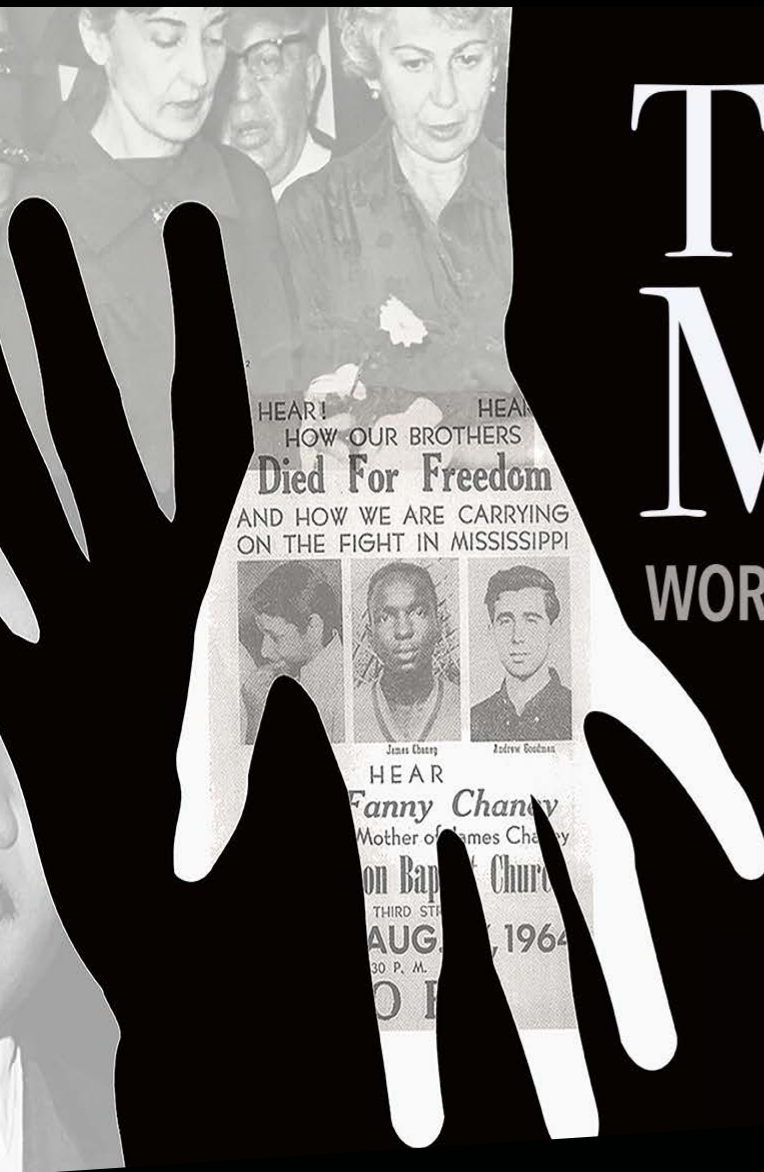
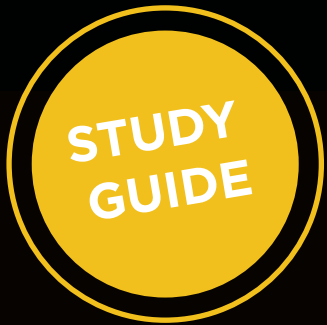


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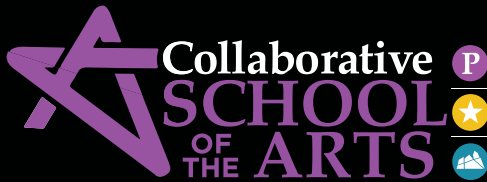
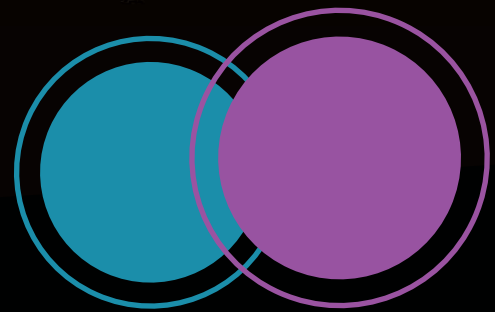
2023-2024 SEASON



Three Mothers

WORLD PREMIERE

By Ajene D. Washington



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
COLLABORATIVESCHOOLOFTHEARTS.ORG

Or Contact Group Sales at:
(518) 382-3884 x 139 | groupsales@proctors.org

theREP and Collaborative School of the Arts are a part of Proctors Collaborative

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ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE

Being a member of an audience is an important job. Live theatre couldn't exist without you! That job carries with it some responsibilities. Follow these simple suggestions in order to have the best theatre experience possible!

BRING WITH YOU...ideas, imagination, an open mind, observation skills and a sense of wonder.

LEAVE BEHIND...cell phones, pagers, pen lights, food and drink and anything else that might distract you, the performers or other members of the audience.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE A PERFORMANCE...learn about the show you are going to see, arrive on time, find your seat, visit the restroom.

DURING A PERFORMANCE

PLEASE DO...applaud, laugh, pay attention to big and little details, think about questions that arise for you, stay seated until intermission/end of the show.

