Nashville Children's Theatre

ROSA PARKS *and the* MONTGOMERY *Bus Boycott*

Support for *Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott* provided by

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Middle Tennessee

By Sue Greenberg

Commissioned and first presented by the St. Louis Black Repertory Company in 1988. The script was revised and expanded in 2014 for the Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, MO.

February 25 - March 13

Nashville Children's Theatre
25 Middleton St
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 254-9103
nashvillect.org

Inside this Guide:

Subject Area Key:

These icons show what subject areas each activity addresses.
Standards for all activities are on page 9.


English Language Arts


Visual Arts


Theatre Arts


Career Guidance


History / Social Studies


Music


Dance

Once you've been to NCT, please tell us about your experience by completing an Online Survey.
(This survey is a requirement for ticket subsidy recipients.)

Go to nashvillect.org and click "For Teachers" from the left menu.
Then follow the "Click here for a short online survey" link. Thanks!

The information and activities in this guide were compiled, devised, and edited by Megan Bleil and Alicia Fuss. Layout by Erin McInnis.

About Nashville Children's Theatre
Nashville Children's Theatre is a professional theatre company providing the children, families and educators of Middle Tennessee with extraordinary shared theatrical experiences that inspire imagination, develop creativity and build community.

About the Play

About the Play:
On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks made history when she refused to vacate her seat on a segregated bus for a white male. Her decision launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott, an influential moment in the modern civil rights era because of the results it achieved. Sixty years later, her legacy lives on. Since 2013, her statue has sat in the United States Capitol, a reminder of the brave actions of a "simple seamstress".

We are familiar with a romanticized version of the story in which Rosa Parks is the hero. She has become a symbol for change; however, the bus boycott did not start, nor end, due to her actions alone. Over the course of 381 days, roughly 50,000 African Americans participated in the boycott, the idea of which had been planned before Rosa Parks was ever arrested. Following her arrest, white citizens also aided in the effort, including Reverend Graetz and the Durrs.

On November 13, 1956, the Supreme Court declared that segregation on buses was unconstitutional and the black citizens of Montgomery were able to return to the buses on December 21, 1956. Their patience, dedication, and courage changed our country's landscape and serves as a reminder that a group of citizens can bring about positive change through civil, caring commitment to one another. It is a crucial moment of success in our history, but it is not the final chapter for civil rights.

"People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired. But that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of the working day.... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in." - Rosa Parks, *Rosa Parks: My Story*

About the Playwright
When asked what inspired her to write *Rosa Parks & the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, Sue Greenberg referenced the myths that surround Parks' story. According to Greenberg, Parks' story is "usually oversimplified and partially incorrect." Many people assume that she refused to give up her seat because she was tired; others believe that, as a civil rights activist, she planned her act of defiance.

Greenberg was originally commissioned by the St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre Company to write the play. The script was revised and expanded for The Coterie in Kansas City. She is the part-time Executive Director for the St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts and, during the summer, she is the Company Manager for The Muny, an outdoor theatre that produces Broadway musicals.

Slideshow


Rosa Parks & the Montgomery Bus Boycott is an historical narrative about the events of the boycott, similar to a docudrama style of theatre. Instead of seeing the action that takes place, the characters describe the events of the boycott to the audience. Invite students to research three or four key events of the boycott in groups (ex. Rosa Parks refusal to stand up, the bombing of Dr. King's home). One student will describe the moment that will be depicted in the picture; the remaining students will create a frozen tableau (or image) of the event using their bodies.

What is tableau? A tableau (or frozen picture) is a dramatic activity where a group of students are asked to physically construct a scene through body placement and facial expressions.

Beliefs and Stereotypes

We are not born with our belief systems; rather, we are informed by what we see, hear, and understand in the world around us. We often surround ourselves with people who hold similar belief systems, but it is equally important to listen to (and respect) opposing opinions.

