



THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE AIMS TO FACILITATE BRINGING *MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MONTGOMERY STORY* INTO K-12 CLASSROOMS, AND TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROUPS, INCLUDING FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, IN THEIR ONGOING WORK CHALLENGING RACISM, UNDOING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION, AND PRACTICING NONVIOLENCE. AS IT HAS DONE THROUGHOUT ITS EXISTENCE, THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION (FOR) SEEKS BOTH TO STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE THE EVOLUTION OF ACTIVISM FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE. AND AS IT DID WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE COMIC BOOK IN 1957, FOR SEES THE STORY OF MONTGOMERY AS ONE ENTRY POINT FOR INFORMING CONTEMPORARY POPULAR EDUCATION, CONVERSATION, AND ACTION.

#### USING OTHER SECTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR POPULAR EDUCATION

Many of the texts and activities offered in this guide for use in classrooms are suitable or adaptable for use with adults in community settings. The following especially lend themselves to study and examination in a popular education context.

1. The Fellowship of Reconciliation: An Introduction  
This reading provides a brief history of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States.
2. Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story: How a Comic Book Taught Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement  
This backgrounder tells the story of how the comic book came to be created and the impact it had in the U.S. and around the world. It also details

important stories of Montgomery that the comic book left out.

3. Questions to Guide Reading and Discussion of Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story  
These questions go page-by-page through the comic book to help readers pull out key facts and details, react to and reflect upon different aspects of the text, and locate resources to deepen their learning about lesser-known figures mentioned in the text. The "Summary Questions for Reflection and Discussion" at the end give individuals and groups of readers the opportunity to consider some of the gaps in the comic book, as well as to draw out lessons it may offer for their personal lives and their activism.
4. Young People Taking a Stand: From Claudette Colvin to Today  
The stories and biographical sketches included in this activity -- of Claudette Colvin and other global youth activists and movements up to the present -- provide powerful reminders of both the legacy and potential of young people as catalysts for social change. As we think about how to continue and grow movements for justice, it is essential to look to lessons we can learn from young people.
5. Comparing Two Articles about #BlackLivesMatter  
The texts for this activity examine aspects of the #BlackLivesMatter movement from very different perspectives. Alicia Garza's piece addresses the movement's origins (including the centrality of its co-founders identities as queer Black women), its misuses by supposed allies, and how we can support its ongoing work. The piece on research by economist Travis Campbell about how local BLM protests translate into a drop in police killings of

Black people helps readers examine the possible meanings and impacts of their activism. Though the classroom-ready activity features excerpts of these articles, congregations or other community groups could work with the full texts via the links provided on each excerpt.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND SOURCES FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS TO EXPLORE TOGETHER

Throughout the curriculum guide, we've strived to highlight both the insights and the omissions of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* -- and what we can learn from both. The following themes and questions related to the comic book may help your community to deepen its own thinking and activist work.

#### ON "THE MONTGOMERY METHOD"

The final four pages of the comic outline "How the Montgomery Method Works." Is this still an effective and powerful method for taking actions today? What might be added? How does it complement activist work being done today? What does this story mean to you? Or what has it meant to you during different periods of your life? How, if at all, has that meaning changed?

#### ON LEADERSHIP

The narrative and the message of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* highlight the importance of a charismatic leader. How have our understandings of the role and shape of leadership changed or evolved as movements for justice have developed? In what ways do movements make room for and amplify a multiplicity of voices? In what ways do they fall short? Have you seen changes in leadership style and emphasis over time during your involvement with activist spaces or communities, such as FOR?

Consider [this profound 2015 piece by Barbara Ransby](#), in which she refutes the notion that the contemporary movement to defend Black lives is "leaderless," highlights #BlackLivesMatter co-founder Patrisse Cullors' description of the movement as "leader-full," and provides both a primer and a retrospective on lessons in leadership from Ella Baker. To what extent does Ransby's piece reflect or inform your own experience of working for justice? To what extent does it challenge the narrative or strategies we see in *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*?

You might pair Ransby's article with [Margaret Burnham's remembrance of Bob Moses](#), who died in July 2021 at the age of 86. The life of the SNCC co-founder and Freedom Summer organizer -- as well as later Algebra Project founder and MacArthur "genius grant" recipient -- offers an instructive example. In Burnham's words: "He stayed steady in his own quiet skin, and rather than 'leading' the march, he chose to heed the leaders he met in the hollows and back roads of Mississippi. By leading from a place of quiet, Bob paved the way for hundreds to find the leader within themselves—especially women. By rendering fully audible the voices of his teacher, Ella Baker, and his co-organizer, Fannie Lou Hamer, by using his own very distinctive but unamplified, unadorned, and unglorified voice, he disrupted the gendered hierarchies of Black leadership."

What other examples have we seen in recent years of more inclusive, supportive, and horizontal leadership structures? To what extent does the development of trends such as "citizen journalism" help to empower more people to take leadership roles?

#### ON THE CENTERING OF MEN IN THE "MONTGOMERY STORY"

Ransby's article can also inform important conversations about gender in social movements. Certainly we can interrogate the comic book on this point. How were women erased from *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*? How have they been erased from other movement work? What has been your own experience around these issues of gender, as well as heterosexism?

[Alicia Garza's 2015 article mentioned above](#) can help groups and facilitators to broaden and engage with these questions of erasure. In one passage she emphasizes, "Straight men, unintentionally or intentionally, have taken the work of queer Black women and erased our contributions. Perhaps if we were the charismatic Black men many are rallying around these days, it would have been a different story, but being Black queer women in this society (and apparently within these movements) tends to equal invisibility and non-relevancy." How can movements challenge these tendencies? What examples have you seen that work? How should we respond when we fail or fall short?