



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

IN THE SHADOWS, AGENTS OF CHANGE

Lesson Overview

This lesson allows students to become familiar with some of the brave women who helped drive and sustain the civil rights movement. Their work and courageous efforts have gone unsung for many years. Students will explore the role played by gender during an era of expanding political rights and personal liberties.

Suggested Grade Level

Middle school (adaptable for upper elementary)

Estimated Time to Complete

Two class periods

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to

- explain why, in the struggle for civil rights, women remain less known,
- identify individual women and their contributions to the civil rights movement, and
- discuss the impact of the collaborative efforts of women in the civil rights movement.

Materials Needed

- Who Am I? Cards (Handout 1)
- Transparency of the Who Am I? Cards
- Who Am I? Quick Answers (Teacher Resource 1)
- Student Direction Sheet (Handout 2)
- Female Civil Rights Leaders (Teacher Resource 2)
- Chart paper/poster paper

Before the Lesson

As background for the teacher, read the following two articles:

1. Associated Press, “Women Had Key Roles in Civil Rights Movement: But Few Achieved Prominence with Public,” NBCNews.com, October 29, 2005:
http://www.nbcnews.com/id/9862643/ns/us_news-life/t/women-had-key-roles-civil-rights-movement/#.UwWiIc4Qwbw.

2. Steph Solis, “Strong Women Were Pillars behind Civil Rights Movement,” *USA TODAY*, August 19, 2013: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/19/march-on-washington-women/2648011/>.

Lesson Procedure

Day 1

1. *Beginning the lesson.* Divide students into groups of three. Distribute to each group one of the six cards provided in **Handout 1** (duplicate the cards as needed). Students should identify as many individuals as possible and give as much information as possible for each, such as who they are, what events or issues they are associated with, and what, if anything, these individuals had in common. Give them about 5–6 minutes to complete this activity.
2. *Class discussion.* When time is called, ask students how successful they were: Groups with List A, B, or C should be able to identify most of the names on the list; groups with List D, E, or F will probably not be able to identify most of the people on the list. Display **Handout 1** on a whiteboard or screen. Call on various groups to share their answers.
 - How many individuals did your group identify?
 - Share information about two or three of the individuals on the list.
 - As each group correctly identifies a person from the list, put a star or check next to that person’s name. This allows the class to have a visual indication of their knowledge.

Ask the class to reflect on the levels of success of the various groups.

- Why were some of the groups able to identify so many of the individuals, while others were not?
- What was the most obvious difference between the lists?

Share with students a quick fact about the unidentified individuals (see **Teacher Resource 1**).

- Does the era in which they live (or lived) play a role in their prominence or lack of prominence?
- How has the passage of time affected how we perceive their contribution to society?

3. *Discovering women leaders.* Divide the class again into groups of two (pairs). Provide each pair with the name of one of the leaders on the list in **Teacher Resource 2**. Each group is to provide the following: (a) a short, one-page biography, (b) a description of the person’s impact on the civil rights movement she was involved in, (c) a quote by that person and a picture of her, and (d) if she is still alive today, a description of what she is currently doing. Give each group a copy of the direction sheet (**Handout 2**). Determine and share with the class when the assignment will be due. Give the groups the opportunity to discuss how they will accomplish this task. This will bring you to the end of Day 1.

Day 2

4. *Finishing touches.* Reconvene the work groups and allow them a few minutes to prepare their materials for presentation.
5. *A shared experience.* Create clusters, containing three pairs each, spread out around the room. Each cluster will share the information gathered about the three women leaders they represent. Allow students 10 minutes in their cluster. Repeat the sharing process with a new set of cluster configurations, again allowing for 10 minutes. After the students have completed the second sharing time, call their attention for some quiet reflection time.
6. *Who were they?* Leaving students within the last cluster grouping, ask them to think about the women they have learned about. Lead a class discussion based on the following questions:
 - What did these women have in common?
 - What personal qualities did they have?
 - What types of contributions did these women make to society?
 - How can they be role models for all of us today?

Based on time, these questions can be used for a class discussion, a Think-Pair-Share exercise within the groups, or as a short, reflective in-class discussion that is elaborated on individually in a written homework assignment.

7. *Keeping them with us.* Collect the chart paper or posters each pair made. Display them around the room as a reminder of what these brave women stood for and tried to do to improve society.