

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION • "ONE AMAZING MOMENT" ..... 3  
 PART I • "SHE STARTED A REVOLUTION TO FREEDOM" ..... 7  
 PART II • "VIOLENCE MUST NOT COME FROM ANY OF US" ..... 10  
 PART III • ACTIVISM ISN'T JUST FOR ADULTS ..... 13  
 HANDOUTS ..... 16-24  
 RESOURCES ..... 25

MONTGOMERY

REBEL BUSES

WHY FIGHT TRAFFIC?

GO BY BUS

Mighty Times

FIRST EDITION, 2002

COPYRIGHT © 2002 BY THE SOUTHERN RURALITY LAW CENTER

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This teaching kit was produced by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Rurality Law

### Separation of races—Required

Every person operating a bus line in the city shall provide equal but separate accommodations for white people and negroes on his buses. ...

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the operators of such bus lines from separating the races by means of separate vehicles if they see fit. ...

It shall be unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take a seat among those assigned to the race to which he belongs.

— Montgomery City Code

### INTRODUCTION

#### “ONE AMAZING MOMENT”

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks sparked a revolution to freedom when she refused to yield her seat to a White passenger on a Montgomery, Ala., city bus. Her defiance of racial segregation on that day required very few words — she twice refused the driver’s order with a quiet but firm “No,” and replied, “You may do that,” when he threatened to have her arrested. It was a simple yet courageous and inspiring act, one that earned her the title “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”

*Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* is the story of how Rosa Parks inspired the African American community of Montgomery to unite against the segregationists who ran City Hall and demand an end to segregation on the buses.

Mrs. Parks has often been portrayed as a quiet, deeply religious, middle-aged seamstress who refused to budge from her bus seat out of sheer exhaustion. Although she was indeed weary that evening, Mrs. Parks was also a committed, well-trained anti-segregation activist. Her actions on the bus were fueled by a widespread sentiment among African Americans throughout the Jim Crow South: Enough is enough. As she would write in her 1992 autobiography *My Story*, “The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

While Mrs. Parks’ arrest provided the spark for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, it was the hard work, courage and dedication of the African American community that provided the engine. The “newsmakers” of the Boycott, such as Mrs. Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., occupy the most pages in the history textbooks, but it was the contributions of countless brave, largely unheralded citizens that galvanized the Civil Rights Movement. *Mighty Times* is their story as well.

#### ABOUT THE FILM

*Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* examines not only a watershed moment in the Civil Rights Movement, but also an inspiring story of everyday people whose example can be followed by young activists who seek social change in their communities today.

Witnesses and participants in the Montgomery Bus Boycott are joined in *Mighty Times* by their sons, daughters, grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews to tell the story. Archival footage and dramatic reenactments\* recreate the energy, joy, pain and triumph of that extraordinary period.

#### USING THE VIEWER’S GUIDE

The purpose of this viewer’s guide is to extend the scope of the Rosa Parks story beyond 1950s Montgomery and examine in closer detail the role of the individual in a democracy. Students should come away with a sense of how ordinary people can stand up to powerful forces and traditions to create social change. The guide features classroom activities that draw upon discussions, role-plays, primary sources and



\*NOTE TO THE TEACHER: REENACTMENTS ARE CLEARLY MARKED IN MIGHTY TIMES BY FILM SPROCKETS AT THE EDGES OF THE FRAME. MAKE SURE YOUR STUDENTS ARE AWARE OF THIS FEATURE BEFORE YOU SHOW THE VIDEO. EXPLAIN WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

DITS, BUS AND SNOWFLAKE ILLUSTRATION COURTESY, CSAIMAGES.COM; ROSA PARKS RE-ENACT, © CORBIS; BUS RIDERS, AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO



student handouts. Parts one and two are designed primarily for the middle grades but include activities that can be adapted for higher grades. Part three is best suited for the upper grades. Discussion questions and activity instructions are targeted directly at students and can be read aloud or copied for distribution.

This viewer's guide is structured to support both a single class session focusing on Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and extended sessions addressing broader issues of activism. Parts two and three will help students fully appreciate how the example of Mrs. Parks and others can inspire young people today as they seek to make a positive change in their communities.

### BEFORE YOU VIEW

You will be watching a video about Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56. This is a story about a courageous woman, a community united, and the movement her courage inspired. This event in Alabama continues to resonate 50 years later because it demonstrates the importance of individual decisions to act for change and the power of many individuals acting together.