PLEASE DON'T...talk, sleep, eat or drink, distract others, use a cell phone, exit the theatre during the performance unless it's an emergency.

2023-2024 | CAPITAL REPERTORY THEATRE STUDENT MATINEES

“What the Constitution Means to Me”

by Heidi Schreck
Student Matinee | Oct. 4, 2023

“Million Dollar Quartet Christmas”

Book by Colin Escott
Student Matinee | Dec. 13 and 20, 2023

“Sweat” by Lynn Nottage

Student Matinee | Mar. 27, 2024

WORLD PREMIERE

“Three Mothers” by Ajene D. Washington

Student Matinee | May 2 and 9, 2024

“Beautiful, The Carole King Musical”

Book by Douglas McGrath, Music and Lyrics by Carole King, Gerry Goffin, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil
July 12-Aug. 18, 2024

ON-THE-GO! IN-SCHOOL TOURS

“Shakespeare: The Remix”

by Aaron Jafferis & Gihieh Lee
Oct. 23-Nov. 18, 2023

“Henry Johnson: Ballad of a Forgotten Hero”

by Rachel Lynett
Dramaturgy by Eunice Ferreria
Feb. 5-March 8, 2024

OTHER

NEXT ACT! NEW PLAY SUMMIT 13 | SPRING 2024

SUMMER STAGE YOUNG ACTING COMPANY

PERFORMANCES | SUMMER 2024

For more information visit:
collaborativeschoolofthearts.org or contact
group sales at: (518) 382-3884 x 139
groupsales@proctors.org

Dear Educator:

Welcome to Capital Repertory Theatre at 251 North Pearl St.!

We are thrilled that you are attending a student matinee performance of “Three Mothers,” one of theREP’s mainstage productions for the 2023-24 Season, and hope that you will find this guide to be a useful tool in your classroom!

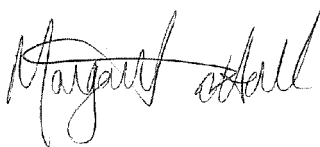
You have permission to reproduce materials within this guide for use in your classroom. It is designed to introduce the cultural and historical context of the play, as well as provide resources and ideas for incorporating the theatre experience into your curriculum. Productions by theREP are likely to generate questions, thoughts and opinions amongst your students.

The arts provide young imaginations with stimulation, points of reference and intellectual resources for the mind and spirit; it is theREP’s goal to make live theatre attendance possible for all students in the Capital Region. Tens of thousands of Capital Region students have attended student matinees and On-The-Go! performances throughout our history. We hope to continue to grow and serve the needs of the Capital Region education community for decades to come.

Your success stories help us to keep the program funded, so please let us know how you are using theatre in the classroom. We love to receive copies of lesson plans, student work related to our productions and your letters. These are important testimonials to the value of the arts in education.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With deepest gratitude,



Margaret E. Hall
Associate Artistic Director
mhall@attherep.org
(518) 462-4531 x410



Shai Davenport
Education Programs Manager
sdavenport@proctors.org
(518) 382-3884 x197

ABOUT US



Capital Repertory Theatre (theREP) is a non-profit professional-producing theatre. In its decades-long history, theREP has produced more than 8,000 performances for the people of the Capital Region.

A member of LORT (League of Resident Theatres), theREP strives to bring quality work that explores the essence of the human condition through the stories of people, events and phenomena that shape our contemporary lives. Theatre, at its best, entertains, cajoles and inspires by engaging the heart and mind through its most powerful ally—the imagination.

There are two basic types of theatre companies: producing and presenting. theREP is a producing theatre. The theatre hires a director and designers for the set, costumes, lights and sound. The theatre's artistic director and the director select appropriate actors for all the roles in the play. Then they all come to Albany, where the play is built and rehearsed. The resident staff of the theatre works with visiting artists to put the production together.

In addition to the main theatre space, theREP has a studio theatre that acts as a rehearsal hall and secondary venue for performances (such as several of Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate NY's recent productions), a costume shop where costumes are constructed and cared for, a prop shop where props are made, offices where the administrative staff works and housing facilities for out-of-town actors. theREP's sets are constructed in a scene shop that is also a part of the Proctors Collaborative and located in Rotterdam, N.Y.

In contrast to a producing theatre, presenting theatres (sometimes called “roadhouses”)—like Proctors in Schenectady (also a part of the Proctors Collaborative)—host shows that have been designed, built and rehearsed elsewhere. Touring productions are booked into presenting theatres. Shows that are booked into presenting houses will tour regionally, nationally or even internationally over an extended period. What you will see at theREP or with our On-The-Go! tours are unique to theREP where it was built. No one from anywhere else will see this production just as you see it!

Capital Repertory Theatre is a part of Proctors Collaborative, which also includes Proctors, Universal Preservation Hall, the Collaborative School of the Arts and the Collaborative Scene Shop.



STUDENT MATINEES | Performance at theREP @ 10:30 a.m.

