

Fort Wayne
youththeatre
*Education
Guide*



**Ruby
Bridges**



2023-24 SEASON

Fort Wayne youthatre *About Us...*

As the fifth oldest active children's theatre in the nation, Youthatre is dedicated to its mission to "educate, engage and entertain" through quality theatrical experiences. In 1934, Dr. Clive McAllister, president of the Old Fort Players (now the Civic Theatre), appointed a committee to create a junior or children's theater branch of the organization. The committee established the philosophy that the new "Children's Theatre" would develop poise, better diction, and self-esteem for children through dramatic instruction. They would give at least one play a year, and awaken enthusiasm in children for beauty in art and integrity in dramatic literature.

The first class began with an enrollment of a whopping 40 students, each of which paid just \$1.00 for 8 classes! The first production, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," was performed at the Majestic Theatre in Fort Wayne and had a cast of 75 young people. Tickets were only 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults.

In 1954, the Majestic Theatre was deemed unsafe for children by the fire department and so the Children's Theatre spent the next 10 years at various locations in the city. By the time it rejoined the Civic Theatre at the Old Palace Theatre, it had a new name, the "Fort Wayne Youthatre." In 1973, both organizations moved to their current home in the Arts United Center on E. Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne. The Youthatre became autonomous in 1984.

In 1978, Broadway star Harvey Cocks became the Executive Director of Youthatre. Even after retiring from that position, Harvey remained as our Artist in Residence; inspiring young artists for over forty years until his death in 2022. In 2010, Leslie Hormann took the reigns, serving as Executive/Artistic Director until 2018.

Youthatre is currently managed by Executive/Artistic Director Todd Espeland, who came to us in 2018 after serving as Artistic Director of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. He is joined by Associate Director/Director of Outreach Christopher J. Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Marketing Director Morgan Montgomery, Administrative Assistant Kimee Gearhart and a staff of outstanding local artists who serve as teachers, guest directors, choreographers, music directors and designers.

For over three quarters of a century, Youthatre has produced classes, camps and theatrical productions for the artists and audiences of northeast Indiana. Our touring "Youthatre-On-The-Go" troupe takes literature-based shows into the community, performing in hospitals, libraries, community centers and more. In 2018, our Linda L. Ruffolo "Young Heroes of Conscience" Series, which has spotlighted the likes of Anne Frank, Ryan White, Harriet Tubman and Ruby Bridges, won the "Mayor's Arts Award."



ELEMENTS OF A PRODUCTION

SETS

The scenery pieces that form the area in which the performers act out the play. Sometimes scenery is very realistic, making the audience think they are inside a real house, for example. Other times the scenery is quite fanciful or limited. What different sets can you name in the show? What time and place does it look like?

LIGHTS

The lighting instruments that help to create the right atmosphere on the stage. Lights direct the attention of the audience to specific areas of the stage or to a specific performer. The lights may be different colors to add special effects such as nighttime or a storm. How do the lights in this production show changes in the time and place?

PROPS

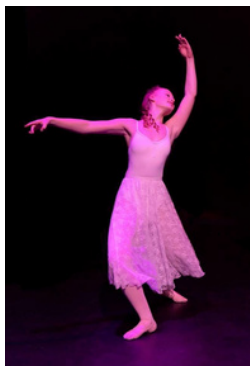
The objects performers carry to help them act out the story. Look for important props that help define character or place. Can you name a few?

MAKE-UP

The cosmetic bases, blushes, lipsticks, mascara and eye liners which helps the performer physically become the character he/she is playing. Make-up is also used so that the performers facial features can be seen clearly under the bright stage lights from a distance. Do you notice any special make-up in the show?

COSTUMES

The clothing the performers wear. Depending on the story being acted out, this clothing may be what a character of the time would have actually worn. It may also be very exaggerated or fantastic in the case of a dream or a fairy-tale. Costumes help the audience know what a character is like or where and when he/she lived. Are the costumes drab or colorful? Do they look realistic? What do they tell you about the time and place?



