



A Teacher's Guide to Discussing  
**CIVIL AND HUMAN  
RIGHTS**



Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

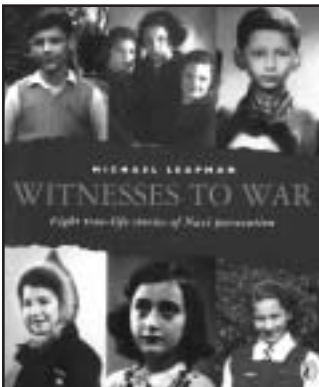
## INTRODUCTION



Most children and young adults know something about the Civil Rights Movement. They know that Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. They know that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy led black people on peaceful marches through the streets of Southern cities and the nation's capital during the 1950s and 1960s. They may have heard of the “Freedom Riders” and “The Little Rock Nine.” But few know the names of the countless numbers of individuals who risked their lives in an effort to gain equality for their people. Rosa Parks became a hero. So did Martin Luther King, Jr. What about Claudette Colvin, Fred Shuttlesworth, Barbara

Johns, Elizabeth Eckford, Raymond Greene, Barbara Howard, and Delores Boyd? What about the hundreds of anonymous children and teenagers who marched without fear? What about the students who bravely walked down the halls of white schools during the first days of integration? They are heroes too!

*Freedom's Children* by Ellen Levine tells the stories of courageous children and teenagers who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. Their names may not appear in history books, but their stories are poignant reminders that the Civil Rights Movement was a success because of them.



These children and teenagers understand the meaning of *civil liberties*. They know the meaning of *human rights*. Their stories, along with the stories of the children who survived the Holocaust, offer heroic role models of young people who know what it means to survive. For this reason, this guide parallels *Witnesses to War* by Michael Leapman with *Freedom's Children* in an effort to help students better understand the broad issues of *human rights* and *civil rights*.

There are discussion questions that challenge students to think about the deeply personal parts of these issues, and to relate these issues to today's society. Classroom activities offer connections to all areas of the curriculum so that students will know that *liberty* and *equality* expands to all areas of our lives.

## PRE-READING

Engage the class in a discussion about the difference between *civil rights* and *civil liberties*. Ask them to discuss *human rights*. Have them read the newspaper and watch the national and world news for a week and make note of issues related to *civil rights*, *civil liberties* and *human rights*. Allow students time to share these issues in class. What are some of the threats to individual freedoms in this nation and other nations today?

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

In *Freedom's Children*, Princella Howard says, "The [Montgomery Bus] boycott was a real movement. It was so powerful....It brought together—even people who were generally at odds with each other." (p. 30) How does adversity bring people together? Read Howard's story. To what is she referring when she says that there were "victories within our own race?" How does victory require unity? How did Martin Luther King, Jr. promote unity?

Ernest Green states in *Freedom's Children* that "Little Rock became symbolic for a lot of things....It was good and evil." (p. 49) Ask students to read about "The Little Rock Nine." How might Elizabeth Eckford describe the "good and evil" of her experience at Central High School? How are Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford and the other seven students of the "Little Rock Nine" symbols of courage and achievement?



Discuss the literal and figurative meaning of the term “color blind.” In *Freedom’s Children*, Ricky Shuttlesworth says, “If I could have one wish, it would be that everybody would be blind. Then nobody would know what color anything was.” (p. 14) Do you think that Ricky Shuttlesworth’s wish for blindness is literal or figurative? How does Arlam Carr’s story in *Freedom’s Children* (p. 50-52) reflect evidence that color blindness was possible in the 1960s in the South? Discuss whether Shuttlesworth and Carr would think that young people today are “color blind.”

Read “The Aftermath” in *Freedom’s Children*. (p. 89) Explain what Charles Morgan means in reference to the Sixteenth Street church bombing when he asked, “Who did it? We all did it...” How does his question address the issue of responsibility? Discuss the relevance of his question to the issues of teen violence and other social problems today.