Find out what your class knows about Rosa Parks before viewing the video: Who is Mrs. Parks? Where and when did she live? Why is she considered a national hero? What was the impact of her actions on the course of history? Write down your responses.

Rosa Parks is not only the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" but a living example of what ordinary people can do to inspire social change. Her legacy is strong today because the qualities and philosophy she embodies — commitment, courage, nonviolent protest — still resonate.

Have you ever spoken out or taken action against something you believed was unjust? It could be something that occurred at school, at home or something you read about or saw on the news.

- Why did you feel the way you did?
- How did this law/policy/rule affect you and your peers/friends?
- What course of action, if any, did you take?
- Did anyone help you or did you act alone? What kind of help did you receive?
- What are the benefits of acting as part of a team? Acting alone?

### PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. Read aloud or write the following quotation by Martin Luther King Jr. on the board:

*I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.*

What is your reaction to Dr. King's assessment? How is it possible to break a law and yet have the "highest respect for law"?

2. Brainstorm about the word *citizenship*. Compare and contrast the strict definition — the status of being a native or naturalized inhabitant of a country — with the broader sense of membership in a community. What are the rights of citizenship? What are the responsibilities of citizenship? Do you have to obey all laws to practice good

citizenship? Why or why not? Can non-citizens (such as international students or new immigrants) practice good citizenship? Explain.

3. Brainstorm words that come to mind when you think of the term *activist*. Write class responses on the board. Are the responses positive, negative or both? Who are some famous activists? What causes did they champion? Did they practice "good citizenship"? Why or why not?

### GLOSSARY

Before watching *Mighty Times*, familiarize yourself with the following words and phrases.

**boycott** • a form of protest consisting in the refusal to have dealings with a person, business or organization

**Brown v. Board of Education** • landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing the separation of races in public schools

**civil disobedience** • the nonviolent protest of a law or social/political system deemed unjust

**integration** • the process of bringing a group into equal membership in society

**Jim Crow** • the system of laws and practices that discriminated against African Americans between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement

**Ku Klux Klan** • a secret White supremacist organization that came into prominence in the South after the Civil War

**literacy tests** • civics-based tests administered by Southern states to prevent African Americans from voting

**lynching** • the execution of an individual, usually by a mob, without legal sanction

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** • organization founded in 1909 to combat racial discrimination

**segregation** • the separation or isolation of a race, class or ethnic group

**U.S. Supreme Court** • the final court of appeal in the United States



“There was a spirit of revolution.”



## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES • PART I “SHE STARTED A REVOLUTION TO FREEDOM”

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand how Rosa Parks became a committed civil rights activist.
- Understand that the Montgomery Bus Boycott was the action of a community working together, not just a few individuals.
- Use primary sources to examine events surrounding the boycott.
- Identify important people, places and events associated with the boycott and the early stages of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Understand how the Montgomery Bus Boycott relates to the long tradition of peaceful economic protest.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was life like for African Americans in the South when Rosa Parks was a child?
2. How was Mrs. Parks “raised a little different”?
3. What happened when Mrs. Parks first encountered bus driver James Blake in 1943? What did she do when he told her to get off the bus and re-enter through the side door? How do you think this episode influenced her actions more than a decade later?
4. What did Mrs. Parks learn at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee? How do you think her experiences at Highlander inspired her when she returned to Montgomery?
5. How were young people involved in the Montgomery Bus Boycott? What roles did teenagers perform? In the 1950s, word about the boycott and meetings was spread by handbills and through the radio. How might young people communicate with each other today about a protest?
6. What qualities did the newly hired minister Martin Luther King Jr. bring to the boycott?
7. What economic effects did the boycott have on the city? How did many White people in Montgomery react to the boycott? Why did some Whites help with the boycott? How did the Supreme Court rule on Montgomery’s bus segregation laws?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Create a timeline charting the important events of Rosa Parks’ life and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. You may need to use outside sources for additional information/dates. Illustrate the timeline with images of the Civil Rights Movement at that time.
2. Distribute **Handout 1 • “They Messed With the Wrong One Now.”** Pictured is a reproduction of the actual arrest record from the Montgomery Police Department dated December 1, 1955. Read the document. (You may want to replay the reenactment of the 1955 bus incident as you discuss the arrest record.) According to the document, in what section of the bus was Rosa Parks sitting? Where was she actually sitting, as explained in *Mighty Times*? How do the arresting officers identify Mrs. Parks’ “nationality”? Is this description accurate? Explain.