BEHIND *the* SCENES

This remounting of our 2016 production of RUBY BRIDGES marks the 10th anniversary of our Linda L. Ruffolo Young Heroes of Conscience Series. Other past young heroes include Ryan White, Helen Keller, Anne Frank, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and Harriet Tubman. Each of these plays has been helmed by Youtheatre director/instructor/playwright Gregory Stieber, who is retiring from the series with this special anniversary production. We celebrate his talent and contribution to Youtheatre, the arts in our community, and his dedication to the important issues of our day.

GREGORY STIEBER has been with Youtheatre for more than 25 years as an actor, teacher, playwright and director. He is the creator of our "Linda L. Ruffolo Young Heroes of Conscience Series," writing & directing MARY'S STORY, THE KID FROM KOKOMO, RUBY BRIDGES, REMEMBERING ANNE, AFTER THE MIRACLE, BUILDING THE DREAM and more. He has directed for Civic, Arena & Fort Wayne Ballet. His other creations include STAR CROSSED for the Fort Wayne Dance Collective, AN EVENING OF HAMLET for the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and I WILL WAIT: The Veterans Spouse Project with George John Productions. He was named Artist of the Year by Arts United in 2011, 2015 and 2020. He was also awarded "One of the Righteous" from the Jewish Federation for his continued dedication to social justice through theatre.



**GREGORY STIEBER,
DIRECTOR & PLAYWRIGHT**



Q: What does a Director do?

A: A Director collaborates with and supervises all the other members of the production team (sets, lights, costumes, etc.) to make sure everyone is working together to tell the same story. He or she also directs the movement of the performers and helps them develop characters and relationships. In short, the Director is THE BOSS.

Q: What does a Playwright do?

A: A Playwright is the author of the play. This may be one person or a team. It may take many years for a Playwright to perfect their work through readings, workshops and productions.

HISTORY: *School Segregation*

School segregation in the United States is the separation of students based on their ethnicity.



Before the Civil War (1861-1865), enslaved children were not allowed to attend school. Soon after the war ended, the U.S. government required former slaveholding states that had fought against the Union to educate both white and Black children. Then, in 1868, Congress passed the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guaranteed every citizen equal rights and protection under the law—including equal access to education.



Not everyone agreed with these decisions. Southern leaders did not want Black people to have the same rights as white people. So most Southern states adopted a group of laws in the late 1870s, called Jim Crow laws, to segregate Black and white people.

Throughout the South, nearly all public places—restaurants, parks, movie theaters, trains, swimming pools, schools, and even drinking fountains—were separated by race. It was because of these new laws that Black children could not attend the same schools as white children in the South. Separate but not equal



Despite the 14th Amendment, Southern states were able to legally segregate Black and white children because of a U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1896 called *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. After Homer Plessy, a Black man, tried to sit in a whites-only train car, the court ruled that as long as Black and white people were treated equally, they could be separated by race. This became known as “separate but equal.”

But “separate but equal” wasn’t truly equal—conditions in places meant for Black people were usually much worse than those for white people. For instance, Black schools often had leaking roofs, sagging floors, and windows without glass. They were also overcrowded, with too many students per teacher and not enough desks or books. If books were available, they were old, outdated ones from white schools.





Black families knew that if they wanted their children to have an equal education that these laws needed to change. And the only way to do that was through the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hope for equality

In 1951, eight-year-old Linda Brown was not allowed to attend an all-white elementary school in Topeka, Kansas. Her father, Oliver Brown, did not think this was fair and filed a lawsuit against the Topeka Board of Education.

Around the same time, four other lawsuits challenging school segregation had been filed, so in 1952, the Supreme Court combined all of them into one. The justices would decide once and for all if schools could separate students based on the color of their skin.

Thurgood Marshall—who would later become the first African American Supreme Court justice—represented the five children and their families in a case called *Brown vs. Board of Education*. He argued that segregation was not equal and was actually harmful to children. The court agreed.



On May 17, 1954, every single justice decided that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional, which meant that separating children in public schools by race went against what had been outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

School segregation was now against the law. States were ordered to begin desegregating their public schools. But changes were slow to come.

Racial inequalities in the nation's school system still exist today, more than 65 years after the Brown decision. Schools in wealthier, mostly white neighborhoods sometimes have better technology, higher-quality books, and smaller class sizes; schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods with more people of color sometimes have older or broken computers, overcrowded classes, and buildings in need of repair.