Spectrum of Difference

To prepare for this activity, place signs on opposite sides of the classroom that say “Agree” and “Disagree” (or, as a variation, “Like Most” and “Like Least”). Ask students to imagine that there is a line that extends from one sign to the other. Explain that you are going to make statements or ask questions about situations and social issues and that they will stand somewhere on the line in a spot that best represents their feelings on the subject matter. They may have varying levels of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Students standing in the middle of the line may be undecided or may feel like they can go either way, depending on the situation. Why did they choose to stand where they did? What do they notice about the group as a whole? Does everyone tend to agree or are differences in opinion emerging during the activity?

> **Sample Questions:** How do you feel about: Pizza? Going to School? Gossip? Talking about feelings? Working on projects in large groups? Standing up in front of people? Meeting new people? Public speaking?

Point of View Circle

Have a person stand in the center of the circle or place an object in the middle. Ask for a student on one side to describe features that they can see (ex. The person has two eyes. The clock has 12 numbers). Then ask another student on a different side of the circle. Students should only describe to you what they can currently see; they cannot make assumptions about what is hidden from view. Ask the rest of the circle who is right. Listen to a few opinions from the group and then explain that both students were right. They expressed a difference of perspective (or point of view). When can a difference of perspective be a good thing? When can it be a bad thing? Explore different scenarios, such as action vs. non-action, or peaceful protest vs. violence.

Topic Machine

Ask one student to create a short movement that they can repeat and sustain for the length of the activity. It may or may not be accompanied by sound. After they have established their movement, ask for a volunteer to join the “machine” by adding a different movement that complements the original movement. One at a time, ask other students to join. Now, come up with a list of topics or themes that are relevant to the story of Rosa Parks. Using the topic as inspiration for their next machine, students will incorporate a repetitive sound or line of dialogue into their movement. For example, students might create a “Justice Machine.” Does the movement match the dialogue? How did physicalizing the movement help reflect what you were saying?

Stereotypes

A stereotype is a widely held but overly simplified view that is heavily regarded as being true. As a group, brainstorm a list of stereotypes that are used in school or in popular culture and come up with a list of adjectives for each one. Have they ever been stereotyped or experienced bias? Ask each student to create a collage using paper, magazine images, or words to present how being stereotyped makes them feel.

> **Extension:** Challenge students to pay attention to stereotypes that the see in the media at home on TV and in movies or books. Ask them to make a list of the type of media, a description of the group stereotyped, and the stereotype portrayed, as well as their reaction to it.

Courage of a Community

In *Rosa Parks & the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, the citizens of Montgomery united to achieve a common goal. Whether it was passing out flyers, providing rides through a carpool system, or simply offering support, the success of the boycott can be linked back to the community's involvement.

Carpooling during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Flock of Geese

In groups of four, have students form a diamond and face in the same direction. The student at the front of the group will be the leader. The leader will improvise slow, expressive movement and the rest of the group will mirror it. At any point, the leader may choose to turn 90 degrees. When that happens, the student who is now in front becomes the leader. After each student has had at least one turn being the leader, discuss the differences between the two roles: Did you feel like a cohesive group? How did it feel to lead the group? How did it feel to follow? By sharing responsibility to keep the group moving at all times, did you feel as though there was less pressure on you as an individual?

Help!

Invite students to split into pairs and decide who will be Partner A and Partner B. Partner A will silently choose an activity that is difficult, if not impossible, to do alone, such as folding a large blanket or moving a heavy piece of furniture. Without any sound, Partner A will begin to improvise the activity, making it clear what the activity is. When Partner B thinks they have figured out what Partner A is trying to do, they will join the improvisation and add dialogue. For example, if Partner A is miming pulling on an imaginary rope, Partner B might join the scene and say, "It looks like you need a tug of war partner!"

Making Connections


As a class, brainstorm a list of words (ex. cat, bus, winter). Ask students to write down an association or connection that they have to each word.

> Example: "Dog"
> Student A: I have a pet dog.
> Student B: I'm allergic to dogs.
> Student C: My favorite children's book was Go, Dog, Go!