PRICE | \$14 per student

CHAPERONES | For every 15 students, one complimentary adult ticket is provided

LOCATION | 251 North Pearl Street, Albany, N.Y. 12207

RESERVATIONS | Contact Group Sales at (518) 382-3884 x 139
groupsales@proctors.org

SCHOLARSHIPS | Visit www.attherep.org for more information and applications

ON-THE-GO! | For more information and to book a tour contact
onthego@proctors.org | collaborativeschoolofthearts.org

Capital Repertory Theatre is one of the organizations within the Proctors Collaborative, which also includes: Proctors, Universal Preservation Hall (UPH), the Collaborative School of the Arts and the Collaborative Scene Shop.

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT

BY MEGAN DELLENBAUGH

June 21, 1964. Three college students, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, were tortured and murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Their crime: registering Black Americans to vote and being born Black or Jewish. Taking inspiration from the 1964 photo of their bereft mothers leaving the final funeral together, “Three Mothers” is the imagined moments afterward, in Carolyn Goodman’s home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, when the three women forged an unbreakable bond and commitment to the Civil Rights Movement.

CHARACTER LIST

Fannie Lee Chaney: A mild-mannered southern Black American woman in her early forties. James’s mother.

Anne Schwerner: A stoic, well-meaning Jewish biology teacher in her early fifties, scarred by the recent events. Mickey’s mother.

Carolyn Goodman: A political and progressive thinking Jewish psychiatrist in her late forties. Andrew’s mother.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT AJENE D. WASHINGTON

Ajene D. Washington is an award-winning playwright, director, actor and set designer who resides in Bronx, N.Y. He received a B.S. degree in Speech and Drama from Lincoln University and a M.A. from Northern Illinois University. He has directed many plays and readings, such as “Adam,” “American Menu,” “Slapped,” “Family Night,” “The Old Settler” and many others.



His plays have received readings and performances in New York, California, Arkansas, Missouri and Nashville, Tenn. He received the BRIO award from the Bronx Council of the Arts for playwriting in 2012 and 2020. His play “I Can See, a Raging Revolt” was a finalist in the TRUSpeak festival. The Arkansas Repertory Theatre selected his play “Almost September” for its “Voices at the River” series. He received an AUDELCO Award for Best Director and Best Set Design, also a nomination as Best Actor. He received a nomination for Best Set Design by Lucille Lortel committee. Washington is a member of AEA, SAG, SSDC, AFTRA, Black Theatre Network and The Dramatist Guild.

- In his artist’s statement, Washington writes, “Theatre can be a powerful tool for social change, and I am dedicated to using my craft to give underrepresented stories a platform ... My goal is to create theater that moves and inspires, that challenges and empowers, and that contributes to the ongoing struggle for social justice and human dignity. I believe that by using our creativity and our collective voice, we can work towards a more just and equitable world for all people.”

LITERARY CONTEXT:

POEMS REFERENCED IN THE PLAY



PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Paul Laurence Dunbar was one of the first influential Black American playwrights in American literature. His writing is “an impressive representation of Black American life in turn-of-the-century America.”

We Wear the Mask

By Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our
eyes,—

This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!



PASTOR MARTIN NIEMÖLLER

Pastor Martin Niemöller was an antisemitic early supporter of the Nazi regime, only turning against them when the Nazis attempted to control the churches. After resistance got him thrown into a concentration camp, he expressed regret at not having stood up more broadly against the Nazis, leading to his famous poem. The Holocaust Memorial published a different version with an added verse.

First They Came

By Pastor Martin Niemöller

First they came for the socialists, and I
did not speak out—

Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did
not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was
no one left to speak for me.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The play's an imagined conversation between three mothers after the horrific murders of their sons, but the three mothers—and their murdered sons—are historical fact.

- Three Mothers, taken after Andrew Goodman's funeral 1964 by an unknown photographer.
- Flyer for Fanny's speech at New Zion after her son's death showing photos of all three children. Useful for context and putting names to faces.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS BY MEGAN DELLENBAUGH

Mickey and James worked for the Congress of Racial Equality, a civil rights group, in Meridian, Mississippi. Andrew volunteered to register and educate voters through **Freedom Summer**, also known as the Mississippi Summer Project, a voter registration drive attempting to increase Black American voting registration in Mississippi. The Civil Rights Movement faced extreme opposition from the KKK—there were 10,000 members in Mississippi alone. The KKK burned 20 Black Mississippi churches during the summer, targeting the Mount Zion Baptist Church on June 16 (mentioned in the play on **page 16**) where Mickey had worked. The three sons visited the remains of the church when they got back to Mississippi but got arrested for speeding around 4 p.m. on June 21. Released at around 10:30 p.m., the three sons were never seen alive again.

The investigation brought in the FBI and drew national attention. The search for the sons led to the discovery of eight Black American men's bodies in the Mississippi swamps. On Aug. 3, the FBI found the son's bodies buried under a dam via a tip from an informant. The multiple rounds of trials lasted years, with only some of the accused perpetrators entering prison in 1970, six years after the incident. None of them served more than six years.