CREDITS: ROSA ON COURTHOUSE STEPS, AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO; BOYCOTT PLANNING MEETING, © LUMIBIS; EMPTY BUS, AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO; DR. KING, AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO; MEN WALKING TO WORK, AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO

3. Distribute **Handout 2** • “That Was the Law Back Then.” Pictured on the handout is a page from the Montgomery City Code, printed in 1952, three years before the bus boycott began. Pay close attention to Sections 10 and 11. What section of the City Code was Mrs. Parks charged with violating? Which codes gave the bus driver the authority to have Mrs. Parks arrested after she refused to surrender her bus seat to a White man?

4. Distribute **Handout 3** • “Word Got Out Like Wildfire.” This document was presented to the Montgomery City Council just prior to the beginning of the boycott. Read the list of “urgent needs” as a class. What purpose did the African American community in Montgomery hope this list would serve? Given the racial climate of the time, were these demands likely to be met? Explain.

5. Imagine that you are helping to organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Create flyers, posters and other items soliciting support for the protest. Display your creations on the classroom wall.

6. Distribute **Handout 4** • “It Wasn’t Just the Klan ... Who Could Make Your Life Miserable.” This is a copy of a so-called voter “literacy test” that was given to African American citizens in Alabama. The purpose of these tests was to discourage African Americans from voting. Rosa Parks had to take a test similar to this when she tried to register to vote in the early 1940s.

Read the questions. How many could you have answered correctly? Literacy tests were abolished by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Why do you think Congress made the decision?

7. Develop and perform a skit or play depicting one of the events from the film. For example, you might choose the scene on the bus, a conversation between Mrs. Parks and a mentor, an episode from her childhood, or a mass meeting at a church. Talk about the sacrifice about to be undertaken. To make your performance distinctive, consider adding poetry, rap or other music.

8. *Mighty Times* tells more than the story of Rosa Parks. The video features many ordinary Montgomery citizens who played indispensable roles in the boycott. Other women had refused to give up their seats on the bus before Mrs. Parks. Many had already been working behind the scenes, waiting to challenge the city’s segregation codes. Select one of the other “witnesses” from the film (such as Jo Ann Robinson, Virginia Durr, Reverend Robert Graetz or Alphonso Perry) and explain in a discussion or a written essay why these men and women inspired or moved you as you watched the video.

9. In his book *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time* (see Resources), author Paul Rogat Loeb contrasts the well-known “story” of Rosa Parks with the actual accomplishments of Parks and her fellow protesters in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Viewers of *Mighty Times* can gain more from Rosa Parks’ story when they understand that she is an ordinary person involved with her community and not, as Loeb puts it, “larger than life.”

Distribute **Handout 5** • “Just Like the Rest of Us.” Read this excerpt from *Soul of a Citizen* and answer the following questions:

- What is the “mistaken belief” that Loeb describes?
- Why does Loeb consider this belief so destructive?
- What does he fear will happen if this “mistaken belief” is not dismissed?

10. Considering the consequences of Mrs. Parks’ actions — her arrest and conviction the harassment directed at her, unemployment — would you have refused to give up your seat on the segregated bus if you had been she? Why or why not? Write a short essay on what it might have been like to be in Mrs. Parks’ situation in 1955–56. What do you believe is worth risking your life or livelihood for today? Explain.

11. Rita Dove is one of the many contemporary intellectuals who have found inspiration from Rosa Parks. Born in Akron, Ohio, in 1952, just three years before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dove has written that she was largely sheltered from the realities of Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement as a child. She began to explore her African American heritage as a maturing poet. Dove won the Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1987 and was named Poet Laureate of the United States in 1993. Distribute **Handout 6** “Rosa,” Ms. Dove’s tribute to Mrs. Parks.

- What event is Rita Dove describing in the poem?
- Explain the phrase “so wrong it was ready.” What was wrong? Ready for what?
- What does Dove imply by describing Mrs. Parks’ coat as “sensible”?
- Discuss the irony that “doing nothing was the doing.”
- Like the quote above, “How she stood up” has a contradictory meaning. Explain.
- The poem ends with the line “That courtesy.” What is the poet describing?

Rosa Parks inspired many artists, including Rita Dove, by her dedication to defending human rights in a nonviolent manner. What contemporary person who shows courage or practices nonviolent protest in the face of injustice has inspired you? Write a poem that conveys your feelings about this hero.

