



Post-Show Resources: Encouraging Discussions about Equity & Diversity

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Strong Inside addresses racism on both individual and systemic levels, presenting a thought-provoking stage performance that features historical events in Nashville. As we delve into discussions surrounding racism, we acknowledge the sensitivity of this topic, especially for those who have experienced racial trauma.

This guide is designed to support **families, students, and educators** in fostering meaningful conversations about equity and diversity. We hope these discussion tips will help you and your children explore the production's themes with empathy and curiosity and that our shared resources connect you with additional support and context. Let us come together to learn, grow, and promote inclusivity, as we work towards a more equitable and understanding society.

Discussion Questions

Use the following questions to explore themes and events in the show. In addition to these questions, check in with children after the show about how it made them feel, what surprised them, moments that stood out, etc.

The Story

- Perry Wallace once said that people can be treated by others in one of three ways: treated well, treated poorly, or not treated at all. What does this mean to you? What are examples of this in the show?
- The Pastor tells the congregation to say to their neighbor, "I *am* somebody. I **AM** somebody!" Why do you think he does this exercise? What does saying that phrase mean to you? Is there power in speaking something out loud?
- The story ends with Adult Perry asking, "What difference will you make in *your* world? The ball's in your court." What is your response to his question?

The Production

- This show is part of NCT's "Courageously Me" season. How does this show fit in the season's theme?
- The show uses mirrors. Why do you think that is? How did it help tell the story?
- The show also uses media from true history. Why do you think the artistic team made that choice? How did it support the story?

The History

- Why is studying the Civil Rights Movement important today? In the United States? In Middle Tennessee?
- What was it like seeing a show about history that took place right here in your community? Did you know any of the references the characters made, such as specific locations? How did that make you feel?
- If you could talk to Perry Wallace today, what would you say or ask him?

I Saw - I Think - I Wonder Exercise

Help your children unpack the thoughts and feelings they have after the show. On a piece of paper, draw two lines to make three columns. At the top of the first column, write "I Saw." At the top of the second, write "I Think." At the top of the third, write "I Wonder." Next invite the kids to write or draw their responses to each prompt as it relates to the show. Do the exercise as well and share what you wrote or drew.

Want to Learn More?

Interested in finding out more about Nashville's civil rights history? Visit the Nashville Public Library's Civil Rights Room and reach out to the incredible librarians there for recommended books and resources.

<https://library.nashville.org/research/civil-rights-room>

Are you an educator looking for tools to engage students with subject areas of justice, identity, diversity, and action? Visit [LearningforJustice.org](https://learningforjustice.org) - an initiative of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Are you in the field of education looking for classroom supports in SEL, current events, and facilitating brave conversations? Check out the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility.

<https://www.morningsidecenter.org/>

Formats for Post-Show Discussion

Below are some structures you can use for post-show reflection and discussion with your class or family. Remember to set group expectations to help create a safe, brave space for sharing.

Check In

At The NCT Drama School, we do a nonverbal "check in" with the students to gauge how they are feeling throughout the day. You can do the same thing with your children when experiencing or discussing something new! It can be as simple as drawing an emoji of a feeling (How are you feeling now? How did you feel during the show?) or the "thumb scale" (thumbs up if feeling great, thumbs down if feeling awful, thumbs somewhere in the middle on the scale depending on how you're feeling).



Learning for Justice's fantastic guide "[Let's Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students](#)" has great ideas, including ways to gauge students' comfort levels and feelings. (Although this guide is geared towards educators, some of the tips can be helpful for parents and guardians as well.) One way to check the "emotional temperature" in the room (to know if you need to pause the conversation to address strong emotions) is the "fist-to-five" hand signal system pictured below.

Listening Circle

Listening circles give people a chance to say what they are thinking and feeling, and can help engender mutual understanding and support. The format is simple: Arrange chairs in a circle. Provide an introduction to the issue at hand, and to the format of the circle. Then invite each person in turn to share what they are thinking and feeling.

Give each person a few minutes to say whatever they want to say – or to pass. When one person is speaking, the others in the group should pay close attention but not comment. The circle is over after every person has had a chance to speak. Often going around the circle more than once allows those who pass on the first go-round to collect their thoughts and feelings so that they can share in the next round.

Microlab

One way to support young people in dealing with emotionally laden and controversial issues is to start with a small group experience called a "microlab." In a microlab, people gain understanding through speaking and listening. It is not a time for discussion or dialogue; rather each person has a short time (one to three minutes depending on students' age) to speak in response to a question. When a person is speaking, the others in the group - usually only two or three others - should listen only and not interrupt.

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four using puzzle pieces, number cards, or by counting off. Ask participants to arrange themselves in their small groups so that each person can easily see and hear everyone else in the group.
2. Before you begin, explain the guidelines for a microlab:
 - It's okay to pass if you need more time to think or would rather not respond.
 - This is a timed activity. I will let you know when it is time to move on to the next speaker. You will each have one [or two or three] minutes to speak.
 - Speak from your own point of view.
 - Be your own barometer - share as much as you feel comfortable sharing.
 - Confidentiality is important, especially when we come back together as a large group.
3. Introduce your first microlab question. You can come up with the questions in advance, use the theatre review questions in the curriculum guide, or use the "I" In introducing each question, it's usually helpful to say the question, then give some specifics about the question or model answering the question yourself, and then repeat the question again. This gives participants some time to think about what they would like to say. In between questions, you may want to remind people to try not to interrupt or engage in dialogue.

Reconvene the full group and ask students how the microlab was for them. Then ask for volunteers to share something they said or felt in their microlab. Remind participants of the need for confidentiality - each person should only speak from his or her experience. This sharing may lead to a wider discussion.