

SHOW WAY

Author: Jacqueline Woodson

Illustrator: Hudson Talbott

Publisher: Putnam

NOTE: Teachers should consider the maturity level of their students when viewing this program. Discussion of issues related to the Holocaust can be too intense and frightening for younger children. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has this to say about age appropriateness in teaching about the Holocaust: "Students in grades 7 and above demonstrate an ability to empathize with individual eyewitness accounts and to attempt to understand the complexities of this history, including the scope and scale of the events. While elementary students are able to empathize with individual survivor accounts, they often have difficulty placing these personal stories in a larger historical context. Such demonstrable developmental differences have traditionally shaped social studies curricula throughout the country; in most states, students are not introduced to European history and geography—the context for the Holocaust—before grades 7 or 8." Some of the discussion areas and activities described here are more appropriate for older students. Use this code when considering appropriateness: P=Primary, I=Intermediate, P-I—both levels.

THEME:

Finding our heritage through family stories and artifacts provides a mirror to the past and a window to the future.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Show Way traces the lineage of one family's women who began creating quilts with secret maps to freedom during the years of slavery and continued in the generations beyond as a tribute to the past. Host LeVar Burton and his family discover some items from earlier relatives, and then we meet a grandmother who inspires her grandson, family members and others with her childhood memories of surviving the Holocaust during World War II.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Pose the question, "Why are stories, especially family stories, important?" Discuss the passing of stories to future generations.

The book and the program deal with the concept of "freedom." Discuss with students what it means to be "free." Elicit their prior knowledge about groups of people in history who were not free. Why is freedom important? Is it possible in present day for people to lose their freedom?

Quite often we think of physical traits as being inherited in families, and we know that family heirlooms move from generation to generation. However, as in the book Show Way, a talent (in this case, sewing) or an art (creating quilts) might also be "passed down." Discuss with students any particular talents or abilities they might possess that are typically associated with other members of their family.

Discuss the types of items that families collect and save. Why are they saved?

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

(P-I) Brainstorm a list of family member words and make a chart with space to include brief definitions. (See list)

(P-I) Read books about the role of quilts in providing messages for runaway slaves and compare how the quilts were used to assist their journey to freedom. Have students notice some of the patterns, as shown in the books' illustrations, which provided clues to the slaves. The following books are recommended: Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson (Knopf); Under the Quilt of Night by Deborah Hopkinson (Atheneum); The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom by Bettye Stroud (Candlewick), and The Secret to Freedom by Marcia Vaughan (Lee & Low). Have students sketch and label some of the patterns and figure out how to place them to indicate a possible path.

(P-I) Review the Underground Railroad with students. Harriet Tubman is the best known "conductor," but have them research the contributions of others who led slaves to freedom (e.g., John Parker) and those who helped (e.g., Levi Coffin, Quakers). The following picture books will be helpful: Freedom River, the story of John Parker who possibly helped as many as 900 slaves to freedom, by Doreen Rappaport (Jump at the Sun/Hyperion); Friend on Freedom River by Gloria Whelan (Sleeping Bear Press); Secret Signs: An Escape through the Underground Railroad by Anita Riggio (Boyd's Mills); Almost to Freedom by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson (Carolrhoda); Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter (Knopf); Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad by Pamela Duncan Edwards (HarperCollins), and A Good Night for Freedom by Barbara Olenyik Morrow (Holiday House).

(P-I) The slave tradition of "jumping the broom" was mentioned more than once in the story. Have students research this practice and compare it to tra-

ditional wedding ceremonies with which they are familiar. The picture book, *Jumping the Broom* by Courtni C. Wright (Holiday House), will be helpful in providing background.

(P) Have students draw the people in their house. Give them a piece of 9 X 12-inch construction paper and demonstrate how to cut off two triangles at one end to make the roof of a house. Inside the “house,” have them draw and label pictures of the people (and pets) in their family. Allow time for them to share their pictures with the class.