When the “Little Rock Nine” were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by Congress, Daisy Bates said that what they endured was a “volcano of hatred.” How does this metaphor apply to what the Jews experienced in Central and Eastern Europe during World War II?

In *Freedom’s Children*, Bernita Roberson says that she was taught to forgive people. What is the difference between “forgetting” and “forgiving?” How does forgiveness promote healing? Discuss how “forgetting” the horrors of the Civil Rights Movement and the Holocaust could be a threat to humanity. Why is it so important for the young people involved in the Civil Rights Movement and the Holocaust to record their memories? Why is it important that younger generations read their memories?



Fred Taylor says in *Freedom's Children*, “[As a result of the Montgomery Bus Boycott], I began to have a different assessment of myself as an individual and to feel my sense of worth.” (p. 29) How is self-worth a *human right*? How is bigotry used as a weapon to destroy self-worth? What can we learn about self-worth from the young people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement and the children who survived the Holocaust?

In 1965, Delores Boyd was one of the students who integrated Lanier High School in Montgomery, Alabama. She experienced overt racism from most of the students, but some Jewish students and kids from Maxwell Air Force Base were courageous enough to show her support. Discuss why the Jewish and Air Force kids were more open and sensitive to the issues of integration. Why is it important to learn and talk about cultural differences? How does knowledge and understanding promote harmony?

Childhood is often considered an “age of innocence.” In *Witnesses to War*, Beate Green talks of a lost childhood. Green feels that she recovered her childhood years when as an adult, she was reunited with her parents. Engage the class in a discussion about whether a person can truly and totally recover from a lost childhood. Discuss whether the young people involved in the Civil Rights Movement would identify with Beate Green. What stories about their childhood will they tell their children and grandchildren?

In the introduction to *Freedom's Children*, Ellen Levine says, “I believe that among the most powerful models for young people today are their heroic counterparts of yesterday.” Ask the class to brainstorm the qualities of a hero. How does being a hero take risks and sacrifice? What were the greatest risks to the young people in *Freedom's Children*? What did they sacrifice? Discuss whether these young people saw themselves as heroes, or agents for change. How might the individuals featured in *Witnesses to War* be considered heroes? Describe their sacrifices.



## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### LANGUAGE ARTS

The modern Civil Rights Movement is said to have started with the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–56. Research this boycott and find out why it was so successful. How does the concept of boycotting reflect Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of keeping protests peaceful? Boycott is also used as a method of protest by the Logan family and their neighbors in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor. Write a letter that Martin Luther King, Jr. might have written to the Logan family during their struggle to boycott the local store.



Ask students to read about the following *human rights* workers: Dalai Lama, Rigoberta Menchu, Harry Wu, Nafis Sadik, Bryan Stevenson, Sarah Brady, Claire Culhane, Graca Simbine Machel. Then ask them to select one of the individuals and write their story in first person.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Ask students to check the index of several different American History textbooks for the following topics:

Montgomery Bus Boycott  
Little Rock School Integration  
Birmingham Protests  
Mississippi Summer  
Bloody Sunday  
Selma Movement  
*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*

Have students share how many of these topics are discussed in textbooks. How much information is given? Then engage the class in a discussion about why such topics are often omitted in American History classes. Why is an understanding of recent history like the Civil Rights Movement so important to our lives?

Take the class on a virtual field trip to the National Civil Rights Museum ([www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/](http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/)). What is the significance of the location of the museum? Ask each student to select one of the featured exhibits to research. Then have them write an accurate description of the exhibit for the museum catalog.

Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass) took place in November of 1938 in Germany. Have students use books in the library or appropriate sites on the Internet to find out more about this night. Then ask them to research the



*Birmingham Bombing* and *Bloody Sunday*, two important events during the Civil Rights Movement. Ask students to write a short paper that compares these events. Discuss how each of these events violated *human rights*.

