

Name:

Core:

Activity 3: Teaching Tolerance through the Bus Boycotts

Using the website linked on our class page for activity 3, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper

ACTIVITY 2: Montgomery City Code Document

The [Montgomery City Code](#) outlines the law as it stood in 1955 and was cited by prosecutors as the reason Rosa Parks broke the law. Read the code and answer the following questions:

- Why was separation of the races required (Section 10)?
- Was it hypocritical that the city code allowed "Negro nurses" to sit in the "white section" of the bus if they were attending white people who needed their care (Section 10)?
- How was it that Rosa Parks was arrested on charges of non-compliance of obeying the orders of a bus driver (Section 11)?
- If city codes such as this one existed today, how would you go about changing them?
- On public transportation where you live, does separation of people occur without there being a written law? Do invisible lines and social boundaries exist? If so, what are they and why do they exist?
- Re-write the city code to comply with the 1956 Supreme Court ruling on bus segregation. How would Sections 10 and 11 be written to conform to the law?

ACTIVITY 3: "Bus Boycott Conference Fails to Find Solution" Article

Dr. King met with bus line officials for four hours in an attempt to find common ground. Yet, as reported in this [December, 1955 article](#) bus line officials remained firm in their stance to follow the city code.

- Why would Dr. King's proposal of "first come, first served" on bus seating seem so radical in 1955 Alabama?
- Dr. King commented that the group was not trying to change the segregation laws. Why would he take this position?
- Why would the bus company not hire black drivers?

Jack Crenshaw, legal counsel for the bus line, commented, "We do not contemplate and have no intentions of hiring Negro drivers. The time is not right in Montgomery, but who can say what will happen in 10 years."

- Why did he believe the time was not right in Montgomery?
- Why did a member of the bus boycott delegation take issue with him by replying, "We don't mean 10 years, we mean this year"?

ACTIVITY 4: "Negroes' Boycott Cripples Bus Line" Article

This [January, 1956, New York Times special report](#) details the impact of the successful bus boycott on the city's economy. (*The New York Times*. Reprinted with permission.)

- Why would an organized bus boycott put economic strain on the city?
- What was the bus line's reaction to the boycott's second month of success?
- Three other African-Americans complied with the bus driver's demand that they move to give their seats to whites. How might you have felt had you given up your seat while Mrs. Parks held firm in her conviction to keep her seat?
- Mrs. Parks was originally arrested for violating a city segregation ordinance but the charge was later changed to read "a violation of a state law, which gives bus drivers the power to assign and reassign seating." Why would prosecutors wish to change the charge?

ACTIVITY 5: "Negroes' Most Urgent Needs" Historical Document

[Negroes' Most Urgent Needs](#) was submitted to the Montgomery City Council in 1955 prior to the Montgomery bus boycott.

Transportation, housing, public parks and fair hiring practices are a few areas in which representatives demanded answers. Review the list of the "most urgent needs."

- What similarities and differences are there between "Negroes' Most Urgent Needs" and "Bus Boycott Conference Fails to Find Solution"?
- Have we, as a nation, attained what African-Americans demanded in 1955 Alabama? Why or why not?
- What would your list of "most urgent needs" be to improve your school or community?
- How would you organize a non-violent protest today? What strategies and resources would you use that were not available in 1955?

ACTIVITY 6: "Negro Minister Convicted of Directing Bus Boycott" Article

This [March, 1956, New York Times article](#) details one legal battle leading to the desegregation of Montgomery's bus lines. (*The New York Times*. Reprinted with permission.)

- Dr. King was found guilty under a 1921 statute forbidding the "hindering of a lawful business without 'just cause or legal excuse.'" Why would prosecutors wish to convict Dr. King? Why would Dr. King and his attorneys appeal the case?
- Judge Eugene Carter, who ruled on the case, was a member of the Dexter Avenue Methodist Church and a member of the church's board, which decreed "Negroes who came there should be asked to worship in their colored churches." Do you feel a man who believed that blacks should worship separately from whites would be just in his courtroom decisions or interpretation of the law?