In this example, everyone was able to relate to the word in some way, although their associations with it were different. However, you may find that several students share the same, or similar, connections. As an extension, do the same activity with a list of themes or scenarios.

Variation: In groups of three, give students five minutes to discover three things that they have in common that they did not know before and/or are not outwardly obvious.

"At the time I was arrested I had no idea it would turn into this. It was just a day like any other day. The only thing that made it significant was that the masses of the people joined in." -- Rosa Parks


Right: Rosa Parks is fingerprinted by Officer D.H. Lackey in Montgomery, AL, on Feb. 22, 1956. (AP Photo/Gene Herrick)

The Music of the Movement

It is impossible to talk about the Civil Rights Movement without addressing the importance that music played in the movement. In this production of *Rosa Parks & the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, the music of the era is woven into the play's narration of history. Freedom songs, or protest songs, were integral to the movement. Many of the songs began as spiritual, or gospel, songs and the lyrics were changed to inject new meaning into familiar melodies. However, not all of the music was rooted in African American culture. Folk singers such as Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Peter, Paul & Mary also joined in the movement and demonstrated that there was white support of the boycott. Music has the ability to transcend color, gender, and culture; it is a universal language. The music of the movement served many purposes. It was a call to action, a source of hope and comfort, and also served as an inspiration.

Freedom Songs

Wade in the Water
Will the Circle Be Unbroken?
This Little Light of Mine
We Shall Overcome
We Shall Not Be Moved

Listen to these and other songs of the Civil Rights Movement:
www.folkways.si.edu/sounds-of-the-civil-rights-movement/music/playlist/smithsonian
www.folkways.si.edu/voices-of-the-civil-rights-movement-black-american-freedom-songs-1960-1966/african-american-music-documentary-struggle-protest/album/smithsonian

Listen

Invite your students to think about the music they listen to on a daily basis. What kind do they listen to and why? Is there a song that had a particular emotional impact on them, and why? What songs have taught or inspired you and your students?

Have your class listen to the music that was sung during the Civil Rights Movement.

Are any of the songs familiar to your students? Where have they heard them before? What themes or messages are they singing about? What mood does the music evoke.

Analyze

Consider the music that has an effect on you now and the music of the era. How can music bring about social change and why? Can music have the same impact today? Can your students think of any modern day protest songs? Play a few songs for your class that are meant to inspire social change and ask them to consider the social climate at the time. How do they relate to civil rights?

Ask your students to think about inequalities and issues that still exist in the present day. Start a conversation with your students about an inequality that they feel they currently experience in their lives at home, at school, or even among friends. How can music help promote tolerance when it comes to race, gender, religion, ethnic backgrounds, and disabilities?

Joan Baez and Bob Dylan at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963 (Rowland Scherman, U.S. National Archives)

Write

Using the lyrics for one of the songs provided, ask your students to write a new protest song that focuses on an inequality or injustice of their choice. This activity can either be done as a class using one social issue of the group's consensus, or students can write their original songs individually. Pick one verse that students will change and underline the words that will be changed to relay the new message while retaining the original melody. Use the worksheet provided on the next page or create your own.

The Music of the Movement

NAME: _____

We Shall Overcome

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The Lord will see us through, The Lord will see us through,
The Lord will see us through someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We're on to victory, We're on to victory,
We're on to victory someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We're on to victory someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We'll walk hand in hand someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not afraid today.

The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
The truth shall make us free someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
The truth shall make us free someday.

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
We shall live in peace someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall live in peace someday.

We shall _____, we shall _____,
We shall _____ someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall _____ someday.

_____ will see us through, _____ will see us through,
_____ will see us through someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We're _____, We're _____,
We're _____ someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We're _____ someday.

We'll walk _____, we'll walk _____,
We'll walk _____ someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We'll walk _____ someday.

We are not _____, we are not _____,
We are not _____ today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not _____ today.

_____ shall make us free, _____ shall make us free,
_____ shall make us free someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
_____ shall make us free someday.