The International Charter of Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, was formed under the United Nations Charter. Guided by her leadership, the “Declaration of Human Rights” was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Ask students to read about Eleanor Roosevelt and discuss why she was chosen to chair the “Human Rights Charter.”

## SCIENCE

Dr. Josef Mengele conducted medical experiments on Gypsies during the Holocaust in an effort to find scientific evidence to support the Nazis’ theories of racial supremacy. Discuss the *human rights* issues related to such experiments. Find out some of the human rights issues related to science today and debate them in class.



## ART

Locate and display a picture of Norman Rockwell's 1964 painting of Ruby Bridges. Ask students to study the illustration and discuss why Rockwell titled it "The Problem We All Live With." Who are the men in the illustration? Why doesn't Rockwell show their faces? Notice the letter in the pocket of one of the men. What do you think it represents? What is Ruby Bridges thinking? This painting is said to be a better description of school integration than most history books. Why?

There are 30 articles to the Declaration of Human Rights. Ask each student to select one of the articles to study. Then have them use pictures from magazines and newspapers to make a collage that best conveys the meaning of the article.



## MUSIC

Joan Baez, a singer in the 1960s, joined the Quaker church and learned to value nonviolence and support human rights. She became famous for such songs as "The Times They Are A-Changing," "A Simple Twist of Fate," and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." Ask students to locate recordings of these songs and songs by other singer/activists of the 1960s. How do the lyrics of these songs reflect the social turmoil of the times?

"Go Down Moses" is a famous African American spiritual. It is also a favorite song sung by Jewish families during Passover. Ask students to locate the song and read the lyrics. Why is it a meaningful song for both Jews and African Americans?





## DRAMA

Have the class stage a talk show where the seven survivors of the Holocaust featured in *Witnesses to War* meet some of the Civil Rights participants featured in *Freedom's Children*. What will they say to one another? Allow the students in the audience to ask pertinent questions about *human rights* and *civil rights*.



# BOOKS RELATED TO RACIAL PREJUDICE AND ISSUES OF CIVIL RIGHTS

## NON-FICTION

Levine, Ellen. *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories.*

Thirty African-Americans, who were children or teens in the 1950s and 1960s, talk about what it was like for them to fight segregation in the South. Ages 10-up

Medearis, Angela Shelf. *Dare to Dream: Coretta Scott King and the Civil Rights Movement.*

Illustrated by Anna Rich.

A biography of Coretta Scott King. Ages 8-11.

Parks, Rosa. *I Am Rosa Parks.* Illustrated by Wil Clay.

The woman who is credited with starting the Civil Rights Movement tells her own story for younger readers. Ages 6-9.

Parks, Rosa. *Rosa Parks: My Story.*

This autobiography of Rosa Parks reveals her brave struggle to gain her civil rights. Ages 9-12.

Rochelle, Belinda. *Witnesses to Freedom: Young People Who Fought for Civil Rights.*

The experiences of young blacks who risked their lives in the Civil Rights Movement are described. Ages 9-14.

## NOVELS

Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.*

The Logan family struggles to keep their courage and pride as they fight to keep their family's land during one turbulent year when racism threatens their lives. Winner of the 1977 Newbery Medal. Ages 10-up.

*Let the Circle Be Unbroken.*

The Logan family proves that courage, love, and understanding can defy prejudice as they witness the unfair murder trial of their friend, T.J, and the destruction of their neighbors' homes in this sequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Ages 10-up.

*The Road to Memphis.*

Set in 1941, this third book about the Logan family offers a challenge to seventeen-year-old Cassie who must help a friend to safety after he severely injures a white boy who has tormented him. Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Ages 10-up.

*The Friendship.* Illustrated by Max Ginsburg.

Cassie Logan and her brothers witness a confrontation between Mr. Tom Bee, an elderly black man, and a white storekeeper in rural Mississippi in 1933. Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Ages 8-10.

The Gold Cadillac. Illustrated by Michael Hays.

Lois and Wilma, two black girls living in the North, are proud of their father's gold Cadillac until they drive to Mississippi and face racial prejudice for the first time. Ages 7-11.

