

It's Her Story: Rosa Parks - A Graphic Novel

EDUCATOR GUIDE



Rosa Parks was the courageous thinker and leader known as the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement. Long before the Montgomery Bus Boycott made her famous, she was a social justice activist and organizer. In honor of her work, she received a Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

It's Her Story: Rosa Parks
Written by Lauren Burke
Illustrated by Shane Clester
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Ages 7 to 10
48 pages
Library Edition
Hardcover, 6.2 x 8.6 inches

DISCUSSION

Ask these questions to the class as a whole or have students discuss in small groups.

1. This story is a frame story—the story of the girl and her Grammie in the museum surrounds the story of Rosa Parks like a frame. Why do you think the book was written this way? How might the frame help readers understand Rosa Parks' story differently, or better?
2. When the bus driver threatens to have Rosa arrested (p. 29), Rosa responds by saying, “You may do that.” Did you expect her to answer in that way? Why is her choice of words powerful?
3. On p. 36, Rosa Parks tells her audience that small actions they do in their community can lead to bigger things that change the world. What's one tiny thing that you can do to make your community a better place? What big things do you imagine that could turn into?



MUSIC CONNECTION

Civil rights leaders are shown singing “We Shall Overcome” on p. 41. This song has roots in Black gospel traditions and has been used as inspiration in other labor and civil rights movements. Find the Morehouse College Glee Club version and the Pete Seeger version online. Ask students to write about, discuss, or draw their responses to the following prompts.

1. Play either version for students. Explain that expression in music is how a song makes you feel. Ask: How does the song make you feel in your body? For example, does it make you want to sway slowly, or kick your legs really fast? How does it make your mind feel?
2. Now play the other version. Ask students: How is the expression in the songs similar? How is it different? Did the two different versions change or add to your understanding of the song? How?

MATH CONNECTION

The bus boycott was supposed to last one day. Instead, it lasted almost 13 months (381 days). This class activity helps students visualize and appreciate the duration of the boycott. You can also have students do this activity using graph paper instead of objects.

1. Collect 381 uniform items, such as sticky notes, index cards, binder clips, or blocks. These represent the 381 days of the boycott. For time efficiency, lay out 280 items in advance.
2. Place the last 101 items with your students, practicing any math concepts you are working on as you do this, such as counting, arithmetic, or place value.
 - To help with visualization and math concepts, place items so that they form a single block in a simple shape, such as a rectangle.
 - If placement of items gets awkward and desks and people need to be moved, that is OK! In fact, it will help drive home the boycott's long duration and difficulty.
3. Have a student place a brightly colored sticky or other small, easy-to-see object on top of one of the 381 items. This represents the one day the boycott was planned to last.
4. Have students step back and take in the single day versus the 381 days. Discuss the following prompts in small groups or as a class.
 - How did this activity help you understand the length of time of the boycott?
 - To support the boycott, people walked, shared cars, biked, or found other ways to get around for more than a year. What kinds of disruptions might that have caused them?
 - The boycott leaders lost their jobs and were threatened, bullied, and arrested (p. 35). Why do you think they were willing to go through that for so long?
5. Once the visualization activity is cleaned up, have students solve these multiplication problems and discuss the prompt.
 - The bus company lost more than \$1,000 a day because of the boycott (p. 35). The boycott lasted 381 days. About how much did the bus company lose in total?
 - One dollar in 1956 would be worth about \$9.68 today. How much did the bus company lose in today's dollars?
 - Why do you think the bus company was willing to lose that much money rather than change its laws?