(P-I) Collect family stories. Ask students to choose an older relative to interview about when they were young. Brainstorm questions they might ask. Be sure to include questions that relate to the interviewee personally, but also inquire about the family as a whole. Sample questions might include: “Where did you live as a child?”; “What other people lived in your house?”; “Did you have pets?”; “Who were your friends?”; “What was your school like?”; “What did you like to do for fun?”; “What kind of work at home did you do?” Encourage students to ask for stories from the life of the person they are interviewing. Have students bring the information from their interviews to school and compare the findings. They may also want to tell some of the stories from their relatives.

(P-I) Make “Book Family” trees. Have students ask different family members what their favorite book was as a child. Include siblings by asking what their favorite book is in recent memory. Using the tree reproducible page, have students label the family members (use general names such as “mother,” “aunt,” “sister,” etc.) and the titles of the books.

(P-I) Show Way is told in a timeline format. Have students make timelines of their lives. Provide long strips of bulletin board paper, cut about 8 inches wide. Let them measure 8-inch “boxes” along the strip of paper, allowing a square for each event they plan to show. Place a limit on the number of squares (perhaps three to include the preschool years and one square for each grade level in school) ahead of time. It is a good idea to plan what will go in each square before beginning to draw. Brainstorm events in their lives that they might want to draw a picture of, such a special birthday, a vacation, a family celebration, a milestone, school events and friends, etc. The preparation is a good “homework” activity, as students might need to ask their families to tell them stories about their baby and toddler years. Have them write a caption for each picture.

(I) The story of the family of women in *Show Way* is set against a backdrop of African American history. Working in small groups, have students explore topics related to the Civil Rights Movement that include both people and significant events. Work with the library media specialist to locate print (both fiction

and nonfiction) and nonprint resources. After students have had the opportunity to read some information, have the groups choose topics for further research. Allow each group to choose a project for sharing its information (e.g., a timeline, a book, a web page, a PowerPoint, a dramatic presentation, or other ideas they might have). Possible topics include legislation (they might wish to go back in history to the Fugitive Slave Act, Dred Scott Decision, the Emancipation Proclamation and move forward to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, Constitutional Amendments 13, 14, and 15, the Civil Rights Act of 1964); events (Montgomery Bus Boycott, lunch counter sit-ins, Freedom Riders, the Birmingham church bombing of 1963, the March on Washington and Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, Jim Crow laws, school integration, the Great Migration), and people (Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Emmet Till, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mary McLeod Bethune, Marian Anderson, Malcolm X, and many others). Possible resources include:

- Picture book fiction that deals with Jim Crow laws: *White Socks Only* by Evelyn Coleman (Albert Whitman); *Goin’ Someplace Special* by Patricia McKissack (Atheneum); *Freedom School, Yes!* by Amy Little sugar (Philomel); *Freedom Summer* by Deborah Wiles Atheneum); *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson (Putnam); *Richard Wright and the Library Card* by William Miller (Lee & Low); *Grandmama’s Pride* by Becky Birtha (Albert Whitman); and *The School Is Not White!* by Doreen Rappaport (Jump at the Sun/Hyperion).
- Books that deal with people and events: *Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-ins* by Carole Boston Weatherford (Dial); *Cracking the Wall: The Struggles of the Little Rock Nine* by Eileen Lucas (Carolrhoda); *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles (Scholastic); *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges (Scholastic); *Delivering Justice: W.W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights* by Jim Haskins (Candlewick); *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Scholastic); *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni (Henry Holt); *Martin’s Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport (Jump at the Sun/Hyperion); and *When Marian Sang* by Pam Muñoz Ryan (Scholastic).
- Two resources for students that will provide additional topics as well as an overview of the Civil Rights Movement and those actively involved in it are: *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968* by Diane McWhorter (Scholastic) and *Portraits of African American Heroes* by Tonya Bolden (Dutton).

