

# Goin' Someplace Special

Book by Patricia McKissak

Unit study by Ami Brainerd

## ***SOCIAL STUDIES***

### **History: Jim Crow Laws/Segregation**

The book refers to Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow laws were state and local laws enacted in the Southern and border states of the United States and enforced between 1876 and 1965. They mandated "separate but equal" status for Black Americans. In reality, this led to treatment and accommodations that were inferior to those provided to white Americans. The most important laws required that public schools, public places and public transportation, like trains and buses, have separate facilities for white and Black Americans.

#### Examples of Jim Crow laws:

*"All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races."*

*"The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs."*

*"All marriages between a white person and a Negro, or between a white person and a person of Negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited."*

*"The schools for white children and the schools for Negro children shall be conducted separately."*

*"No persons, firms, or corporations, who or which furnish meals to passengers at station restaurants or station eating houses, in times limited by common carriers of said passengers, shall furnish said meals to white and colored passengers in the same room, or at the same table, or at the same counter."*

*"All persons licensed to conduct a restaurant, shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room or serve the two races anywhere under the same license."*

*"It shall be unlawful for any amateur white baseball team to play baseball on any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of a playground devoted to the Negro race, and it shall be unlawful for any amateur colored baseball team to play baseball in any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of any playground devoted to the white race."*

Discuss discrimination (the treating of some people better than others without any fair or proper reason) with your student. Did these laws make things *separate but EQUAL*? Have your student identify examples of discrimination throughout *Goin' Someplace Special*.

### **History: Civil Rights Movement**

After you've done the lesson on Jim Crow laws, your student may be pretty upset about how people were treated during this time. Explain that some people wanted to put a stop to the insanity. These people were leaders in The Civil Rights Movement. They wanted everyone to be treated with equality, as the Declaration of Independence states.

### **Key Events**

#### ***Brown v. Board of Education, 1954***

On May 17, 1954 the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision regarding the case called *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Topeka being a city in Kansas), in which the plaintiffs charged that the education of black children in separate public schools from their white counterparts was unconstitutional. The unanimous opinion of the Court stated that the "segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group."

#### ***Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-1956***

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks (the "mother of the Civil Rights Movement") refused to get up out of her seat on a public bus to make room for a white

passenger. Parks was arrested, tried, and convicted for disorderly conduct and violating a local ordinance.

After word of this incident reached the Black community, 50 leaders gathered and organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott to protest the segregation of blacks and whites on public buses. The boycott lasted for 382 days (1956 was a leap year), until the local ordinance segregating Black Americans and whites on public buses was lifted.

### ***The March on Washington, 1963***

A. Philip Randolph had planned a March on Washington in 1941 in support of demands for elimination of employment discrimination in defense industries; he called off the march when the Roosevelt administration met the demand by issuing Executive Order 8802 barring racial discrimination and creating an agency to oversee compliance with the Order.

Randolph and Bayard Rustin were the chief planners of the second March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which they proposed in 1962. The Kennedy administration applied great pressure on Randolph and King to call it off, but without success. The march was held on August 28, 1963.

Unlike the planned 1941 march, for which Randolph included only black-led organizations in the planning, the 1963 march was a collaborative effort of all of the major civil rights organizations, the more progressive wing of the labor movement, and other liberal organizations. The march had six official goals: "meaningful civil rights laws, a massive federal works program, full and fair employment, decent housing, the right to vote, and adequate integrated education." Of these, the March's real focus was on passage of the civil rights law that the Kennedy administration had proposed after the upheavals in Birmingham.

The march was a success, although not without controversy. More than 200,000 demonstrators gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial, where King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. While many speakers applauded the Kennedy Administration for the (largely ineffective) efforts it had made toward obtaining new, more effective civil rights legislation protecting the right to vote and outlawing segregation, John Lewis of SNCC took the Administration to task for how little it had done to protect southern blacks and civil rights workers under attack in the Deep South. While he toned down his comments under pressure from others in the movement, his words still stung:

“We march today for jobs and freedom, but we have nothing to be proud of, for hundreds and thousands of our brothers are not here—for they have no money for their transportation, for they are receiving starvation wages...or no wages at all. In good conscience, we cannot support the administration's civil rights bill.

This bill will not protect young children and old women from police dogs and fire hoses when engaging in peaceful demonstrations. This bill will not protect the citizens of Danville, Virginia, who must live in constant fear in a police state. This bill will not protect the hundreds of people who have been arrested on trumped-up charges like those in Americus, Georgia, where four young men are in jail, facing a death penalty, for engaging in peaceful protest.

I want to know, which side is the federal government on? The revolution is a serious one. Mr. Kennedy is trying to take the revolution out of the streets and put it in the courts. Listen Mr. Kennedy, the black masses are on the march for jobs and for freedom, and we must say to the politicians that there won't be a 'cooling-off period.'”

After the march, King and other civil rights leaders met with President Kennedy at the White House. While the Kennedy administration appeared to be sincerely committed to passing the bill, it was not clear that it had the votes to do it. But when President Kennedy was assassinated November 22, 1963, the new president, Lyndon Johnson, decided to pass it.

