. As you listen to Ruby's story, imagine how it would feel to stand in her shoes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4-5

1. What would you say to Ruby if she were in your classroom today?
2. Do you treat all people the same? Are all people treated the same?
3. What injustices do you see happening today in our school, community, or world?
4. Have you ever experienced discrimination?
5. How can we avoid judging people? *recognize bias, get to know someone instead of jumping to conclusions. (We all have biases, but the important thing is to be open to recognizing them and changing our mindset)*
6. How does your body react when you see things that you think are wrong happening? (*heart beats faster, I look down, feel anxious, worried, scared, confused)*
7. What can one person *do/say* to make a difference as an *UPstander*?
    - Give each other kind words to *fill their buckets.*
    - You have the power to choose how to react. *Don't take the bait!*
    - *Say and do something* to give support.
    - *It just takes ONE to make a difference.*
    - *Use an I message.*
    - *Peaceful conflict resolution steps*.(e.g. the Peace Path)
8. What kind of agreements can we work toward to make sure we exhibit caring towards one another?
9. How can you *be a world changer*? At home, at school, or in your community?

<u>Extended Discussion Option: Rosa, Ruby, and Kamala</u>

Show the appropriate slide and discuss who these three women are:

- Rosa Parks was a prominent figure in the civil rights movement. She is best known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which played a role in the desegregation of public transportation. She refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus to a white person on Dec. 1 1955. This act of civil disobedience led to her arrest.

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- Ruby Bridges first integrated Frantz Elementary School in new Orleans in 1960.
- Kamala Harris was elected senator of California January 3, 2017 and became Vice President of the United States January 20, 2021

Questions to ask:

1. What do they have in common?
2. How have they paved the way for a more equal and anti-racist society? How were they *world changers*?
3. What is the meaning of this phrase, "Rosa sat, so Ruby could walk, so Kamala could run."

Optional Digital Citizenship Extension

If you see someone using hurtful words or being prejudiced in a text or online, what are some things you can do?

- *STOP! Don't do anything. Take 5 to calm down.*
- *Block! Block the person or limit all communications to those on your buddy list - chat with people you know in real life.*
- *Tell! Tell a trusted adult. You don't have to face this alone. Caring adults can help you develop a plan to handle the situation.*

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

4-5

Positive Picket Signs

Materials: poster sized paper, markers, crayons, paint, paint brushes
Optional: dowels/paint stirrer/paper towel roll, tape

Ruby was forced to walk through an angry crowd of protesters carrying signs with hateful language to get to her school. This activity allows students to create picket signs with messages of encouragement, kindness, and positivity.

Brainstorm with the students ideas for their signs. They may include language from previous ABC lessons (Be an *UPstander*, *Everyone is welcome*, *We fill buckets, Open Your Heart*), as well as from Ruby Bridges books (*Open Your Heart, I walk with Ruby, etc.)*. Younger students may draw a positive picture instead of a written message. Attach the completed signs to a dowel, paint stirrer, or empty paper towel with heavy tape.

Optional: arrange with your grade and Principal Kobata to march in front of school at drop-off or pick-up time, or at recess and at the cafeteria lunch line, display your *Positive Picket Signs*. Bring along a boom box with festive music, smile and wave at passersby! When people ask what you are doing, tell them, "We are starting something!"

4-5

Web of Support

Materials: balloon and ball of yarn, ABC Cumulative Toolkit

Talk about how Ruby had a *web of support* helping her with this historic time in her life. Who were the caring adults who supported her? She had the courage to do what she knew was right even though she was probably afraid. Each of us can help students at our school feel like they belong by making sure we build a strong *web of support* with our words and actions.

1. Ask the students to think about one thing they could *say or do* if they saw a person being treated unfairly or think of one thing they will *say or do* to create a welcoming, inclusive environment at their school. (ABC Cumulative Toolkit can provide ideas.)

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2. Have them all make one large circle by standing shoulder to shoulder. The first person holds on to the end of a ball of yarn and shares their commitment and/or action with the group. (*I will say hello to people on my way to school, I will invite a friend to play, I will use the Peace Path when needed*) While holding on to the end of the yarn, toss the ball to another person. Each person will have a chance to answer the question above and toss the ball of yarn to someone else.
3. Have them hold one end of the yarn as they toss the ball and toss it so the yarn criss-crosses the room. This creates a *web of support*.
4. Tell the students let's see how well we can support each other. Show them a balloon and name it Ash. Ash came to school today feeling rather deflated. Blow balloon up a little. But after they arrived, they started to feel welcome: like they belonged. They felt noticed and supported by all of the wonderful commitments you made as you build this *web of support.* Blow up balloon fully.
5. Toss Ash into the web and try using the web to support Ash for 5 bounces.
6. What happened? What did you discover about teamwork as you played this game?
7. Did you have success, or do you need to make your web stronger?
8. How can the lessons learned today make your school be a place where all students feel like they belong?

Adaptation:
Half way through, switch the question and ask students to think about who is in their personal web of support (*teacher, parent, coach, Mr Ricky, PC reader, etc)*. The first person holds on to the end of a ball of yarn and names one person that is in their web of support. Toss the ball of yarn to the next student. Each student will have a chance to name someone and then toss the ball of yarn.

CLOSING

Today we learned about a courageous and brave 6 year old girl. She was an *UPstander* then and continues today to advocate for a pathway to peace and an end to racism. She taught us many things. We know that

a. Everyone at our school deserves to feel safe and cared for.
b. Everyone deserves our kindness and respect.
c. Everyone *fills buckets*.

So how can each of us *be a world changer*? What is one thing you will commit to do to make this a better world? (Give students time to think.) I am going to ask a few questions. If you can commit to doing this, raise your hand or stand up. Remember you must commit to at least one action.

- Work to improve the environment.
- Be kind, even when it is difficult.
- Volunteer your time to help others.
- *Fill the buckets* of others.
- Stand up by *saying or doing* something when you see an injustice.
- Show empathy with active listening and perspective taking.
- Be a role model for other young people.

Remember that age is not a barrier to creating a positive impact. You can *be a world changer*!

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