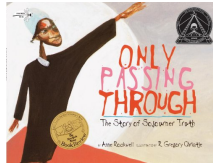


Only Passing Through The Story of Sojourner Truth



Story: Anne Rockwell
Illustration: R. Gregory Christie
ISBN-13: 978-0544357693
C3 Framework Key term:
Rights (of citizens in the U.S.): Rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights as well as other rights.

SYNOPSIS

Only Passing Through is the illustrated biography of Sojourner Truth, an African-American abolitionist and human rights activist. The story begins with her being sold at an auction in 1806 and follows her life in two households. Her persistence and hard work lead her to freedom, the acquisition of literacy skills, and eventually, to promoting public awareness regarding the horrors of slavery.

DISCUSSION

Say: One of the important contributions of Sojourner Truth to the well-being of African Americans was right after Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation. Thousands of slaves escaped the southern states and sought new life in Washington DC. But they had no place to live. The government build for them Freedman's Village in Arlington, VA. The camp provided housing, a school for children, job training school, a senior house, a hospital, and churches. Sojourner Truth lived in the village for one year in 1864. She was a school teacher and a job search counselor. She helped residents organize to defend themselves

against white people who raided the village to kidnap children for slave labor. **Ask:** Why was the moral courage and spirit of people like Sojourner Truth so important to the success of the emancipation of slaves?

ETHICS CONNECTION

Ask: Have you ever heard the phrase, "forty acres and a mule?" **Say:** This phrase represents the government intention to help former slaves transition to free life. In 1865, General William T. Sherman issues Special Field Order No. 15, which confiscated land from South Carolina to Florida. A number of African Americans received legal titles for forty-acre plots of land. Military mules were approved for distribution among the new settlers. However, the hopeful recipients did not receive the land. President Andrew Johnson returned most of the land to its original owners. Confiscating land was viewed as a violation of property rights and as unnecessary punishment of ex-Confederates. Moreover, this solution could hardly address the needs of more than 4 million newly freed slaves who lacked land and shelter. Until today, there is an ongoing debate about the obligation of the US government to provide reparations to descendants of slaves. In groups, discuss your opinion about reparations. You may use NPR resources from their page, [Making Amends](#).

FUN ACTIVITY

Say: Imagine that you are working with Lincoln on his executive. How would you write the executive order if you wanted to prevent discrimination and inequality? Use the [transcript of the Proclamation](#), available on the National Archives website. Write down or type at least one section of the Proclamation and add your suggested text. Find a peer reviewer to review your suggested edits.