

The Case for Loving: The Fight for Interracial Marriage

The Case for Loving

Written by Selina Alko, Illustrated by Sean Qualls & Selina Alko

Ages: 4-8; Grades PreK-3

Themes: Civil rights, Families, Tolerance & Respect

SUMMARY

Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter were in love... so they decided to get married. Except that it wasn't so easy for them. The year was 1966, Richard and Mildred lived in Virginia, and interracial marriage was illegal in that state. And Richard was White and Mildred was Black, so in the eyes of the state, their love was illegal. Of course, this was wildly unfair to Richard and Mildred, so they went to court to fight for their right to be legally married. Their case went all the way up to the Supreme Court, and the court voted that it was unconstitutional to deny the Lovings the right to wed. Richard and Mildred had won a victory for love.

Common Core Connections:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will research the Civil Rights Movement.
- Students will make a timeline of civil rights milestones.
- Students will develop academic vocabulary.
- Students will discuss difference, acceptance, and family.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss civil rights. Define a "right" for students and give examples of rights that we have protected under our constitution today, such as free speech, voting, and free public education. Guiding questions:

- Why is it important for our rights to be protected by laws?
- Who has these rights?
- What do you imagine it would be like if you, or a group of people, weren't given these rights under the law? How would you feel? How would your life be different?
- Have you ever heard of a time or place where people did not have equal rights?

Tell students that as recently as 50 years ago, there were laws designed to keep Black and White people separated. Tell students that they are going to see a movie about two people who lived in the 1960s and wanted to get married, but the law wouldn't allow it because they were a different race for each other. Encourage students to watch and listen for ways that the Lovings advocated for their right to marry who they chose, regardless of race. (CCRA.SL.1)

Introduce other important vocabulary words to students. Encourage students to use context clues to figure out the meanings. Lift some sentences from the movie as an example: "The two were in love; the felt it should be their right to get married. Sadly, it was not. Not in Virginia or sixteen other states. In those places, marriage between people of different races was against the law!" Ask students to infer what the word right means, based on context clues. Guiding questions:

- What does the sentence tell us about what the Lovings wanted? (To get married)
- Why were they not allowed to get married? (It was against the law because they were different races.)
- What word could we substitute for right that would make sense? (freedom; permission)

Provide students with a list of other words to listen for in the movie and encourage them to write their inferred definitions next to the word when they hear context clues that could help them: objected, Supreme Court, unanimous. (CCRA.R.4)

Tell students that you can use context clues (words and phrases around an unknown word that help you figure out their meanings) to figure out unknown words, but that you can also look within words to figure out their meanings. Introduce the prefixes un- and inter-. Work with students to break down the words unlawful, interracial, and unconstitutional to determine their meanings using prefixes and base words. Encourage students to listen for these words in the movie to confirm their meanings. (CCRA.R.4)

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss family with students. Guiding questions:

- What makes a family?
- How are families different?
- What is important in a family?

Invite students to make a family tree or other visual representation of their family to share with the class. Discuss the differences between the families in the class. Some suggested books about families include:

- A Family is a Family is a Family, by Sara O'Leary
- We Are Family, by Patricia Hegarty
- Families Are Different, by Nina Pelligrini
- And Tango Makes Three, by Justin Richardson and Peter Parneff
- One Family, by George Shannon (CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2)

Follow up on the discussion about rights. Guiding questions:

- What right was denied to the Lovings? Why was this right denied to them?
- Why was this law unfair? How did it affect Richard and Mildred's life?
- What did Richard and Mildred have to go through to get the law changed?
- Do you know of any other laws from the past that were unfair to people because of their race? (CCRA.R.1, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2)

Talk with students about other Civil Rights protests and laws that were enacted during this time. Consider:

- Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954
- Rosa Parks and Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955
- Ruby Bridges and the Integration of New Orleans Public Schools, 1960
- Birmingham Demonstrations and the Children's Crusade, 1963
- March on Washington, 1963
- Civil Rights Act, 1963
- Selma-Montgomery March, 1965
- Loving vs. Virginia, 1967

Suggested vocabulary development and research project to connect the learning:

- Use the Frayer Model to introduce topic specific vocabulary: protest, boycott, march, integration, segregation. (CCRA.R.4)
- Have students work in partners or small groups to research one of the Civil Rights Movement events from above. After completing their research students can present their findings to the class in the form of a report with visual aids. Then, students can put their reports together to make a timeline of events to display in the classroom. (CCRA.W.7, CCRA.W.8)

OTHER TITLES ABOUT FAMILIES FROM WESTON WOODS:

Elizabeth's Doll – written by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, illustrated by Christy Hale

The Other Side – written by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

Show Way – written by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Hudson Talbott

Wolfie the Bunny – written by Ame Dyckman, illustrated by Zachariah O'Hara

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