12. The boycott — an organized refusal to have dealings with a business, government or other party deemed unjust — has been used for centuries to force political, economic or social change. Recent examples include boycotts against the Nike Corporation for its use of sweatshops in Southeast Asia, and against various food companies for the practice of catching tuna with nets that suffocate dolphins. An international economic boycott was at the heart of the movement that ended South Africa’s racist Apartheid system in the mid-1990s.

Read **Handout 7** • “Economic Boycott and South Africa.” In this 1959 letter, Prime Minister Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika (later Tanzania) urges people everywhere to support the new anti-Apartheid boycott.

- The letter recounts an incident from Nyerere’s childhood. Describe the incident. Have you ever been in a similar situation? Explain.
- How did this childhood experience in Tanganyika shape what Nyerere was to do as an adult concerning South Africa?
- Nyerere writes, “Can we honestly condemn a system and at the same time employ it to produce goods which we buy, and then enjoy with a clear conscience?” How would you answer this question?

## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES • PART II

### “VIOLENCE MUST NOT COME FROM ANY OF US”

#### OBJECTIVE

*Understand the history and philosophy of civil disobedience/nonviolent protest.*

Civil disobedience is the act of peacefully refusing to obey a law believed to be unjust. Activists who practice civil disobedience usually accept their punishment and make it part of their protest. Rosa Parks' refusal to surrender her seat to a White passenger is one of the most celebrated displays of civil disobedience of the 20th century.

First articulated by author Henry David Thoreau in the mid-1800s, civil disobedience has been an important tactic and philosophy of freedom movements all over the world. Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi developed a method of social action based upon principles of courage and nonviolence, which he called *satyagraha* (literally, “truth-firmness”). Gandhi and his followers used the principle of *satyagraha* to peacefully oppose injustices imposed by British rule of India in the early 20th century. Martin Luther King was profoundly influenced by Gandhi as he followed the tenets of nonviolent resistance in leading the Civil Rights Movement.

#### ACTIVITIES

1. In his 1849 essay “Civil Disobedience,” Henry David Thoreau writes:  
*A government in which the majority rule in all cases can not be based on justice. . . . The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right.*
  - Do you agree with this statement? Does the individual have any more obligations other than to his or her own moral/religious/ethical code? Explain.
  - As a research project, examine how Thoreau's ideas evolved into the nonviolent protests of the Civil Rights Movement and Gandhi's *satyagraha*.
2. **Distribute Handout 8 • “We Were Strong ... and We Won.”** Pictured is a memo written by the Montgomery Improvement Association to African Americans two days before the boycott officially ended. Read through the “suggestions” as a class and identify examples of nonviolence/passive resistance. How would you describe the emotional tone of the document?
3. Civil disobedience has played a significant role in African American history, not only during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s, but also during the abolitionist movement a century earlier. Harriet Tubman, for example, and others were part of a secret network of African Americans in the North who helped guide slaves to freedom.  
  
Create a gallery of prominent historical figures, in addition to Rosa Parks, who advocated and participated in civil disobedience. Examples might include Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Mahatma Gandhi, Harriet Tubman, Dick Gregory and Julia “Butterfly” Hill. Find photographs or draw pictures symbolizing what these women and men accomplished. Then write a few sentences underneath describing the change or awareness these activists helped create.
4. Select a controversial issue from America's past or present and conduct a debate

between two students or two groups of students. One side is intent on carrying out a more confrontational protest; the other favors a more civil, nonviolent approach. Each side should try to persuade the other that their method would be more effective. During the dialogue, the group supporting civil disobedience should offer historical examples of how nonviolent protest or passive resistance was ultimately successful in changing laws.

5. Are there any laws you feel are so unjust that you would be willing to disobey them as long as that disobedience created no harm to anyone but yourself and your fellow protesters? The civil disobedience practiced during the movement was restricted to nonviolent activities and directed at laws that were in direct conflict with constitutional rights. Do you believe that laws should never be broken, even when protesting a policy you believe to be unjust? Should allegiance to the state and its laws be paramount? Write responses on the board. You may also want to conduct a debate around these questions.



## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES • PART III ACTIVISM ISN'T JUST FOR ADULTS

The people who made the Montgomery Bus Boycott successful were women and men, Black and White, young and old. In *Mighty Times*, Alphonso Perry, a track star at school, recalls how he used his athletic skill to deliver notices on the boycott from door to door. Other young men and women walked to and from school together, protecting one another, seeing to it that all got home safely. There is no age requirement for standing up for what you believe; young people can be very effective as activists.

### OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the necessary steps for social action
- Create an action plan for community involvement

### WHAT MAKES AN ACTIVIST?

At the time Mrs. Parks kept her seat and the boycotters refused to ride, segregation was a commonly accepted practice in the South. It takes a great deal of individual courage to stand up to something that most people accept.

At times, we have all refrained from speaking or acting for what we believe is right. What are some of the things that keep us from acting? (For example, we don't have time; we aren't sure anyone else will be on our side; or we don't think our actions will make a difference anyway.) Think of a time when you have been in this position.

- What was the issue or problem?
- What kept you from acting or speaking in that situation?
- What might you have said or done at the time?
- What difference would it have made to the situation?
- What difference would it have made in yourself?
- If you confront the same situation again, what will you do? What will you say?

Although there are many different ways to campaign for change, the following steps will help you get started. See *Resources* for a list of excellent Web sites that offer more detailed guidance and instruction.

1. **Identify your cause.** What current social problems — either at your school, in your community, in the country or internationally — are of special interest to you? What injustices need to be more fully addressed in society?
2. **Consider the possibilities.** Why is this issue important to you? Is it important enough to justify your time? What are the possible risks? How might you and your friends make a difference? What are your chances of success?
3. **Research your issue.** What do you need to know about this issue? What related issues might you investigate? What are some of the opposing arguments? Who can help you find more information or strengthen your position?
4. **Build alliances.** Find allies who will help you with your project. Who shares common goals? (They could be friends, teachers, parents, local organizations, etc.) What individuals might want to work with you on this issue? What local or national organizations can offer assistance?



5. **Develop strategies.** What are some of the methods you might use to educate the public about your cause? Brainstorm things you can do to bring about a change in the current situation. Questions to consider are:

- Why do you want to change the current situation?
- How will you go about doing this?
- Will your actions encourage other people to take up the cause or discourage them from doing so?
- What effect will your actions have on community leaders or lawmakers?

i. After this discussion, formulate an action plan to address the issue you have chosen.

ii. Present your action plan to the class. As part of your group's presentation, explain how your action plan is going to convince the community to support your cause. Students outside the group can suggest additional actions and also play devil's advocate, suggesting how your action plan might turn potential supporters off.

iii. Contact local lawmakers, activists and other community leaders who work for social change. Invite them to your classroom to discuss their projects and critique the class's action plans.

iv. Interview family members who have stood up for something they believed in or were part of a protest or social movement. What role did they play? Why did they choose to act? Did they take any risks? Audiotape or videotape the interviews.

v. The World Wide Web is a gold mine of student activist sites and stories. Using the Web sites listed in *Resources*, research other student activists and projects that you can use as models or sources of inspiration.

vi. At the time that *Mighty Times* was released (September 2002), Rosa Parks was still actively involved in improving the lives of children through the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in Detroit. Write a letter to Mrs. Parks telling her how her story inspires you. Letters can be addressed to:

**Mrs. Rosa Parks**  
**Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development**  
**65 Cadillac Square, Suite 2200**  
**Detroit, MI 48226**





POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF MONTGOMERY

Date 12-1-55 1955

Complainant J.F. Blake (WM)

Address 27 No. Lewis St. Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Offense MISC. Reported By Same as above

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Offense Committed 12-1-55 6:06 pm

Place of Occurrence In Front of Empire Theatre (On Montgomery Street)

Person or Property Attacked \_\_\_\_\_

How Attacked \_\_\_\_\_

Person Wanted \_\_\_\_\_

Value of Property Stolen \_\_\_\_\_ Value Recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Complaint (list, describe and give value of property stolen)

We received a call upon arrival the bus operator said he had a colored female sitting in the white section of the bus, and would not move back.

We (Day & Nixon) also saw her.

The bus operator signed a warrant for her. Rosa Parks, (cf) 634 Cleveland Court.

Rosa Parks (cf) was charged with chapter 6 section 11 of the Montgomery City Code.

Warrant #14254

THIS OFFENSE IS DECLARED:  
UNFOUNDED   
CLEARED BY ARREST   
EXCEPTIONALLY CLEARED   
INACTIVE (NOT CLEARED)

Officers J. B. Day  
D. W. Nixon  
Division Patrol

POLICE DEPARTMENT

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

Date of Arrest 12-1-55

Arrested by Day + Nixon

Charges Resisting to arrest  
Chapter 6 Sec. 11 of city code

Residence 634 Cleveland Court  
Montgomery

Disposition #10 + out (app)

Place of Birth Luckie, Ala.