But people continue to speak out against these inequalities and fight for equal education for all students. As former President Barack Obama said, "In the years to come, we must continue striving toward equal opportunities for all our children. ... Because when children learn and play together, they grow, build, and thrive together."



BIOGRAPHY:

Ruby Bridges

Ruby Nell Bridges Hall, the subject of our show, is an American civil rights activist. She was the first African American child to attend formerly whites-only William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis on November 14, 1960.



Early Life

Ruby was the oldest of five children born to Abon and Lucille Bridges. As a child, she spent much time taking care of her younger siblings, though she also enjoyed playing jump rope and softball and climbing trees. When she was four years old, the family relocated from Tylertown, Mississippi, where Bridges was born, to New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1960, when she was six years old, her parents responded to a request from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and volunteered her to participate in the integration of the New Orleans school system, even though her father was hesitant.

Schooling

Bridges attended a segregated kindergarten in 1959. In early 1960, Bridges was one of six black children in New Orleans to pass the test that determined whether they could go to the all-white William Frantz Elementary School. Two of the six decided to stay at their old school, Bridges went to Frantz by herself. Three children were transferred to McDonogh No. 19 and became known as the McDonogh Three. Bridges and her mother were escorted to school by four federal marshals during the first day that Bridges attended William Frantz Elementary. In the following days of that year, federal marshals continued to escort Bridges, though her mother stayed behind to take care of her younger siblings. Bridges' father was initially reluctant, but her mother felt strongly that the move was needed not only to give her own daughter a better education, but to "take this step forward ... for all African-American children". In the years following, Bridges noted that many others in the community, both black and white, showed support in a variety of ways. Some white families continued to send their children to Frantz despite the protests, a neighbor provided her father with a new job, and local people babysat, watched the house as protectors, and walked behind the federal marshals' car on the trips to school.



History: *The Little Rock Nine*

Although Ruby Bridges was the first African American student to attend a formerly all-white school, there were other brave students who made that initial plunge when risks were still high.



Some school districts defied the 1954 order to begin desegregation by not integrating immediately or simply doing nothing. Other school boards purposefully delayed integration by years by integrating only one grade each year. Other white parents refused to send their children to integrated schools or held angry protests that were sometimes violent to prevent Black children from registering. To help move integration along, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) decided to recruit a group of nine Black students to integrate Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The teenagers gathered on September 4, 1957, to enter the school. But the governor had called in the Arkansas National Guard, which blocked them from entering the building.

The story made headlines across America, and many people were outraged that Southern states were still defying the Supreme Court ruling. A few weeks later, on September 25, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered federal troops to escort the students—now known as the Little Rock Nine—into the school. This time the students' integration efforts were successful.

Fort Wayne Youtheatre
ACADEMY
of Performing Arts

Where Creativity Plays



CLASSES FOR AGES 3-18

ACTING | MUSICAL THEATRE | DANCE
VOICE | TECH THEATRE

FALL SEMESTER: SEPT. 9 - NOV. 11, 2023

SPRING SEMESTER: FEB. 24 - MAY 4, 2024

PRIVATE VOICE & ACTING LESSONS

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For more information, visit our website:



ACTIVITY #1:

BRAVERY BADGES

Ruby Bridges was extremely brave, even as a young kid!
This activity, best suited for Pre-K to 5th graders, encourages students to get thinking about the ways they show courage and bravery.



Materials needed:

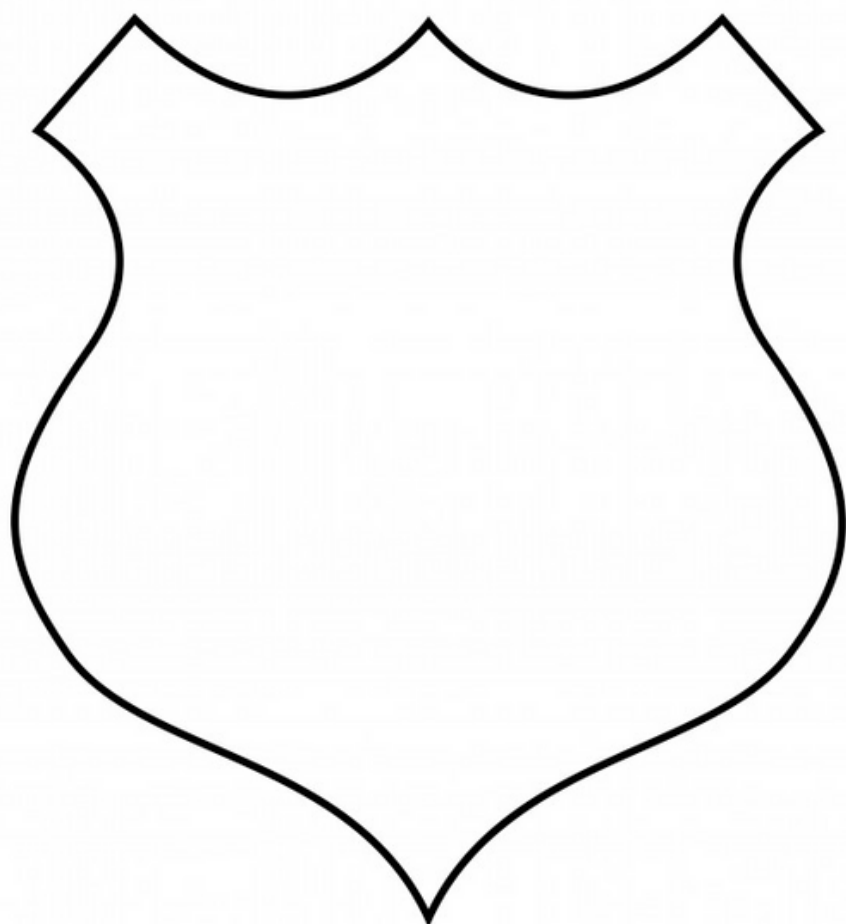
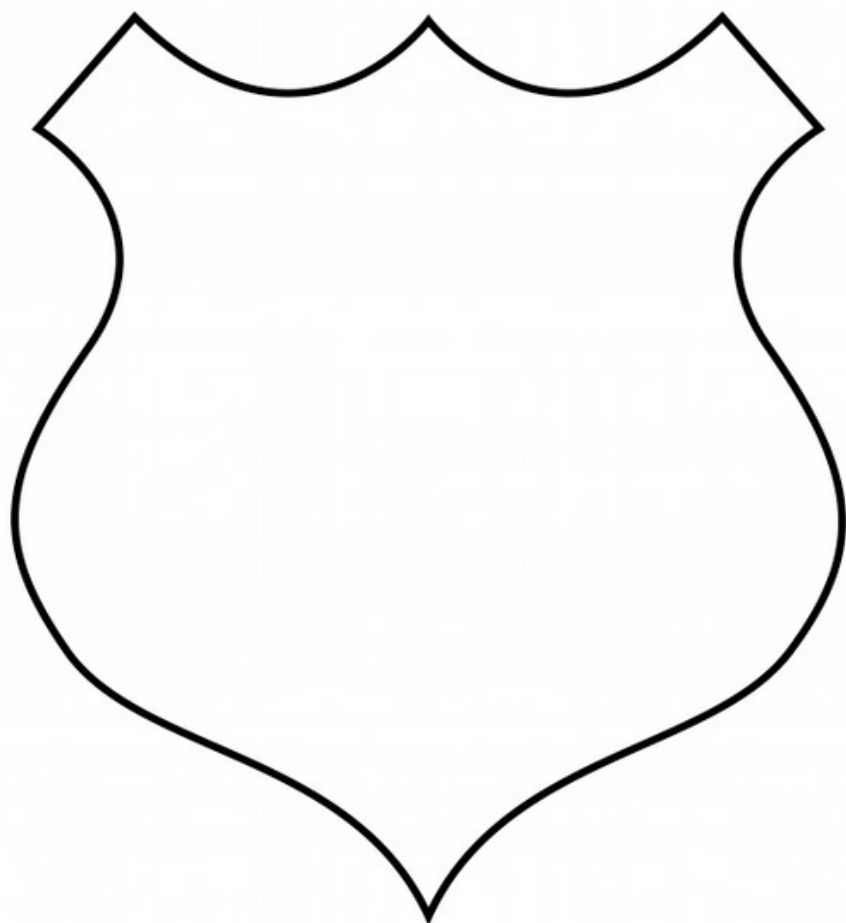
- Safety scissors
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Tape or glue

Cut out the badge outlines (found on the next page). On one badge, decorate as you please and be sure to write the word "BRAVE" big on the front. On your second badge, write out all the ways you're brave. This can be either things you face everyday or specific examples of times you've shown courage or bravery. Tape or glue the two badges together with the sides you've decorated facing outwards.