We shall live in _____, we shall live in _____,
We shall live _____ someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall live _____ someday.

Lyrics to other freedom songs can be found here:
http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/freedom/LunchCounter_Songs.pdf
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/soundtrack-lyrics/

Social Activism

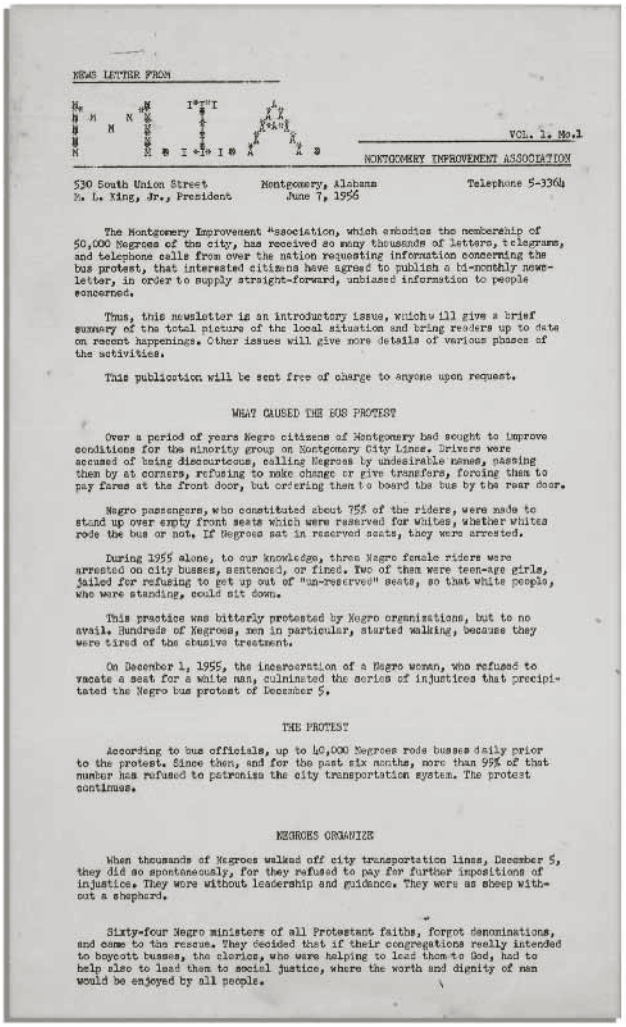
The citizens of Montgomery practiced non-violent action to achieve social change in their community. In the following activities, consider what type of role you can play in achieving change in your own neighborhood, school, or community.

List of Demands

The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) submitted a list of modest demands to the bus company that outlined the terms they wanted met before they would agree to end the boycott. Ask your students to consider an inequality or injustice they experience in their lives. Who would you submit a list of demands to and what would those demands be?

Forum Theatre

This activity is part of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. Forum Theatre is an interactive play space in which the audience becomes "spect-actors" and work alongside the actors to find a solution to a problem. Ask students to brainstorm a scenario in which they have been unable to achieve something that they wanted; there must be some type of obstacle. Ask for a few students to begin acting out the scene but when they reach the moment of conflict, freeze the action. Take suggestions from the audience on how they could try to get what they want or achieve a compromise. The same actors may continue the scene using their suggestions, or an audience member can switch place with one of the actors. Try several different scenarios to see if they can find an effective, positive way of reconciling the problem.



NEWS LETTER FROM

MONTGOMERY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1. No.1

530 South Union Street — Montgomery, Alabama — Telephone 5-3304
M. L. King, Jr., President — June 7, 1956

The Montgomery Improvement Association, which embodies the membership of 50,000 Negroes of the city, has received so many thousands of letters, telegrams, and telephone calls from over the nation requesting information concerning the bus protest, that interested citizens have agreed to publish a bi-monthly newsletter, in order to supply straight-forward, unbiased information to people concerned.