Nationality Negro

Date of Birth Feb. 4, 1913

Age 42 Height 5 Feet 7 Inches

Weight 140 Eyes Brown

Complexion Black

Hair Black

Build Med.

Scars and Marks None

Employed by Montgomery Fair

Occupation Attraction Shop

Relatives husband, R. A. Parks  
634 Cleveland Court

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_

Case No. 44464

C. S. § 10

MONTGOMERY CITY CODE

C. S. § 11

**Sec. 10. Separation of races—Required.**

Every person operating a bus line in the city shall provide equal but separate accommodations for white people and negroes on his buses, by requiring his employees in charge thereof to assign passengers seats on the vehicles under their charge in such manner as to separate the white people from the negroes, where there are both white and negroes on the same car; provided, however, that negro nurses having in charge white children or sick or injured white persons, may be assigned seats among white people.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the operators of such bus lines from separating the races by means of separate vehicles if they see fit. (Code 1938, §§ 605, 606.)

**Sec. 11. Same—Powers of person in charge of vehicle; passengers to obey directions.**

Any employee in charge of a bus operated in the city shall have the powers of a police officer of the city while in actual charge of any bus, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the preceding section, and it shall be unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take a seat among those assigned to the race to which he belongs, at the request of any such employee in charge, if there is such a seat vacant. (Code 1938, § 604.)

**Sec. 12. Failure to carry passengers.**

It shall be unlawful for any person operating a bus line in the city to refuse, without sufficient excuse, to carry any passenger; provided, that no driver of a bus shall be required to carry any passenger who is intoxicated or disorderly, or who is afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease, or who refuses to pay in advance the fare required, or who for any other reason deemed satisfactory by the recorder should be excluded. (Code 1938, § 699.)

**Sec. 13. Smoking.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to smoke a cigar, pipe or cigarette upon any bus in the city; provided, however, that

## NEGROES' MOST URGENT NEEDS

FOLLOWING ARE A FEW OF THE MOST URGENT NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE. IMMEDIATE ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN EACH OF THESE. WHAT IS YOUR STAND TOWARD THEM?

1. The present bus situation. Negroes have to stand over empty seats of city buses, because the first ten seats are reserved for whites who sometime never ride. We wish to fill the bus from the back toward the front until all the seats are taken. This is done in Atlanta, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama and in most of our larger southern cities.
  2. Negro Representation on the Parks and Recreation Board. Our parks are in a deplorable condition. We have protested, yet nothing has been toward improving them. Juvenile delinquency continues to increase. In many instances these children are not responsible. The city is, nobody knows better than Negroes what their needs are.
  3. Sub-division for housing. Just recently a project for a subdivision for Negroes was presented before the City Commission for approval. Protests from whites and other objections prevented the development. There is no section wherein Negroes can expand to build decent homes. What of Lincoln Hotel?
  4. Jobs for qualified Negroes. Certain civil service jobs are not open to Negroes, yet many are qualified. Negroes need jobs commensurate with their training. Everybody can not teach.
  5. Negro representation on all boards affecting Negroes. Negroes are taxpayers; they are property owners or renters. They constitute about 25-30 percent of the city's population. Many boards determine their destinies without any kind of representation whatsoever. Only Negroes are qualified to represent themselves adequately and properly.
  6. Congested areas, with inadequate or no fireplugs. Fire hazards are inviting.
  7. Lack of sewage disposals makes it necessary to resort to out-door privies, is a health hazard.
  8. Narrow streets, lack of curbing, unpaved streets in some sections. Immediate action should be taken on this traffic hazard.
- Gentlemen, what is your stand on these issues? What will you do to improve these undemocratic practices? Your stand on these issues will enable us to better decide on whom we shall cast our ballot in the March elections.

Very truly yours,  
Montgomery Negroes

**MIGHTY TIMES • HANDOUT 4**

**"IT WASN'T JUST THE KLAN ... WHO COULD MAKE YOUR LIFE MISERABLE"**

*Below are questions taken from an Alabama voter literacy test.*

1. The federal census of population is taken every five years.  
True or False?
2. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has.
3. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court is appointed for a term of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Cases tried before a court of law are of what two types: civil and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states?
6. Of the original thirteen states, the one with the largest representation in the First Congress was \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A president elected in November takes office the following year on what date?
8. If the two houses of Congress do not agree to adjournment, who sets the time?
9. If no person receives a majority of the electoral vote, who decides who will become president?
10. The Constitution limits the size of the District of Columbia to \_\_\_\_\_.

