

Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

February 2014: Unsung Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement

By Debbie Vilardi

Debbie Vilardi is an author of poetry, lesson plans and works of fiction. She is seeking an agent and publisher for her chapter book, Flood, set during Hurricane Katrina.

Goal: To learn about the less famous contributors to the modern civil rights movement.

*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning:

Study the cover. What do you think the hands represent? Review the article titles in the table of contents. Have you heard of any of these people? If so, what do you know about them?

"The Fight for Civil Rights" by Eileen Terrill and Geoff Williams (Pages 2-3)

Vocabulary: segregated

Comprehension:

1. What are civil rights?
2. How did segregation prevent blacks from having their civil rights?
3. How did the civil rights movement begin?
4. Why did the movement succeed?
5. What types of punishment faced civil rights protesters?

Discussion Activity: Study the photo that accompanies this article. What are the people protesting? Why might they be dressed up for their protest? Do you think children should participate in protests?

Research: The 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution; segregation laws; Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King; Thurgood Marshall; Rosa Parks

"Pivotal Moments" by Andrew Matthews (Pages 4-5)

Vocabulary: precedent, integrated

Research Activity: Select one of the moments or organizations highlighted and research it. What led up to its development? Who participated in it and why? What impact did it have on civil rights or the civil rights movement? Was the impact local or national? Is it continuing to have an impact today? Present your findings to your class.

Articles on Pages 6-39

Vocabulary: human rights, social issues, pacifists, pilgrimage, class action, militant

The articles on these pages focus on individuals and small groups. Answer as many of the following questions as possible for each article.

1. Who is the article about?
2. What role did his, or her, or their upbringing play in their beliefs about civil rights?
3. How did this person or group of people become involved in the civil rights movement?
4. What was the overall impact of this person or group's involvement?
5. What is the person or group most known for?
6. What other civil rights activities was the person or group involved with?
7. Describe the person or group's methods for achieving change.
8. Did the person or group promote civil rights for workers, women, or other groups that are not African American? Which groups and why?
9. What organizations did this person or group belong to and did they help found those organizations?
10. In what ways, if any, was this person or group persecuted for involvement with the civil rights movement?
11. Was this person or group ever criticized by other members of the civil rights movement? If so, why?
12. Is the person or group still active in civil rights today? If so, how?

Writing Activities:

1. Many of these civil rights workers were religious leaders. What is the relationship between the teachings of their religions and their civil rights work? Write an essay arguing for or against a link between these two callings.
2. Many students were civil rights activists. Why do you think young African Americans supported and participated in the movement in such large numbers? What made education an important factor?

Research: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Harry S. Truman, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Robert F. Kennedy, the United States Supreme Court, the 1966 March Against Fear, Birmingham children's crusade,

Freedom Summer, National Urban League, Howard University, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Profile in Courage Award

"In Memory" by Andrew Matthews (Pages 40-41)

Vocabulary: supremacists

Complete the activity mentioned in the opening paragraph.

"More Fighters for Civil Rights" by Marcia Amidon Lusted (Pages 42-43)

Citizenship Activity: Select one of the causes mentioned in the article and research it. Write a letter to a government official in the United States or elsewhere in support of this cause.

Research: John Peters Humphrey, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations General Assembly, Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize, Rigoberta Menchu

Activities for the Entire Issue: Discuss whether or not the civil rights movement has achieved its goals.

Create a timeline listing the events mentioned in each article. Include the years each civil rights organization was established? Which years were busiest?