Thus, this newsletter is an introductory issue, which will give a brief summary of the total picture of the local situation and bring readers up to date on recent happenings. Other issues will give more details of various phases of the activities.

This publication will be sent free of charge to anyone upon request.

WHAT CAUSED THE BUS PROTEST

Over a period of years Negro citizens of Montgomery had sought to improve conditions for the minority group on Montgomery City Lines. Drivers were accused of being discourteous, calling Negroes by undesirable names, passing them by at corners, refusing to make change or give transfers, forcing them to pay fares at the front door, but ordering them to board the bus by the rear door.

Negro passengers, who constituted about 75% of the riders, were made to stand up over empty front seats which were reserved for whites, whether whites rode the bus or not. If Negroes sat in reserved seats, they were arrested.

During 1955 alone, to our knowledge, three Negro female riders were arrested on city busses, sentenced, or fined. Two of them were teen-age girls, jailed for refusing to get up out of "un-reserved" seats, so that white people, who were standing, could sit down.

This practice was bitterly protested by Negro organizations, but to no avail. Hundreds of Negroes, men in particular, started walking, because they were tired of the abusive treatment.

On December 1, 1955, the incarceration of a Negro woman, who refused to vacate a seat for a white man, culminated the series of injustices that precipitated the Negro bus protest of December 5.

THE PROTEST

According to bus officials, up to 40,000 Negroes rode busses daily prior to the protest. Since then, and for the past six months, more than 99% of that number has refused to patronize the city transportation system. The protest continues.

NEGROES ORGANIZE

When thousands of Negroes walked off city transportation lines, December 5, they did so spontaneously, for they refused to pay for further impositions of injustice. They were without leadership and guidance. They were as sheep without a shepherd.

Sixty-four Negro ministers of all Protestant faiths, forgot denominations, and came to the rescue. They decided that if their congregations really intended to boycott busses, the clerics, who were helping to lead them to God, had to help also to lead them to social justice, where the worth and dignity of man would be enjoyed by all people.

The Montgomery Improvement Association's (MIA) list of demands.

What is the Theatre of the Opressed? The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) describes theatrical forms that the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal first elaborated in the 1960s, initially in Brazil and later in Europe. Boal was influenced by the work of the educator and theorist Paulo Freire. Boal's techniques use theatre as means of promoting social and political change. In the Theatre of the Oppressed, the audience becomes active, such that as "spect-actors" they explore, show, analyse and transform the reality in which they are living.

Community Service Project

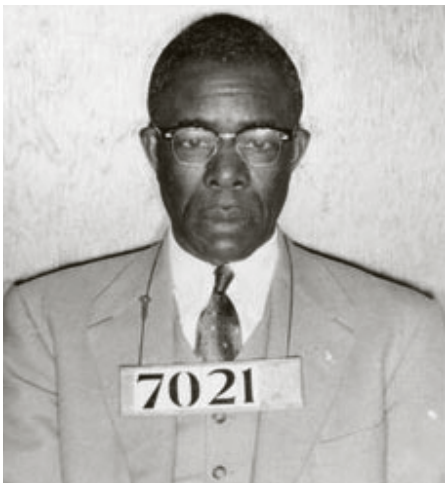
How can we be a better part of our community by lending a hand? Brainstorm a list of issues or problems that your students observe on a daily basis, or that exist in your school, community, state, or world. Discuss possible solutions to these problems. Either individually or in groups, encourage students to think about what they can do in their community to help solve problems. Local service volunteer opportunities can be found through Hands on Nashville (www.hon.org).

HandsOn NASHVILLE

(Less) Familiar Faces of the Boycott

Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King became household names as a result of their involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. Not all of the individuals responsible for the success of the boycott achieved the same level of fame.

Jo Ann Robinson
Referred to as the "unsung hero" of the boycott, Jo Ann Robinson was the civil rights activist who first proposed the idea of the boycott more than a year before it began and was instrumental in its planning.