Mickey's wife, Rita Schwerner, said the case only drew national attention because two of the three dead men were white northerners. She urged people to focus on the overlooked victims of racial violence: "The slaying of a Negro in Mississippi is not news. It is only because my husband and Andrew Goodman were white that the national alarm has been sounded."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT IN-DEPTH HISTORICAL INFORMATION

BY MEGAN DELLENBAUGH

- **M.I. vs. N.Y. racism/desegregation**—In a 1964 New York Times article, Mississippi was named the “Nation’s Most Segregated State.” Many infamous racial violence cases occurred there, the most infamous being Emmett Till’s lynching in 1955. Mississippi also had the largest percentage of Black Americans per state. New York, however, was not blameless. In July 1964, an off-duty police officer shot and killed a fifteen-year-old Black boy names James Powell, sparking a large-scale violent riot, which started in Harlem and spread to neighboring boroughs. Over 450 people were arrested throughout the six-day riot. A different act of police brutality created a three-day riot in Rochester. Titled the New York Race Riots, these protests highlighted the racial injustice and growing civil unrest existing in northern cities and served as a powerful indicator of the urgent need for social and economic reforms for Black American communities outside of the South.
- **Literacy tests**—After the Civil War, when Black men were given the right to vote, they voted overwhelmingly for Abraham Lincoln’s party. Former slaves were more than half of Mississippi’s population at the time, so they elected Black senators and state officials that served their views. When the Reconstruction Era ended, the federal military was no longer present to protect Black American’s rights. Threats and violence from white supremacists led to fewer Black American voters, which elected governments who wrote into the state constitution ways to keep people from voting. One of these blockades was the literacy test, requiring the “person seeking to register to vote to read a section of the state constitution and explain it to the county clerk who processed voter registrations.” Not only was this discriminatory because 60% of voting-age Black men were illiterate, but because the person administering the test could choose complicated passages or simple ones depending who was taking the test.
- **Sovereignty Commission of M.I.**—Created by the Mississippi government in 1956, the Commission’s objective was to “do and perform any and all acts deemed necessary and proper to protect the sovereignty of the state of Mississippi, and her sister states.” Under Ross Barnett, they sponsored a film that portrayed segregation positively, investigated Civil Rights supporters, donated to other organizations that supported segregation, worked with county registrars to stop Black Americans from registering to vote and had strong opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



HISTORICAL FIGURES MENTIONED IN THE SCRIPT

BY MEGAN DELLENBAUGH

Benjamin Chaney- James' younger brother, Fannie's son

Rita Schwerner Bender- Mickey's wife, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

Sheriff Lawrence A. Rainey- Neshoba County Sheriff, charged with civil rights violations for the murder of the three sons.

Mister X- the anonymous informant who tipped the FBI off to the location of the three sons' bodies.



John F. Kennedy-The 35th president of the United States (1961-63) and youngest man elected to office. Supported and acted for the Civil Rights Movement. After George Wallace, an avid supporter of segregation, physically blocked Black American

students from enrolling at the University of Alabama in June 1963, JFK sent the National Guard to force desegregation, successfully. Wallace then tried to keep Tuskegee High School segregated, but JFK sent the National Guard and successfully desegregated the second school.



Lyndon B. Johnson-JFK's successor and 36th president (1963-69). He fully supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and JFK's legacy as president.



J. Edgar Hoover-The first director of the FBI. Hoover was intensely anti-communist and "anti-subversive," including most of the Civil Rights Movement. He created the House UnAmerican Activities

Committee and the Counter Intelligence Program. Both groups were designed to discredit and blacklist any organizations or people that he deemed as "Un-American."



Gov. Paul Johnson- While he campaigned as a segregationist, his policies helped end the violence during the Civil Rights Movement.



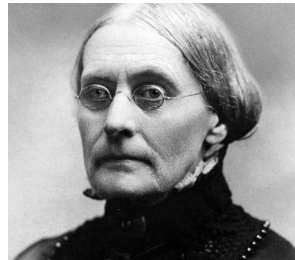
Deputy Sheriff Price- A suspect in the murder of the three men. Escorted them to the jail, contacted one of the leaders of the local KKK, released them, then joined the pursuit of their car. Found guilty in 1970.

UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE (EXCERPT)

- The 13th Amendment is adopted into law, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude.

1863

- Emancipation Proclamation is signed.



1865

- Emma Goldman is the first American to speak publicly in defense of homosexuality.
- Smith-Sears Veterans Rehabilitation Act is passed by Congress and promotes rehabilitation for disabled people discharged from the military.

1878

- The Susan B. Anthony Amendment, which would ensure women the right to vote, is introduced in Congress.



1910

- The society for Human Rights is founded in Chicago, the first organization for gay rights.

1918

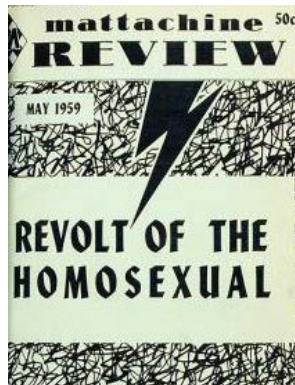
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first president with a disability, is elected.

1919

- Congress passes the 19th Amendment, which gives women the right to vote.

- The Social Security Act is passed by Congress, giving funds to states for assisting blind people and disabled children.