DISCUSSION TOPIC:

Ruby Bridges is considered a hero for many individuals. Who do you look up to and consider a hero? What kind of impact have they had on you or the world?



ACTIVITY #2:

THE EYES OF A CHILD

In this activity, best suited for 6th to 12th graders, students will research and describe a historical event with a point of view different from their own through descriptive imagery and specific word choice



Youtheatre's production of *Ruby Bridges* provides a fresh retelling of the events of Ruby Bridges' experience being the first African American child to attend a formerly all-white school. This is not only a remarkable and history-changing story, but even more incredible when you realize Ruby was only 6 years old when this event took place.

In this activity, you will be briefly describing a major historical event through the eyes of a child (anywhere around 3 to 11 years old). You can choose from one of the provided events, or an event that interests you!

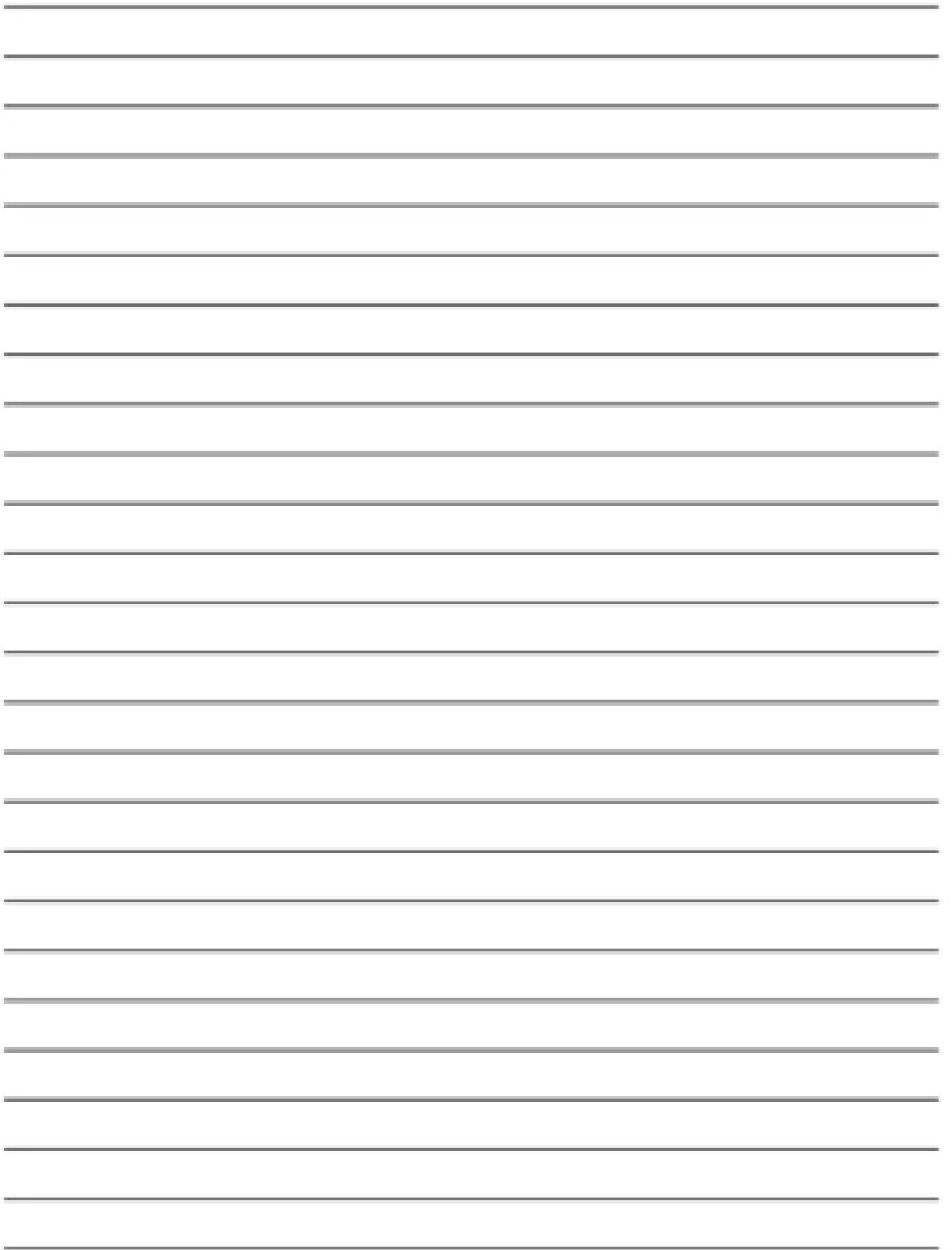
- MLK's "I Have a Dream" Speech
- The Assassination of Julius Caesar
- The Fall of the Berlin Wall
- The 9/11 Attack of the World Trade Center
- The Boston Tea Party
- The D-Day Invasion
- Tiananmen Square Crisis of 1989
- The Apollo 11 Moon Landing

