

Study Guide For Teachers

TAHIRA
in
Freedom Stories
presented by

Young Audiences

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

On January 6, 1773, an African American named Felix wrote the first of five appeals asking for a range of rights for African American slaves. He submitted the legal pleas to then Governor Hutchinson and the General Court of Massachusetts on behalf of other enslaved African American men and women in Boston.

A man named Henry "Box" Brown was an African American who escaped captivity (slavery) by mailing himself in a box from Richmond, Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 29, 1849.

Freedom songs were used by enslaved African American to pass along coded messages with plans for escape. One such song was "John the Rabbit" which TAHIRA will use to in a participatory manner to demonstrate how the messages were passed along. These freedom songs were a form of "resistance communication."

John the Conqueror Tales were stories that used cunning wit as a resistance tool. Some stories were brought from African culture. Others expressed the slaves' own experiences, but all helped the slaves use language as a means for resistance.

A woman named Fannie Lou Hamer led voter registration drives in the southern states from 1960 until her death in 1977.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In *Freedom Stories*, TAHIRA tells the stories of resistance and activism of African American men and women during the period of enslavement and through Civil Rights era. Most of the stories TAHIRA shares are largely unknown. They tell of the roles these important men and women played in forming and shaping American history.

LEARNING GOALS

Through stories and songs, TAHIRA will broaden students' knowledge about the history of the African American fight for freedom by telling of some of the enslaved Africans who lived, struggled and fought for freedom during the 350 years of captivity in the U.S. Her stories and songs will also enlighten students about the struggles of African Americans during the Civil Rights era.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

Discuss the following questions with your students:

Investigate the stories, spirituals and work songs used by African Americans during slavery. Talk to students about how they were used and how the meaning of the stories and the lyrics of the songs might have been interpreted differently by whites than by the slaves themselves. Let students know that songs were also important during the Civil Rights era. Come up with a list of the reasons songs might have been used (to show solidarity, to rally the people to the cause, to point out injustice, etc.)

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Discuss the three questions in #1 above with students now that they have experienced the program. Do they feel differently about their answers, or can they expand on them in light of what they have learned?
2. Talk with students about the songs of the Civil Rights era. How were they similar/different than the spirituals and work songs used during slavery? Look back at the list of reasons for using songs that you created with the class. Can you add any more now?
3. Have students create a list of messages that are important to them (e.g., help your neighbor, keep your neighborhood clean, be peaceful, etc.), and create lyrics to a song using a tune that they are familiar with.
4. Have students paint or draw images depicting their message. This could be used as their "CD cover". Students may also use these images to enhance the written version of their lyrics.
5. Get the music teacher involved! Work with them in having students listen to and perform more spirituals and songs of the civil rights movement, and later music influenced by these songs.
6. Get the visual art teacher involved! Work with them in exposing students to visual art of the time, and have students create their own artwork as influenced by these artistic expressions and messages and the performance of *Freedom Stories*.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Slavery	Constitutional Amendment
Confederacy	Segregation / Desegregation
Union	Civil rights movement
Abolitionist	Civil Disobedience
Underground Railroad	
Thirteenth Amendment	

ARTIST INFORMATION

TAHIRA is a multi-talented storyteller, relating African and African American stories while drawing upon her cultural background and personal experiences. She is filled with passion and enthusiasm for the content of her stories and their inherent cultural messages. Whether performing her original works, or her vast repertoire of stories from the African oral traditions, TAHIRA brings to her audiences messages of courage, hope and spiritual strength. Blending song, poetry and story, her high-energy performance delights listeners of all ages. TAHIRA is an advocate of using the arts to bring about social change. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Temple University's School of Communication and Theatre. She was awarded a fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts for her significant contribution to oral literature. TAHIRA is the Past-President of Keepers of the Culture, a Philadelphia Afro-centric storytelling group, and a member of the National Association of Black Storytellers, the National Storytelling Association and Patchwork: A Storytelling Guild.

RESOURCES

Lest We Forget: The passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation: A Three-Dimensional Interactive book with Photographs and Documents from the Black Holocaust Exhibit. Velma Maia Thomas

Freedom's Children: The Passage from Emancipation to the Great Migration. Velma Maia Thomas

Witness for Freedom: African American Voices on Race, Slavery and Emancipation. C. Peter Ripley, Roy E. Finkenbine, Michael f. Hernbree & Donald Yacovone

A Shining Thread of Hope. Darlene Clark Hine (Author), Kathleen Thompson (Author)

Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory. Kenneth S. Greenberg

Black Abolitionists (A Da Capo Paperback). Benjamin Quarles

Recordings:

Rise to Freedom by TAHIRA & *Gifted Children* by TAHIRA