**MIGHTY TIMES • HANDOUT 5**

**"JUST LIKE THE REST OF US"**

Chief among the obstacles ... is a mistaken belief that anyone who takes a committed public stand, or at least an effective one, has to be a larger than life figure, someone with more time, energy, courage, vision or knowledge than a normal person could ever possess.

[Martin Luther] King and other Movement heroes were just like the rest of us — flawed. In U.S. culture, role models are often expected to be superhuman or to possess character beyond reproach. But heroes are not perfect; they are people. We must find a way to embrace human weakness and human accomplishment at the same time. If we do not, what do we say about our own capacity to serve the common good?

— *Reprinted by permission from Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time by Paul Rogat Loeb.*

MIGHTY TIMES • HANDOUT 6

“ROSA”

by Rita Dove

How she sat there,  
the time right inside a place  
so wrong it was ready.

That trim name with  
its dream of a bench  
to rest on. Her sensible coat.

Doing nothing was the doing:  
the clean flame of her gaze  
carved by a camera flash.

How she stood up  
when they bent down to retrieve  
her purse. That courtesy.

*“Rosa,” from On the Bus with Rosa Parks by Rita Dove. Copyright © 1999 by Rita Dove. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.*

SOURCE: THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

MIGHTY TIMES • HANDOUT 7

ECONOMIC BOYCOTT AND SOUTH AFRICA

JULIUS NYERERE ON THE BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the President of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and Prime Minister of Tanganyika (later Tanzania), wrote this letter on June 26, 1959, a year before he was elected President of Tanganyika. He wrote the letter while at a meeting in London that launched the Boycott Movement. The movement was renamed the Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1960. During the Anti-Apartheid Movement, Tanzania gave support in many forms to the African National Congress and other liberation groups.*

WHEN I was a schoolboy, a friend of mine took me to the tailor one day and had me measured for a pair of shorts. We were great friends. His was mine and mine was his. He knew I needed a pair of shorts very badly. A few days later I got my pair of shorts, well made, fitting perfectly. I was proud of myself and proud of my friend. But it was not long before I discovered how my friend had obtained the money with which he had bought that pair of shorts for me. I returned it to him immediately. I could not disapprove of the manner in which the money had been obtained and still enjoy what the money had bought for me.

It is this same principle which makes me now support the boycotting of South African goods. We in Africa hate the policies of the South African Government. We abhor the semi-slave conditions under which our brothers and sisters in South Africa live, work and produce the goods we buy. We pass resolutions against the hideous system and keep hoping that the United Nations and the governments of the whole world will one day put pressure on the South African Government to treat its non-European peoples as human beings. ...

Each one of us can remove his individual prop to the South African system by refusing to buy South African goods. There are millions of people in the world who support the South African Government in this way, and who can remove their support by the boycott. I feel it is only in this way that we can give meaning to our abhorrence of the system, and give encouragement to sympathetic governments of the world to act. ...

I must emphasise that the boycott is really a *withdrawing of support* which each one of us gives to the racialists in South Africa by buying their goods. There is a very real sense in which we are part of the system we despise, because we patronise it, pay its running expenses.

We are not being called upon to make much of a sacrifice. We are not being called upon to go hungry and court imprisonment. That is the lot of our brothers and sisters inside South Africa. We are being asked to substitute other goods for South African goods, however much of a sacrifice this may mean to our suffering brethren in South Africa itself. We are not being called upon to support or not to support the oppressed in South Africa. We are being called upon to stop supporting those who oppress them.

JULIUS NYERERE

*President of the Tanganyika African National Union*

October 19, 1956

INTEGRATED BUS SEAT MATTER

This is a historic event which has already been declared unconstitutional. It is a test case which will teach Montgomery and you a lesson in mass action. This places upon us all a tremendous responsibility, in fact of what could be the most important, a self-loving dignity, self-respect and respect for our fellow man. There is violence in mind or deed it might be that we should commit it.

For your help and convenience the following suggestions are given. Will you read, study and memorize them at least our own lives and termination may not be endangered. First, some general suggestions:

1. Not all white people are opposed to integrated buses. Accept goodwill on the part of many.
2. The whole bus is now for the use of all people. Do not stand.
3. Pray for guidance and comfort yourself to complete non-violence in word and action as you enter the bus.
4. Demonstrate the calm dignity of our Montgomery people in your actions.
5. In all things observe ordinary rules of courtesy and good behavior.
6. Remember that this is not a victory for Negroes alone, but for Montgomery and the South. Do not brag. Do not brag.
7. Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous but not boisterous.
8. Be loving enough to absorb evil and understanding enough to turn an enemy into a friend.