E.D. Nixon
A long-time activist who protested racial discrimination, particularly when it came to voting, he bailed Rosa Parks out of jail and arranged for her white lawyer, Clifford Durr.

Claudette Colvin
She was fifteen years old at the time of her arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a bus, nine months before Rosa Parks did the same thing.

"Young people think Rosa Parks just sat down on a bus and ended segregation, but that wasn't the case at all." - Claudette Colvin

For more information about Claudette Colvin: www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101719889

Write in Role

Research one of the boycott participants above, or another person who was instrumental in the boycott. What role did they play in the boycott and why are they important to the outcome? Ask students to write a piece of historical fiction from the perspective of one of the lesser known people involved in the boycott.

Write a Letter
Write a letter detailing one event that happened during the boycott. Their knowledge about the event will be inspired by their research.

Thousands of commuters walked long distances to work instead of riding the buses during the bus boycott in 1956.

Write a Persuasive Essay
Challenge your students to write a persuasive essay about why their character deserves more credit for their role in the boycott.

Educational Standards

Page 2: About the Play
- *Slideshow*
  - Theatre: 2.2, 2.4, 5.1, 5.2

Page 3: Beliefs and Sterotypes
- *Spectrum of Difference*
  - ELA: SL 1
  - Career Guidance:
    - Grades 4-5: 7.2, 7.7
    - Grades 6-8: 7.1, 7.2, 7.8
- *Point of View Circle*
  - ELA: SL 4
  - Career Guidance:
    - Grades 4-5: 7.2, 7.5, 7.7
    - Grades 6-8: 7.2, 7.5, 7.7
- *Topic Machine*
  - Theatre: 2.5, 2.6
  - Career Guidance:
    - Grades 4-5: 7.5
    - Grades 6-8: 7.5
- *Stereotypes*
  - ELA: SL 1 & 4
  - Career Guidance
    - Grades 4-5: 7.7
    - Grades 6-8: 7.8
  - Visual Arts: 1.2, 3.1

Page 4: Courage of a Community
- *Flock of Geese*
  - Dance
    - Grades 4-5: 3.1
    - Grades 6-8: 2.1, 2.2
- *Help!*
  - Theatre:
    - Grades 4-5: 2.4, 2.5, 2.6
    - Grades 6-8: 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6

Making Connections
- ELA: SL 1
- Career Guidance
  - Grades 4-5: 7.5, 7.8
  - Grades 6-8: 7.1

Page 5 & 6: Music of the Movement
- *Listen*
  - Music
    - Grades 4-5: 6.4
    - Grades 6-8: 6.1
  - ELA: SL 1 & 2
- *Analyze*
  - Music
    - Grades 4-5: 7.1, 9.1
    - Grades 6-8: 6.2, 7.1, 9.2
  - ELA: SL 1 & 2
- *Write*
  - ELA: W4
  - Music:
    - Grades 4-5: 8.2, 9.1
    - Grades 6-8: 6.1, 8.2, 9.1

Page 7: Social Activism
- *List of Demands*
  - ELA: W1, W9
  - Career Guidance
    - Grades 4-5: 7.2, 7.5, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4
    - Grades 6-8: 7.2, 7.5, 8.1 - 8.3
- *Forum Theatre*
  - Theatre
    - Grades 4-5: 2.1 - 2.6
    - Grades 6-8: 2.1 - 2.3, 2.5, 2.6
- *Community Service Project*
  - Career Guidance
    - Grades 4-5: 8.1, 8.4
    - Grades 6-8: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 9.2

Page 8: (Less) Familiar Faces
- *Write In Role*
  - Social Studies 5th Grade: 5.65
  - Theatre
    - 4th-5th Grade: 2.2
    - 6th-8th Grade: 2.1
  - ELA: W3, W9

Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott
Cast

LaToya Gardner ..... Rosa Parks
Latrisha Talley... Claudette Colvin, Coretta
Lauren Jones ..... Bus Passenger, Grandma
James Rudolph .....E.D. Nixon
Rashad Rayford..... M.L. King
Denice Hicks ..... White Woman
Bobby Wyckoff .....Bus Driver, Sellers

