

## ROSA PARKS – A LESSON IN COURAGE

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. understand the contribution of Rosa Parks to the Civil Rights movement
2. reconstruct the events of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in a role play

TEKS: SS 5.5 (B), 5.13 (B), 5.23 (C), SS 3.7 (C), 3.10 (A), 3.11 (B), LA 5.11 (B), 4.11 (B), 3.10 (B)

Materials Needed: Information on Rosa Parks. Suggested sources include:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/rosa/supreme.htm>

[www.grandtimes.com/rosa.html](http://www.grandtimes.com/rosa.html)

<http://e-portals.org/Parks/>

Parks, Rosa. Quiet Strength. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Adler, David A. A Picture Book of Rosa Parks. New York: Holiday House, 1993.

Ringgold, Faith. If a Bus Could Talk. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Vocabulary: segregation, discrimination, boycott

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to analyze the following situations. They should determine if the action is fair or not, and explain their reasoning.
  - a. Is it fair to not let someone on your baseball team because he/she is overweight?
  - b. Is it fair to not allow someone under 18 to drive a car?
  - c. Is it fair to make all blue eyed students clean up the classroom at the end of the day?
  - d. Is it fair to let only boys play sports?
  - e. Is it fair to let only girls dance?
  - f. Is it fair to make students come to school?
  - g. Is it fair for the teacher's pet to get all the good parts in the school play?
  - h. Is it fair for some schools to require uniforms?
  - i. Is it fair to insist that children eat foods that are good for them?
2. Narrate for the students what the racial climate was in the 40's and 50's, when African Americans were discriminated against. Mention should be made of segregated schools, buses, restaurants, movie theaters, motels, and water fountains.

3. Read one of the suggested children's books on Rosa Parks or refer to a website which tells about her refusal to move to the back of a bus, the Montgomery Bus boycott, and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement.
4. Students will reenact the story of Rosa Parks by dividing up into the following groups. See attached instructions for each group.
  - a. Sitting Down – December 1, 1955
  - b. Arrest/Jail – December 1, 1955
  - c. Trial – December 5, 1955
  - d. Bus Boycott – December, 1955 until December 21, 1956
  - e. Court Ruling and Results – December 21, 1956
5. Allow time for students to prepare the different segments of the story, then role play the story in chronological order before the class or other groups.
6. As a culminating activity, students will create Bio Poems for Rosa Parks. Poems may be copied on unlined paper, illustrated, matted and displayed on the bulletin board. The format for the poem is as follows:

*Rosa*  
*Who loves* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Who fears* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Who would like to* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Wife of* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Friend of* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Whose goal is* \_\_\_\_\_  
*America* \_\_\_\_\_ *her*  
*Parks*

## **Instructions for Reenactment Groups**

### **Group 1 – Sitting Down**

**Your job is to show Rosa Parks as she gets on the bus after work on December 1, 1955. She is confronted by the driver, J. P. Blake and told to move to the back. Your group should include some other riders. When she refuses to move, Mr. Blake stops the bus and notifies the police. Two policemen come and remove her from the bus. When asked why they are doing this, one of the officers replies, “I don’t know. It’s just the law.”**

**Characters needed: Rosa Parks, J. P. Blake, 2 police officers, other bus riders.**

### **Group 2 – Arrest/Jail**

**Your group will show Rosa Parks being arrested and taken to jail. None of the other bus riders offered to help her or even contact her husband of her arrest. Her friend, E.D. Nixon bailed her out of jail.**

**Characters needed: Rosa Parks, police officer taking her to the police station, police officer charging her and putting her in jail, E. D. Nixon, other riders on the bus.**

### **Group 3 – Trial**

**Your group will show Rosa Parks’ trial. She is charged with failure to move to the back of the bus when instructed to by the driver. Her attorney argued that the law was not fair. She is found guilty and fined \$14.**

**Characters needed: Rosa Parks, her lawyer, Fred Gray, the prosecuting attorney, the judge, the bus driver, J. P. Blake.**

## **Group 4 – Bus Boycott**

**Leaders of the African American community met after Rosa's arrest and decided to do something about the way blacks were discriminated against. Present at these meetings on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 1955 were Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, JoAnn Robinson, and E. D. Nixon. Their group was called the Montgomery Improvement Association. They decided that blacks should boycott (refuse to ride) the city buses. They printed 40,000 fliers urging African Americans to refuse to ride the buses, which would hurt the bus company economically. It worked. The bus boycott lasted 381 days.**

**Characters needed: Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, JoAnn Robinson, E. D. Nixon, riders standing at the bus stops but not getting on the buses, walking, or carpooling to work.**

## **Group 5 – Court Ruling and Results**

**Your group will demonstrate the Supreme Court ruling which said that the law stating that African Americans had to ride at the back of buses was unconstitutional and could no longer be a law in Montgomery, AL or anywhere else. As a result, the bus boycott ended and blacks began riding the buses again, being seated wherever they chose.**

**Characters needed: Supreme Court justices to announce decision, riders on the bus, bus driver**