



## Ruby Bridges

### Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe how segregation originated in America.
2. Explain how school segregation was carried out.
3. Know strategies to cope with a bully.
4. Evaluate whether various kinds of strategies to cope with bullying are effective or ineffective.

### Materials Needed

1. The Guinness Book of World Records or a picture/print out of it
2. Photo of Ruby Bridge
3. Statistics in your state on bullying: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/stats.asp>
4. Statistics on suicide: <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-and-suicide.html>
5. YouTube link of when sister rip Cinderella's dress.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaQH\\_x4Zt1M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaQH_x4Zt1M)
6. Clip from Forest Gump scene [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2-MCPa\\_3rU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2-MCPa_3rU)

### Vocabulary

- Black Codes
- Jim Crow Laws
- School Segregation

Bloom Taxonomy	Affective Domain	Gardner's Multiple Intelligences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Application</li> <li>• Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving</li> <li>• Responding</li> <li>• Valuing</li> <li>• Organizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic</li> <li>• Interpersonal</li> <li>• Bodily Kinesthetic</li> </ul>

### **Introduction/Motivation**

- Show students a copy of The Guinness Book of World Records or show them a picture/print out of it.
- Direct students to The Guinness Book of World Records website:  
<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/>
- Depending on the age of the students, direct them to the Guinness World Record Kids (one the website). View and discuss the site.
- The Guinness Book of World Records has a YouTube site that displays the accomplishments of every month. Pick a month, view the video prior to lesson, and show students the short video clip.
- Discuss which clip/accomplishment that students liked the most.
- Discuss the **challenges**, and **difficulties** that the person/people had in **completing the task**.
- Have students take 5-10 minutes and answer: Would you like to be the 1<sup>st</sup> at doing something? If so, what would it be? What would your **challenges and difficulties** be?
- If possible, share your 1<sup>st</sup> experiences with students. For example, being the 1<sup>st</sup> person in your family to graduate from college. Also, share your **challenges** and **difficulties**.
- After the 5-10 minutes, have students share.

### **Background on Segregation**

- Segregation first originated in the form of Black Codes in 1865. These Black Codes controlled where African Americans could work and live. Thus, it allowed African Americans to earn very little and work only certain types of jobs.
- Once segregation became official policy, legislators separated African American and white from all public spaces like public parks, theaters, pool areas, cemeteries, and jails. Public transportation such as buses, trains and taxis were segregated. These prohibitions were called Jim Crow Laws approved by the separated but equal doctrine.
- School Segregation required that American Americans and white people be prohibited from attending the same schools. Although public spaces and schools were separated, they were often not equal.
- In 1954 the landmark Civil Rights case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka declared all segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

### Background on Ruby Bridges

- When Ruby was in kindergarten, she and other students were chosen to take a test to prove if they could attend the all-white school. The test was particularly difficult because the administration did not want integration. Therefore, Ruby was the only student to pass the test which granted her access to William Frantz School.
- At first her father, did not want Ruby to attend the school because he was afraid that the community would retaliate, and that Ruby could be harmed. Ruby's mother intervened because she believed that Ruby could receive a better education at the all-white school. So, Ruby's parents allowed her to attend.
- Instead of starting William Frantz School in September, Ruby's first day of school was in November because the Louisiana State Legislator kept finding ways to keep the school segregated. However, on November 14, 1960, Ruby was escorted into William Frantz School by her mother and U.S. marshals due to violent mobs.
- Ruby experienced many **challenges** and **difficulties** as the 1<sup>st</sup> child to integrate William Frantz School. When Ruby arrived at the school, an angry crowd gathered, screamed at her and even threw objects at her! Some made death threats, stating they would poison her. One woman greeted Ruby with a black doll in a wooden casket.
- Ruby's mother told her to pray before she entered the school and to be strong, which helped her feel courageous.
- Another **challenge** and **difficulty** for Ruby was isolation. Ruby was the only student in her class because the all-white community made their children attend other schools. For an entire year, Ruby and her teacher Mrs. Barbara Henry sat side by side completing lessons. Henry's role in supporting Ruby was instrumental not only in her academic success but also in helping her cope with being alone and harassed daily by the angry mob.
- Despite eating alone sometimes, playing recess alone and being the only student in her class, she did not miss one day of school that year.

**Activity****1. Share Ruby's Story**

- Show a photo of Ruby Bridges.
- Say to students Ruby Bridges became the first African American child to integrate the William Frantz School, an all-white Southern elementary school, when she was 6 years old.
- Have students share what they think her challenges and difficulties were.
- Make a list.
- Share background on Ruby Bridges.
- Add to the list of challenges and difficulties Ruby faced.
- Share with students that despite her challenges and difficulties she never yelled back at the crowd and she never threw back what was thrown at her. She also had perfect attendance that year!
- Sharing bullying stats with students such 1 in 5 students report being bullied.
- Show clip of Cinderella/or Forest Gump scene as an example as discuss the scene.
- Cinderella received the support of her Fairy god mother. Forest Gump had a moment where he realized, in a dangerous circumstance, that he could run.

**Student Answer questions:**

1. Describe how Ruby was bullied by the crowd.
2. What was Ruby's response to being bullied by the crowd?
3. Why do you think Ruby did not fight back?
4. What have you learned from Ruby's example?

**Answers can be delivered through a:**

1. Story (drawing or video)
2. Poem
3. Song or musical expression
4. Drama (in a group)

**2. How We Deal with Bullying**

- For older students, share statistics on the suicide.
- Discuss causes of youth suicide.
- Discuss various kinds of bullying including physical bullying, emotional bullying, cyber bullying.
- Have students find a movie clip, song, book scene that conveys a form of bullying (relationship violence)
- Students should describe the scene, the characters, type of bullying and how the situation was resolved.
- Students should analyze the similarities and differences of the movie bullying scene they selected and bullying that Ruby experienced.

- Students should thoroughly explain the similarities and differences and present them in a report or a created visual aid.
- Teacher should keep track of similarities and differences.
- With the information, teacher and students create a **Dealing with Bullying** guidelines for the school or add to the bullying policy of the school.
- The guidelines should be shared with the parents, teachers, and students.

#### Links

- <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/bridges-ruby-1954/>
- <https://www.womenshistory.org/>
- <https://www.biography.com/activist/ruby-bridges>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ruby-Bridges>