(I) If the use of such material is deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher, the following books will provide some context for the time period associated with the Holocaust. These are biographies or works of fiction that do not provide extensive detail. See: *The Cats in Krasinski Square* by Karen

Hesse (Scholastic); Let the Celebrations Begin! by Margaret Wild (Orchard); The Lily Cupboard by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim (HarperCollins); The Harmonica by Tony Johnston (Charlesbridge); One Candle by Eve Bunting (HarperCollins); The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco (Philomel); A Picture Book of Anne Frank by David A. Adler (Holiday House); Passage to Freedom by Ken Mochizuki (Lee & Low); Willy and Max by Amy LittleSugar (Penguin); Always Remember Me: How One Family Survived World War II by Marisabina Russo (Simon & Schuster); and The Flag with Fifty-Six Stars: A Gift from the Survivors of Mauthausen by Susan Goldman Rubin (Holiday House).

RELATED THEMES:

family traditions
genealogy
quilting
slavery
storytelling

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #22 The Patchwork Quilt
Program #96 Follow the Drinking Gourd
Program #130 The Carousel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jacqueline Woodson says she told a lot of stories as a child and wrote on everything and everywhere... "I loved and still love watching words flower into sentences and sentences blossom into stories." She is the author of numerous award-winning picture books and young adult novels. Among her honors are two National Book Award finalists, a Coretta Scott King Award, and a Newbery Honor Book, which she received for Show Way. Jacqueline is also the author of Reading Rainbow feature book Visiting Day. She lives with her daughter in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Hudson Talbott grew up in Kentucky and says he has been interested in drawing from the time he could pick up a pencil. He considers himself fortunate that his family and teachers encouraged his talent. A graduate of the Tyler School of Art in Rome, he lived and worked in Europe and later in Hong Kong before returning to New York, where he now lives. Hudson still enjoys traveling and believes that his interest in other cultures influences his work.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

SEVEN BRAVE WOMEN
by Betsy Hearne, illustrated by Bethanne Andersen (Greenwillow)

WHAT A FAMILY!
by Rachel Isadora (Putnam)

THE KIDS' FAMILY TREE BOOK
by Caroline Leavitt, illustrated by Ian Phillips (Sterling)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

BEAUTY, HER BASKET
by Sandra Belton, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera (HarperCollins)

MY FAMILY IS FOREVER
by Nancy Carlson (Viking)

WHO'S IN MY FAMILY?
by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House)

BASKET
by George Ella Lyon, illustrated by Mary Szilagyi (Orchard)

BETTY DOLL
by Patricia Polacco (Philomel)

THE KEEPING QUILT
by Patricia Polacco (Simon & Schuster)

CHERRY PIES AND LULLABIES
by Lynn Reiser (Greenwillow)

COPPER TIN CUP
by Carole Lexa Schaefer, illustrated by Stan Fellows (Candlewick)

THIS IS THE BIRD
by George Shannon, illustrated by David Soman (Houghton Mifflin)

THIS IS THE DREAM
by Diane Z. Shore & Jessica Alexander, illustrated by James Ransome (Amistad/HarperCollins)

WHO'S IN A FAMILY?
by Robert Skutch, illustrated by Laura Nienhaus (Tricycle Press)

ME AND MY FAMILY TREE
by Joan Sweeney, illustrated by Annette Cable (Crown)

THE WALKING STICK
by Maxine Trottier, illustrated by Annouchka Gravel Galouchko (Stoddart)

"What Was It Like, Grandma?" series
(Lerner)

FAMILY MEMBERS

mother
father
sister
brother

female parent
male parent
female sibling
male sibling

stepmother
stepfather
stepsister
stepbrother
half sister
half brother

married to father
married to mother
stepparent's daughter
stepparent's son
daughter of mother and stepfather or father and stepmother
son of mother and stepfather or father and stepmother

grandmother
grandfather
great-grandmother
great-grandfather

parent's mother
parent's father
grandparent's mother
grandparent's father

aunt
uncle
niece
nephew
cousin

mother or father's sister (also uncle's wife)
mother or father's brother (also aunt's husband)
female child of sister or brother
male child of sister or brother
child of aunt or uncle

first cousin
second cousin

have same grandparents
have same great-grandparents

cousin once removed
cousin twice removed

share relatives that are one generation apart
share relatives that are two generations apart