# BOOKS RELATED TO THE HOLOCAUST AND ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## NON-FICTION

Leapman, Michael. *Witnesses to War: Eight True-Life Stories of Nazi Persecution.*

These true-life stories of eight children, seven who survived, reveal the horror of the Holocaust and the fear that ripped away their childhood. Ages 10-up

Pressler, Mirjam. *Anne Frank: A Hidden Life.*

A detailed study of Anne Frank's life in the attic and the years following when the annex residents were taken to German concentration and death camps. Ages 10-up.

Rabinovici, Schoschana. *Thanks to My Mother.*

Susie Weksler survives the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Lithuania because her mother disguises her as an adult and gives her the courage to endure three concentration camps. Ages 12-up.

Siegal, Aranka. *Upon the Head of the Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944.*

This true and haunting story about fear, war, and anti-Semitism is told through the eyes of a young Hungarian Jewish girl who survived the occupation of the Third Reich. A Newbery Honor Book. Ages 10-up.

Siegal, Aranka. *Grace in the Wilderness: After the Liberation 1945-1948.*

Fifteen-year-old Piri is liberated from a German concentration camp and begins a new life as a Jew in Sweden. A sequel to *Upon the Head of the Goat*. Ages 10-up.

Van der Rol, Ruud and Rian Verhoeven. *Anne Frank Beyond the Diary: A Photographic Remembrance.*

This photographic tribute to Anne Frank reveals her family life during the years before and after her family was forced into hiding. Ages 10-up.

## NOVELS

Richter, Hans Peter. *Friedrich.*

Hans recounts the fate of his best friend Friedrich--a Jew--during the Nazi regime. Ages 10-up.

*I Was There.*

A young German boy narrates his experiences in the Hitler youth movement during the early years of the Third Reich. Ages 10-up.

Vos, Ida. *Anna Is Still Here.*

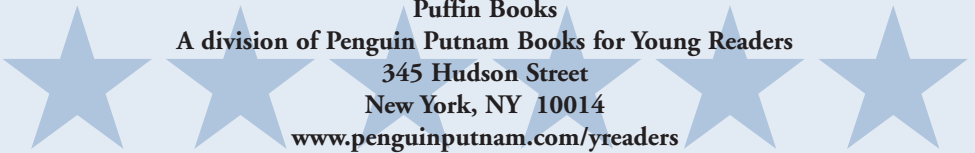
Anna, a "hidden child" during World War II, struggles to adjust to freedom and overcome her fears in Holland after the Holocaust. Ages 8-12.

*Hide and Seek.*

Eight-year-old Rachel, living in Holland, tells of her experiences during the Nazi occupation, her years in hiding, and the aftershock when the war finally ends. Ages 8-12.

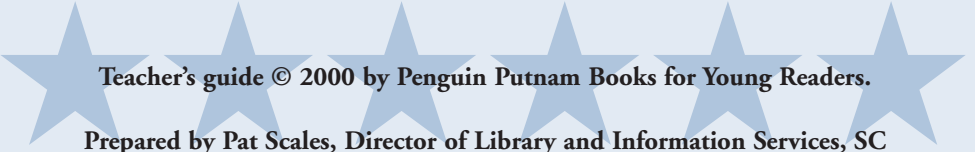
Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic.*

Hannah resists her Jewish heritage until time travel takes her to a small Jewish village in Nazi-occupied Poland. Ages 10-up.



**Puffin Books**  
**A division of Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers**  
**345 Hudson Street**  
**New York, NY 10014**  
**[www.penguinputnam.com/yreaders](http://www.penguinputnam.com/yreaders)**

*All photos from **Freedom's Children** and **Witnesses to War**.*



**Teacher's guide © 2000 by Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers.**

**Prepared by Pat Scales, Director of Library and Information Services, SC  
Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, Greenville, SC.**

**All or part of this guide can be reproduced for classroom use.**