Now for some specific suggestions:

1. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and his job is to obey the law. Assume that he will cooperate in helping you occupy any vacant seat.
2. Do not deliberately sit by a white person, unless there is no other seat.
3. In sitting down by a person, wait or be asked, say "Excuse me" or "Pardon me" as you sit. This is a common courtesy.
4. If cursed, do not curse back. If pushed, do not push back. If struck, do not strike back, but evidence love and goodwill at all times.
5. In case of an incident, talk as little as possible, and always in a quiet tone. Do not get up from your seat. Report all serious incidents to the bus driver.
6. For the first few days try to get on the bus with a friend whose non-violence you have confidence. You can appeal and be helped by a glance or a prayer.
7. If another person is being molested, do not arise in his defense, but pray for the oppressor and use moral and spiritual force to carry on the struggle for justice.
8. According to your own ability and personality, do not be afraid to experiment with new and creative techniques for achieving reconciliation and social change.
9. If you feel you cannot take it, walk for another seat or bus. We have confidence in our people. YOU BEGGED YOU GAVE.

THE MONTGOMERY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
 THE BUS, P. O. BOX, MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA  
 THE REV. W. E. B. DUBOIS, SECT. 147

RESOURCES

FOR FURTHER READING

LOWER GRADES

PARKS, ROSA, JIM HASKINS  
*I Am Rosa Parks*  
 Penguin Putnam  
 375 Hudson St.  
 New York, NY 10014  
 (800) 788-6262

PARKS, ROSA., GREGORY J. REED  
*Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue With Today's Youth*  
 Lee and Low Books  
 95 Madison Ave. #606  
 New York, NY 10016  
 (212) 779-4400

RINGGOLD, FAITH  
*If A Bus Could Talk*

Simon and Schuster  
 100 Front St.  
 Riverside, NJ 08075  
 (800) 223-2336

MIDDLE TO UPPER GRADES  
 BRINKLEY, DOUGLAS  
*Rosa Parks*  
 Penguin Series Lives  
 Penguin Putnam  
 375 Hudson St.  
 New York, NY 10014  
 (800) 788-6262

LOEB, PAUL ROGAT  
*The Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*

St. Martin's Press  
 175 Fifth Ave.  
 New York, NY 10010  
 (888) 330-8477

PARKS, ROSA, JIM HASKINS  
*My Story*  
 Penguin Putnam  
 375 Hudson St.  
 New York, NY 10014  
 (800) 788-6262

ROBINSON, JO ANN GIBSON  
*The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*  
 University of Tennessee Pre Conference Center, Suite 11  
 Knoxville, TN 37996-4108  
 (800) 621-2736

YOUTH ACTIVISM ORGANIZATIONS/WEB SITES

Action Without Borders, Inc.  
 79 Fifth Ave., 17th Floor  
 New York, NY 10003  
 Tel: 212-843-3973  
 www.idealists.org

Activism 2000 Project  
 P.O. Box E  
 Kensington, MD 20895  
 (800) Kid-POWER  
 www.youthactivism.com

Do Something  
 423 West 55th St., 8th Floor  
 New York, NY 10019  
 (212)-523-1175  
 www.dosomething.org

Global Youth Network  
 Box 78603  
 University Postal Outlet  
 Vancouver, BC  
 V6T 2E7  
 www.youthwhocare.com

Kids Care Clubs  
 975 Boston Post Road  
 Darien, CT 06820  
 203-656-8052  
 www.kidscare.org

Mixitup  
 400 Washington Ave.  
 Montgomery, AL 36104  
 www.mixitup.org

SHINE, Inc.  
 427 Broadway, Suite 41  
 New York, NY 10013  
 (646) 613-5100  
 www.shine.com

What Kids Can Do  
 P.O. Box 603252  
 Providence, RI 02906  
 (401) 247-7665  
 www.whatkidscando.org

WireTap  
 c/o Independent Media Institute  
 77 Federal St.  
 San Francisco, CA 94107  
 (415) 284-1420  
 www.wiretapmag.org

Youth in Action  
 211 East 43rd St., Suite 905  
 New York, NY 10017  
 (212) 661-6111  
 www.youthlink.org

YouthNOISE  
 2000 M St., NW  
 Suite 500  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 www.youthnoise.com