1924



1932

- The U.S. Supreme Court rules that "separate but equal" is by definition unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

1935

- The Mattachine Society, founded by Harry Hay, becomes the first national gay rights organization in the U.S.

1951

1954

- Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old Black American child, visits his family in Mississippi when he is kidnapped, brutally beaten and shot for allegedly whistling at a woman. Two men are arrested, tried by an all-White jury, and promptly acquitted.

1955

UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE (EXCERPT)



1955

- The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins.

- The Supreme Court declares bus segregation unconstitutional in *Browder v. Gayle*.

1956



1957

- Southern Christian Leadership Conference is formed, with Martin Luther King, Jr. as its president.
- The Federal Guard is called into Little Rock, Arkansas in order to escort nine Black American students to an all-White school. The Little Rock Nine, as they came to be known, faced protests and harassment at their new school.



- MLK is arrested at a sit-in in Atlanta.
- Supreme Court issues ruling that interstate buses were required to integrate.
- Four Black American university students in Greensboro, N.C. sit down at the “whites only” lunch counter in their local Woolworth’s and order some coffee. When the business refuses to serve them, they stay at the counter until closing. They become known as the Greensboro Four.

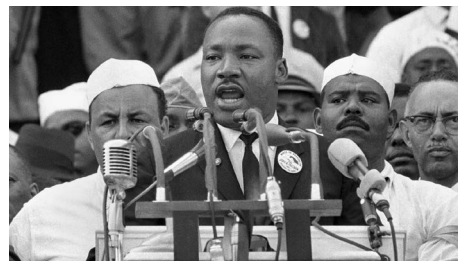
1960

1961

- The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) sends volunteers from all ethnicities on Greyhound buses to discover if the new law that required integration on interstate buses would be enforced. Segregationists attacked the buses and the volunteers in protest. These brave volunteers became known as the Freedom Riders.
- The American Standard Specifications for Making Building Accessible to, and Usable by, the Physically Handicapped is published, becoming the foundation for architectural access codes.

- Malcolm X becomes national minister of the Nation of Islam. He declares that equal rights should be secured “by any means necessary,” and dismisses non-violence as useless tactic.

1962



1963

- On Aug. 28, a quarter million people march to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. This was the biggest demonstration in the history of the United States. Dr. King gives his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.
- The Equal Pay Act passes and establishes equal pay for men and women, with the exception of agricultural workers, executives, administrators and professionals.

UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE (EXCERPT)

- President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity or religion.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.



- Thurgood Marshall becomes the first Black American justice on the Supreme Court.



- The Stonewall riots in New York's Greenwich Village spark national protests in support of equal rights for LGBT people.

1963

- President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Texas.
- Four Black American girls are murdered in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

1964

1965

- Malcolm X is assassinated in New York.



1967

1968

- On April 4th, Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had been organizing a march for the Memphis sanitation workers.
- Shirley Chisholm becomes the first Black American woman to be elected to Congress.

1969

1971

- Fifteen Black-American members of Congress form the Congressional Black Caucus.

1972

- Congress passes Title IX, which requires that federally funded schools provide equal access to educational and physical programs for girls and boys.

1973

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 passes, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in federally funded programs and services.

1974

- U.S. District Court Judge finds the city of Boston guilty of unconstitutional segregation within its schools and implements a system of two-way busing, which sends White students into largely Black schools and vice versa.

UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE (EXCERPT)



- Harvey Milk and Mayor Moscone are assassinated.
- In *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down six separate decisions on affirmative action, yet the majority consented that race could be a factor in university admissions to increase diversity in higher education.



- Congress repeals “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the military policy that requires openly gay men and women to hide their sexuality, lest they be discharged.

1975

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires free public education to all children with disabilities.

1976

- San Francisco Mayor George Moscone appoints Harvey Milk to the Board of Permit Appeals. Milk is the first openly gay city commissioner in U.S. history.

1978

1979

- The National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights is held in October. Around 75,000 people participate.



1981

- Sandra Day O’Connor is the first woman to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court

1984

- Geraldine Ferraro becomes the first woman to be a vice-presidential candidate of a major political party.

1990

- President George Bush, Sr. signs the Americans with Disabilities Act, which provides comprehensive civil rights protection for people with disabilities.

2004

- Massachusetts is the first state to legalize same-sex marriage.

2008

- President Barack Obama is elected, the first Black American president in U.S. History.

2010

2012

- The 113th U.S. Congress had 43 Black American members, 100 female members, and seven LGBTQ members.
- The people of Maine, Washington, Minnesota and Maryland vote in favor of marriage equality.



CONNECTIONS: Students are asked to research and create the timeline between 2012 and 2023. What has advanced since 2012? What has regressed?