Research one of these events for about **10-15 minutes**, then write about **1-2 pages** (provided on the next page) through a child's point of view. Whether they are an observer, a bystander, or actually involved in the event, try to be creative with your storytelling. What kind of words does a child that age use? How, physically, does the world look different? Are there some things happening that they don't understand? If so, how do they interpret and process those things?

Once you are finished writing, share your story with a classmate, and have them try to guess what important historical event you are describing!

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

Reflecting on Ruby's story, did she have anyone supporting or helping her? If so, who? Can you think of any examples of someone showing you support through difficult times?





Want to get involved?...

23-24 SEASON AUDITION DATES:

THE HOUSE.....Aug 21 & 22, 2023

A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS.....Oct 9 & 10, 2023

THE PROM.....Dec 10, 2023

RUBY BRIDGES.....Feb 26 & 27, 2023

GO, DOG! GO!.....Feb 26 & 27, 2023

Sign up at fortwayneyouththeatre.org/auditions

Suggested Reading...

Elementary: *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story* by Ruby Bridges, *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles, and *The Life of Ruby Bridges* by Elizabeth Raum

Middle School: *The Means That Make Us Strangers* by Christine Kindberg, *The Lions of Little Rock* by Kristin Levine, and *Glory Be* by Augusta Scattergood

High School: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (Logans, #4)* by Mildred D. Taylor



POP QUIZ:

Test Your Memory

See how much you remember from the performance of RUBY BRIDGES with this brief quiz on the play, the plot and characters.



1. Why does Mrs. Hank agree to teach only one student?
 - a. She loves to teach
 - b. She was forced to
 - c. She didn't know when she agreed to it
 - d. She doesn't like kids
2. Why did Ruby's mother stop walking with her to school?
 - a. She was scared
 - b. She got hurt
 - c. She had to go back to work
 - d. She had chores to do at home
3. What did Ruby's father talk to her about after she was playing with friends?
 - a. Dinner was ready
 - b. The sky
 - c. To change her jump rope chant
 - d. Both b & c
4. Why did Ruby say she didn't want to eat dinner?
 - a. She didn't have time
 - b. She wasn't hungry
 - c. She doesn't like her mom's cooking
 - d. She was mad at her parents
5. Mrs. Hanks is from Boston.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. What did the politician say about Ruby?
 - a. She's not very smart
 - b. There was something wrong with the test she took
 - c. She's a good kid
 - d. She is too young
7. What happened to the white children who started going to school with Ruby?
 - a. They made friends with her
 - b. Nothing
 - c. They were applauded
 - d. They got eggs and rocks thrown at them
8. What was Ruby's way of "acting out?"
 - a. Running away
 - b. Being rude to her parents
 - c. Hiding her lunch
 - d. Skipping school
9. The show begins and ends in a song.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. Why did Ruby deviate from the planned route?
 - a. She forgot to pray for them
 - b. She got scared
 - c. She didn't want to go to school
 - d. She forgot something in the car