Free Educator Preview:
Thurs, February 27th

Reception/Workshop : 5:00 pm Performance : 6:30 pm

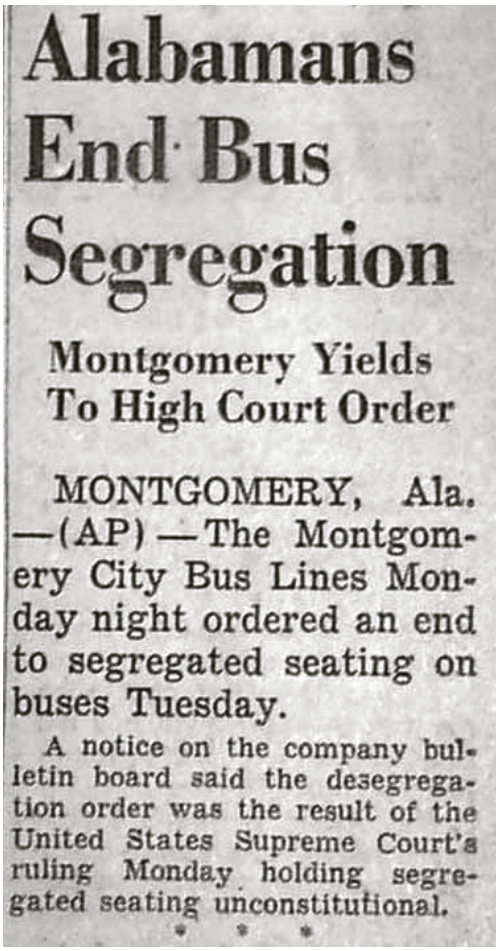
This FREE event includes a wine and cheese reception followed by a 45-minute workshop where NCT staff demonstrate lessons designed to explore some curricular connections of the production. The workshop qualifies for Professional Development credit.

Reception begins at 5 pm, and the evening includes two tickets to the 6:30 pm performance. Educators may purchase additional tickets for this performance at the school rate of $8.00/person. The workshop is intended for adults only.

To reserve your spot visit NashvilleCT.org and click on "Book a Field Trip" under "visiting NCT." Scroll down to the Educator Preview Section

The bus on which Parks was riding before her arrest, is now a museum exhibit at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI.

On February 27, 2013, a statute of Rosa Parks comissioned by Congress was unveiled in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol, approximately 100 years after her birth.



Alabamans End Bus Segregation

Montgomery Yields To High Court Order

MONTGOMERY, Ala. —(AP)—The Montgomery City Bus Lines Monday night ordered an end to segregated seating on buses Tuesday.

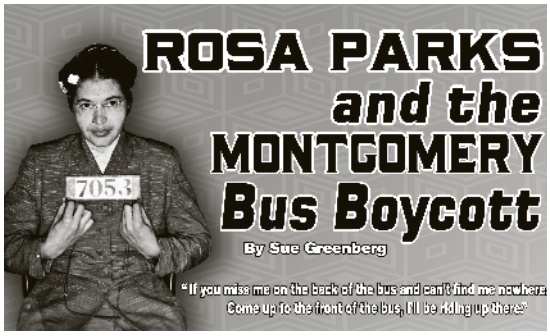
A notice on the company bulletin board said the desegregation order was the result of the United States Supreme Court's ruling Monday holding segregated seating unconstitutional.

Nashville Children's Theatre's 2015-16 Season

Sept 17 - Oct 4

Oct 29 - Dec 6

Jan 14 - Feb 7



Feb 25 - Mar 13

Apr 14 - May 15

To make a group reservation
call CATHERINE at 615-252-4662.

NCT is proud to acknowledge the government agencies, foundations and business partners that provide leadership support:
Metro Nashville Arts Commission, Tennessee Arts Commission,
The Memorial Foundation, The Shubert Foundation