

READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

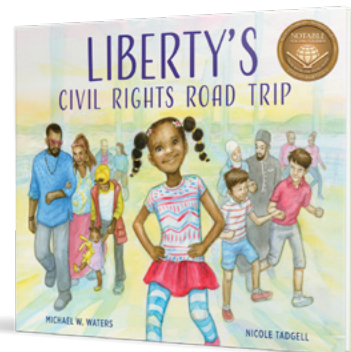
A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Liberty's Civil Rights Road Trip

By Michael W. Waters & Nicole Tadgell

For many years Michael W. Waters, author, activist, professor, and pastor, has led a civil rights pilgrimage from his home city of Dallas, Texas to various locations along the Civil Rights Trail (www.civilrightstrail.com) to connect people of different ages and invite conversation about the history of the struggle for freedom. This book is based on a trip he took with his family, including his young daughter Liberty, and a diverse group of participants including people of all ages and different faiths.

While the book might be best suited to older children who may understand the historic significance of the civil rights movement and the sites visited, it is never too early to introduce the concepts of equality, freedom, justice, and love to a child. Before reading the story, look at the cover together and wonder who is going on this trip, where they will go, and what they might see.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- Recall any road trips you have taken as a family. How were they similar and different from Liberty's trip?
- Some of the sites the group visited had very sad stories. How did hearing these stories make you feel? What do you do when you are sad or a friend is sad?
- What was a place on Liberty's trip that you would like to visit to learn more about and what happened there?
- What do you think Liberty's dad meant when he said "This is what America looks like" as they were crossing the bridge in Selma?
- *With older children:* Why is it important to remember these stories?
- *With older children:* How do you think this road trip impacted the participants? What does hearing these stories make you want to do?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Plan a real or imaginary road trip to visit one or more historic sites using the Civil Rights Trail website as a guide (www.civilrightstrail.com). If planning an imaginary trip, talk about who you would like to invite on your journey and why they might be good companions for this trip. Note that Liberty and her friend Abdullah also had times to play and enjoy the places and people around them. Research the cities or towns you will visit and look for parks, museums, and other places of interest you can discover.
- *With older children:* What words do you associate with "civil rights"? Make a collage of words and/or pictures to depict the struggle for equality and freedom that people sought and still work for today.

PRAY

Gracious and loving God, thank you for the people who have gone before us, and the people around us today, who bravely work for freedom, equality, and justice for all people. We know that you love each one of us as your own. May we, too, love one another. Amen.



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A sense of history and learning about the past doesn't mature until around age 9 or so as a child begins to develop more abstract thinking. This doesn't mean you can't talk about the past with your child. Here are some helpful tips to engage your child:

- Tell stories to engage your child with the past.
- Connect the past to the present to show how the past shapes the present.
- Make history personal by sharing family stories and memories.
- Use interactive experiences to bring history to life.
- Encourage creativity through art, music, and play.
- Explore books and videos. Do an internet search for "children's pictures books about civil rights" or a YouTube search for "civil rights for children" to find suggestions.

The pivotal Bible story that people often associate with the civil rights movement and other struggles for equality and freedom is the story of God's people moving from oppression in Egypt, often referred to as the Exodus. To understand the context of the larger story, read Exodus 1:1-14. Exodus 2 tells the story of the birth of Moses, who, in chapter 3, is called by God to lead God's people out of Egypt. Exodus 2:24-25 and 3:7-10 show God's compassion for the people to be freed from oppression. Read stories of the exodus from a children's Bible or Bible storybook with your child, and, as appropriate to their age, wonder why these stories might be important to the civil rights movement and other struggles for justice.

Listen to music of the civil rights movement, such as the songs below, and talk about why they are meaningful to the quest for equality and freedom. Explore other songs to add to your list.

- "We Shall Overcome"
- "Oh Freedom"
- "Blowin' in the Wind"
- "The Times They are a Changin'"
- "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL BOOKS ABOUT HISTORY, RACE, AND COMMUNITY

- [*For Beautiful Black Boys Who Believe in a Better World*](#), by Michael W. Waters & Keisha Morris
- [*Saving Delicia: A Story about Small Seeds and Big Dreams*](#), by Laura Gehl & Patricia Metola
- [*Who Is My Neighbor?*](#) by Amy-Jill Levine & Sandy Eisenberg Sasso & Denise Turu
- [*Crocodile's Crossing: A Search for Home*](#), by Yoei Slegers
- [*Three Lines in a Circle: The Exciting Life of the Peace Symbol*](#), by Michael G. Long & Carlos Vélez
- [*Walking toward Peace: The True Story of a Brave Woman Called Peace Pilgrim*](#), by Kathleen Krull & Annie Bowler

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](http://pcusa.org/resource/around-table)" (pcusa.org/resource/around-table).



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