Answer Key

Q1: a: She loves to teach Q2: c: She had to go back to work Q3: d: Both b & c Q4: b: She wasn't hungry Q5: a: True Q6: b: There was something wrong with the test she took Q7: d: They got eggs and rocks thrown at them Q8: c: Hiding her lunch Q9: a: True Q10: a: She forgot to pray for them

2023-24 SEASON SCHOOL SHOWS

Did that door just creeeeek open on its own? Where did those eerie footsteps come from? Do ghosts roam the halls or is the house itself evil? A trio of students enter a haunted house determined to answer this question. Using spine-tingling tales from authors like Edgar Allen Poe, Youtheatre and Theatrefolk Publishing collaborate on this world premiere about the stories that lie within the walls of these haunted habitats. Only the spirits know....and they're watching you....

Performance: Monday, October 2, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater



Everyone's favorite holiday classic returns to Youtheatre in an all new production. Charles M. Schulz's Emmy Award-winning **A Charlie Brown Christmas** has been warming hearts since it debuted on television over 50 years ago. Now the whole family can join Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, good ol' Charlie Brown and the whole Peanuts gang as they sing, dance, and learn the true meaning of Christmas LIVE ON-STAGE!

Performance: Monday, December 11, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

Since 2014, Youtheatre has shone a light on young people making a difference with our *Young Heroes of Conscience Series*. To celebrate the series 10th Anniversary, we revisit a past hero whose story seems all too relevant today. Ruby Bridges was born in 1954, the same year Brown v. Board of Education ordered schools to integrate with "all deliberate speed." Six years later, as immortalized by the famous Norman Rockwell painting, Ruby became the face of integration when she enrolled in the all-white William Frantz Elementary School. Her story shows one little girl's unbeatable courage in the face of adversity, helping lead the Civil Rights movement up the front steps and into America's classrooms.

Performance: TBA



Youtheatre and the Allen County Public Library team up for the first in our *Stories from the Stacks: Theatre for Young Readers Series*. Aimed at Pre-K through 3rd Graders (but with plenty to enjoy for all ages), P.D. Eastman's classic children's book **Go, Dog. Go!** comes to life on stage in an exploration of movement, music, color and space. The dogs delve into life with gusto, creating a visual spectacle for the audience to feast upon. They snorkel. They howl at the moon. They ride a ferris wheel. They sing and dance and climb trees. This is a rollicking free-for-all of chicanine-ery. . A big and little musical world of doggy fun. Like a pop-up book that comes to life – and never stops.

Performance: Monday, April 29, 2024 | 10:00 AM | Downtown ACPL Theatre

For more information and resources for your classroom,
visit our website at fortwayneyoutheatre.org/school-shows-resources

LANGUAGE ARTS

STANDARDS

Most Youtheatre productions are literature-based and on the recommended reading list of the Library of Congress.

Language Arts Standard: Perceive, identify, describe and analyze the distinguishing characteristics of form, structure and style of story.

- Retell story identifying plot, theme, characters, and setting.
- Recall story plot utilizing chronological order.

Language Arts Standard: Evaluate Theatre/Literary work based on critical perception and analysis.

- Share perception of theatre experience in the area of voice, movement, mood and motivation.
- Make suggestions for alternative endings.
- Analyze and critique story and performance through creative writing.
- Create a similar story through creative writing.

Language Arts Standard: Use Theatre /Literary work to develop affective areas of self-concept, problem solving and interpersonal skills.

- React to feelings of self and others within a production.
- Identify conflict within story as it relates to self and others.
- Compare and contrast problems and resolutions found in different stories and real life situations.
- Express personal attitudes, values, and belief systems as it relates to theatre piece.
- Interact freely in conversations, class discussions and dramatic activities.
- Contribute to the solving of problems through dramatization/improvisation.

Language Arts Standard: Examine Theatre /Literary work in a historical and multicultural context.

- Identify similarities and differences between characters from diverse cultures depicted.
- Identify historical differences/figures in different time frames depicted in story.
- Identify significance of historical aspects in story.

Exploring Aesthetics: A Philosophical Basis for Life!

- Attending live theatre helps children value its importance to the community and helps develop a lifelong commitment and love of Theatre and Literature. Students experience aesthetic growth through appreciation of Theatre.
- Students discover through experience that making art is an essential human activity. It requires collaboration, and enhances creative thinking.