CULTURAL CONTEXT

- **Shiva:** A week-long period of mourning by the immediate family of the deceased in the home of the deceased. It begins immediately after burial and lasts until Shacharit, or a morning synagogue service, on the seventh day. It is custom for the mourners to sit lower than usual—for example, on low-cut chairs, stools or boxes—and to cover mirrors to remind them that it is a time to reflect on the deceased.
- **Ethical Society Center:** A meeting place for Ethical Humanists, a semi-religious belief that aspires to lead “ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.” Ethical Humanists believe there is a definite good and evil, and for humanity to prosper, love, truth, honesty, justice and freedom need to be prioritized.
- **New York World’s Fair:** The World’s Fair has been held in New York twice, once in 1939 and once 25 years later, in 1964 (the one mentioned in the play). The 1964 fair featured futuristic architecture but also historical nods to dinosaurs and past presidents. While it was a showcase for Walt Disney, premiering the now famous “It’s a Small World” show, it was protested after a “satirical” minstrel show. The NAACP declared it a parody, but the discussion of race and bigotry came to the front and center of the fair. Later, the Jewish community protested a poem supporting Palestinian refugees, leading to a rule that protestors could only hand out pamphlets and not block entry to the fair.
- **Theresa Hotel:** Also known as the “Waldorf of Harlem,” one of the most important social centers for the Harlem Black American community.
- **Unlisted number:** A phone number not included in a phone book. More difficult to find by the general public, so more private.

CONNECTIONS TO MODERN VOTING RIGHTS AND DISCRIMINATION

BY MEGAN DELLENBAUGH

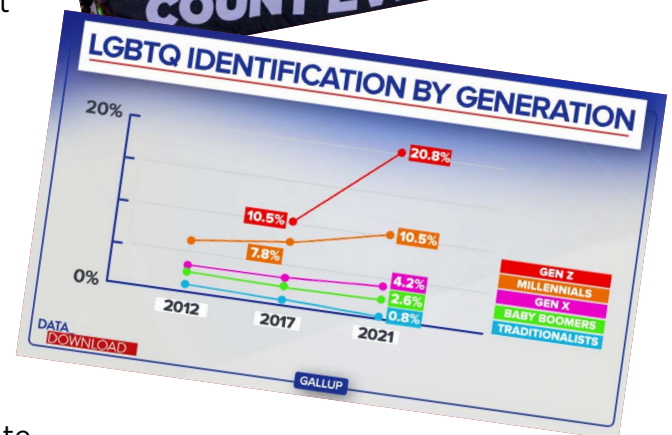
- The Freedom Summer Project’s aim was to increase voting rights for Black Americans. While the literacy tests and grandfather clause were removed under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, **there are still voter discrimination laws being passed today to prevent people of color and younger voters from voting.**
- In 2013, the Supreme Court weakened the Voting Rights Act: “The court struck down a section of the law that required states with a history of race-based voter discrimination to gain federal approval before changing their election rules.”
- After the 2020 election and former President Trump’s claims of voter fraud, state and federal courts introduced a record number of restrictive voting bills in 2021, 2022 and 2023. In 2023, **253 bills in 43 states** were introduced, many of them targeting mail-in votes, which would eliminate voters who are unable to get to the polls for health, distance or work reasons.
- Although Gen Z and Millennials will represent 45% of eligible voters by 2024, **Republican lawmakers are pushing to restrict voting on college campuses.** Idaho banned student ID cards as a valid form of identification, which requires college students to bring a different form of ID, like a passport or birth certificate, to vote, instead of using their most accessible identification. Texas closed early voting sites on college campuses, eliminating the population of



CULTURAL CONTEXT

voters that cannot make it to the polls in November. Ohio passed a new law requiring new voters to be registered to vote at least 30 days before the election, which eliminates young voters with birthdays in October.

- Democrats introduced a bill that would protect voting rights nationwide, “The goal of a democracy should be that the people who are participating in it look a lot like the people who live in it. Right now, the electorate is older, Whiter and wealthier than the population writ large. And this rights that wrong.” Unfortunately, it is expected to fail in the Republican senate.
- Over half of LGBTQ+ adults are under 35, and one in five Gen Z adults identify as LGBTQ+. Despite this, the Human Rights Campaign declared a state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people for the first time ever. In two and a half years (Jan. 2021 to June 2023), 16 states have put in severe restrictions on or have banned gender affirming care for minors, nine banned trans students using the restrooms that align with their gender identities, and 18 banned trans women from playing on school sports teams. Florida passed a bill that bans schools from talking about LGBTQ+ history and rights, showing films or presentations that have any mention of LGBTQ+ and even requires teachers to out trans kids to their parents. **By restricting Gen Z’s vote, the government also restricts LGBTQ+ rights** and allows the “older, Whiter, and wealthier” officials to continue taking away their freedom.
- Native Americans living on reservations use absentee ballots and ballot collection services to vote because they have limited access to mailing companies and polling places. Last year, Montana, home of 12 Native American tribal nations, passed a law that bans paying people who collect absentee ballots from voters. Some reservations do not have any polling places or ballot drop boxes, and most have very few. Combined with stricter voter ID laws and elimination of same-day registration, **Native American voters are extremely suppressed.**
- Check out the Brennan Center for Justice (<https://www.brennancenter.org>) for more information on voter discrimination, restriction, and suppression.



IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

ENGLISH/LITERARY

WRITE! A Review: Ask students to write a review of the REP’s production of “Three Mothers.” Things to consider when writing the review:

- Did any of the characters resonate with you and why?
- What was the most compelling or intriguing aspect of the production?
- How did the set, costumes and props add (or take away) from the production?
- What did you think of the sound/music and stage movement?
- What did you think of the direction of the piece?
- What questions arose for you about the production? Was anything unclear or confusing?
- What did you think of the actors—did you feel their characters were vibrant, three-dimensional, real people?
- Can you make any connections between this play and other plays that you have seen?
- Can you make any connections from the play to your own life?

WRITE! Using the image of the Three Mother’s, on page 7 of this guide, as inspiration: students are asked to write a monologue or diary entry, from the POV of one of the mothers.

WRITE! Read the poems on page 6 of this guide. Discuss the poems as a class. Then ask students put pen to paper and write a poem of their own. The poem should reflect on a social justice issue.

READ! Read additional plays that focus on Civil Rights Movement and/or Social Justice Issues.

- “Sweat” by Lynn Nottage
- “The Mountaintop” by Katori Hall
- “A Raisin in the Sun” by Lorraine Hansbury
- “Hairspray” (the musical) Marc Shaiman – Scott Wittman
- “The Laramie Project” by Moisés Kaufman
- “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf” by Ntozake Shange
- “Colossal” by Andrew Hinderake
- “Pipeline” by Dominique Morisseau
- “Luz” by Catherine Filloux

READ! Read books that deal with Civil Rights and/or Social Justice issues.

- “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee
- “The House in the Cerulean Sea” by TJ Klune
- “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” by Maya Angelou
- “Brown Girl Dreams” by Jacqueline Woodson
- “The Secret Life of Bees” by Sue Monk Kidd
- “Through My Eyes” by Ruby Bridges
- “The Help” by Kathryn Sockett
- “Black Like Me” by John Howard Griffin
- “The Color Purple” by Alice Walker

IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY

RESEARCH AND REPORT: Students are asked to write a research paper on voter suppression/voter rights in the 1960s-what the three murdered boys in the play were “fighting” for.

RESEARCH, WRITE & ORATE: Students are to do some historical research and find an event-human rights/civil rights-that they have not already studied; and then students are to ask themselves the question: How far has society come since then; and how much farther do we (society) have to go?

Students should take their research and develop a timeline, with images, to support their findings. Write a paper, a short story or short play that addresses the question posed. Finally, students should give an oral presentation of their work. They could use their timeline as support material. If any student(s) write a play, a reading of it could occur.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION POINTS (or Research Paper Ideas):

a. Us vs. Them

- Boss vs. workers
- Educated vs. not
- Politicians vs. citizens
- Race
- Nativism
- Union vs. not
- Scarcity vs. abundance

- Privilege
- Nativism

b. Identity and Humanity

- Race
- Gender

c. Talk about the effects of stress on the play’s characters. What coping methods do each of the characters use to deal with their emotional turmoil-the murder of their children?

d. Connections between “Three Mothers” and the current political climate

e. Do you think this could happen today?

PASS THE BATON ACTIVITY

Goal: For students to reflect on citizenship and their place in society; for students to consider how societal change is brought about. Students can work in groups of two-four for this exercise.

Step 1 Choose: Focus on one area of human rights, one which you feel strongly about or would like to see change in. You can choose one of the following or pick your own:

- Poverty
- Racial Equality
- LGBTQ+ Rights
- Disability Rights
- Women’s Rights
- Religious Equality

Step 2 Reflect: What are some of the challenges that people who are affected by your chosen human rights issue face in today’s America?

Step 3 Imagine and Write: Imagine that the area of human rights you have picked has been fought hard for and America is an almost perfect place for all people. What specific, concrete things would be different about this world? How would things look or be done differently? You might want to think about:

- Education
- Housing
- Socializing
- Politics
- Architecture
- Media & Press
- Public Sector
- Public Places
- Art
- Welfare
- Lifestyle
- Transport
- The Workplace

IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

Step 4 Hypothesize and Write: What could some of the steps/methods/events for getting to that point have been? You might want to think about:

- Law
- Nonprofits/
Community Groups
- Education
- Media & Press
- Politics
- Art
- Policy
- Funding/Money

Step 5 Perform: Tableau

- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 2:** create a tableau (frozen picture) individually or in small groups that uses the body to illustrate a challenge
- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 3:** create a second tableau that illustrates an ideal world as it relates to your chosen human rights concept
- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 4:** illustrate a method that you envision would help address your chosen human rights need
- **After all three tableaux have been created, perform them in either sequence or varied order for the class,** stopping at each pose allowing for the class to reflect on what they see

Step 6 Discuss: Is anyone taking any of these steps or trying these ideas to improve human rights? If not, why not? Do you feel empowered to try and change society? Would you know how to begin or who to talk to? Do you think individuals can change their communities/societies? Do you think you need to have high status to change society?

THEATRE/ART

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION ON ART! VISIBILITY/REPRESENTATION: Why is it important for everyone, in every walk of life, to have a voice and be represented in the world of art? How does the world of art, be it performative or visual, help everyone in every walk of life be represented?

DESIGN! Students are asked to be the designer for the World Premiere show poster for “Three Mothers.” The design should include:

- Art/imagery that evokes the play.
- Production title and playwright’s name.
- That it’s a World Premiere production.
- Performance venue and dates.
- And possibly the box office information.

COSTUME DESIGN! After reading the play, students are asked to research clothing for the time-period when the play takes place and to create a collage of found images/research to represent each character.

IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION



CITATIONS/ADDITIONAL READING

- <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/pastor-martin-niemoller-hmd-2021/>
- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/paul-laurence-dunbar>
- <https://ajenedwashington.com>
- <https://digital.lib.miamioh.edu/digital/collection/fstxt/id/1551/>
- <https://andrewgoodman.org/historical-archives/1964-large-and-last-photo-of-andy/>
- https://embarkweb1.campus.pomona.edu/objects-1/info?query=keywordPath%20%3D%20%22EAS%22%20and%20Period%20%3D%20%22Contemporary%20%28post%201945%29%22%20and%20Disp_Obj_Type%20%3D%20%22Photography%22&sort=0&page=5
- <https://www.amisraelmortality.com/shiva-jewish-funeral-customs>
- <https://aeu.org/who-we-are/ethical-humanism/>
- <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/collections/worldsfair/>
- <https://www.nps.gov/places/hotel-theresa.htm>
- <https://www.att.com/support/article/local-long-distance/KM1065144/#:~:text=An%20unlisted%20phone%20number%20is,listed%20in%20the%20phone%20book>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedomssummer-murder/>
- <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/freedom-summer>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/06/28/archives/mississippi-a-profile-of-the-nations-most-segregated-state-through.html>
- https://crdl.usg.edu/events/ny_race_riots#:~:text=The%20New%20York%20Race%20Riots,officer%20on%20July%2018%2C%201964
- For more information on voting discrimination: <https://www.crf-usa.org/brown-v-board-50th-anniversary/race-and-voting.html>
- For more information on the Commission: <https://da.mdah.ms.gov/sovcom/scagencycasehistory.php>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/24/obituaries/24chaney.html>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/john-f-kennedy/>
- <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/university-of-alabama-desegregated>
- <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2004/summer/civil-rights-act>
- <https://www.biography.com/legal-figures/j-edgar-hoover>
- <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-nov-11-me-rainey11-story.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/10/15/us/paul-b-johnson-jr-dies-at-69.html>
- <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/voting-rights-throughout-history/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/politics/republicans-young-voters-college.html>
- <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/politics/ohio-politics/gen-z-voters-worry-about-possible-age-restrictions-if-issue-2-is-passed>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/02/politics/voting-rights-bill-millennials-generation-z/index.html>
- <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2021/02/26/republicans-voter-suppression-pkg-gallagher-newday-vpx.cnn>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/news/one-five-adult-members-gen-z-self-identifies-lgbtq-rcna36147>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/upshot/trans-laws-republicans-states.html?auth=login-email&login=email>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/13/florida-teacher-allegedly-investigated-for-showing-students-film-strange-world>
- <https://theweek.com/education/1011116/floridas-dont-say-gay-bill-explained>
- <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-voter-suppression-laws-target-native-americans>
- <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ny-human-rights-campaign-lgbtq-state-of-emergency-hate-laws-20230606-lcsrw7tvfnczpk66iol3o45txy-story.html>

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH are key components of theREP’s mission, “to create an authentic link to the community we serve.” Through a wide range of programs, theREP strives “to provide the Capital Region with theatre programming which inspires a greater understanding of the human condition” and helps “to develop future audiences by instilling the notion that theatre is a vital part of the cultural life of all vibrant cities.”

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

Student Matinees (Classics on Stage): Performances of most of the theatre’s professional productions are scheduled during the school day with dramatically discounted prices for area students to allow for greater accessibility.

On-The-Go! In-School Tour: Specially adapted professional productions designed to play to students on-site in schools. theREP’s On-The-Go! program reaches close to 10,000+ students every year.

Young Playwright Contest: Providing students ages 13-19 with the opportunity to submit their work to be produced on theREP’s stage. In addition, the winning playwrights are given a mentorship—prior to the production of the play—with a theatre professional playwright (and/or director).

Summer Stage Young Acting Company: Providing young actors the opportunity to work together, with leading professionals in the field, on a production that will take place at theREP. Company members hone their acting skills while rehearsing and then performing the Young Playwright Contest-winning plays.

CAST (Cultivating Arts & Students Together): Providing students with the opportunity to volunteer at the theatre and earn community service credits at the same time. Teens get an in-depth learning experience that satisfies their passion to be a part of the arts while fulfilling their community service needs.

Artists-in-Residency Programs: theREP works in conjunction with school educators to bring highly trained teaching artists to work in extended residency within the classroom. Opportunities to embed the theatrical experience into the curriculum are available.

Career Development: theREP is dedicated to helping build the next generation of theatre professionals with programs like the Professional Apprenticeship Program which provides year-long or summer-long paid apprenticeships (as an assistant stage manager and/or crew member) and Internship Program that provides college students internships in many disciplines of theatre. These programs are specifically for young people beginning a career in the performing arts.



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