Source: Wikipedia

Read (or listen to) and discuss [Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" Speech](#)

### **Geography: Nashville, Tennessee**

In the author's note at the end of the story, the reader discovers that this story is set in Nashville, TN, The state capital of Tennessee is the story's setting-- Nashville.

Today, Nashville is known as the world's center for country music. The Grand Old Opry (which actually started as a radio show in the 1920s) nourished the growth and history of country music. On the outskirts of Nashville, you will find Opryland, a major country music concert center.

Tennessee Facts

Largest City- Memphis

Principal Rivers- Mississippi and Tennessee (point these out to your student on a map)

Statehood- June 1, 1796 (16th state admitted)

Major Industries- mining (coal), electrical power, enriched uranium production, music, automobile manufacturing, farming (tobacco, cattle, soybeans, cotton), walking horses, tourism

### **History: Libraries**

A library is a place where books, magazines, and records are kept for use but not for sale. It is maintained by a public body, institution, or private individual.

The first libraries open to the public were the collections of Greek and Latin scrolls which were available in the dry sections of the many buildings that made up the huge Roman baths of the Roman empire. However, they were not lending libraries. The "halls of science" run by different Islamic sects in many cities of North Africa and the Middle East in the 9th century were open to the public. Some of them had written lending policies, but they were very restrictive. William James Sidis claims the public library is an American invention and states that the first town library was established in Boston, MA in 1636 (the library is still in existence!).

The Library Company of Philadelphia was founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin and a group of his friends as a means to settle arguments. The subscription library was born. A subscription library allowed individuals to buy "shares." The money raised from the sale of shares went into buying more books. A member or shareholder then had rights to use the library.

Discuss with your student how this is different from the library you use today. How do libraries afford to exist?

### **History: Andrew Carnegie**

In the end note of the book, McKissak mentions Andrew Carnegie. He was a Scottish-American businessman who donated money for the building of thousands of Carnegie libraries in English speaking countries around the world. Find out your local library is a Carnegie library. Encourage your student to do more research on Andrew Carnegie.

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## Character Building & Bible Study: Joy

Tricia Ann is reminded-- "don't let those signs steal yo' happiness!" What does that phrase mean?

Sometimes we allow outside circumstances to determine whether or not we will be happy or joyful. What does the Bible say about this? Paul says that he has learned to be content regardless of his circumstances (and he had it pretty rough at times-- beaten, imprisoned, shipwrecked, etc.). Discuss attitudes and circumstances with your student. How does he respond when things don't go his way? What reasons do we have for being joyful all the time? Make a list of these reasons and remember to give praise to God together for giving us JOY.

Meditate on and possibly memorize these verses this week:

Philippians 4:4

1 Peter 4:13

Galatians 5:22

Philippians 4:11-12

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## *LANGUAGE ARTS*

### Vocabulary

confident- showing a feeling of certainty

fare- the money a person pays to travel by public transportation

staggered- to move or cause to move unsteadily from side to side as if about to fall

muttered - to mumble or to murmur complainingly or angrily

sober- having a serious attitude

scald- to bring to a temperature just below the boiling point

elderly- old

addled- to make or become confused

matinee-a theatrical performance held in the daytime and especially in the afternoon

clenched- to hold fast

harshly- making demands in a difficult way

spectacular- exciting to see

autograph- person's signature written by hand

ruins- the remains of something destroyed

## Character Development: Dialogue

Notice the way the grandmother speaks:

"I reckon. . . But you best hurry on 'fore I change my mind."

"hold yo' head up and act like you b'long to somebody."

This isn't what we'd consider proper grammar, but most of us speak with a regional dialect. (I've met very few people in my life who speak correctly-- I know I don't!)

When an author gives a character a voice, she needs to insure that the character sounds real. Writers get to throw out all the English book rules when they starting trying to create dialogue for their characters.

Re-write grandmother's words in the "correct" way. "I guess. But you should hurry before I change my mind." or "Hold your head up and act like you belong to somebody." What changes? Writing would be boring if all the characters talked the same!

Ask your student to try to capture the words of a younger sibling. I've never heard a two-year-old say, "Mother, I would like a hotdog for lunch today, please." That's not realistic. What I've heard would be a little more like this: "Momma, dog dog! Pease! Dog-dog!"

Extend the exercise by including more examples:

What would a pirate say/sound like?

A cat? Other animals? Have fun with this.

## Word Choice

In this story 'Tricia Ann has to walk from here and there until she finally makes it to her destination-- The Public Library. Instead of using the words walk and ran over and over again, McKissak has used words such as the following:

*staggered*

*bounded*

*strutted*

*skipped*

Point these out to your student. Discuss what each one means; you could even act each word out if you'd like.

Ask your student to re-write the following sentences using stronger words to replace the word walk/ed.

*Sally got out of bed and **walked** down the stairs.*

*She **walked** to the kitchen to help her mother with breakfast.*

*After eating breakfast, she **walked** down the sidewalk and then **walked** back home.*

Your writer may want to re-vamp more than just the word walk--go ahead and let her!

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## **SCIENCE**

### **Botany: Pollination**

Before you complete this lesson, you may want to review the parts of a flower.

"Tricia Ann heard the distant buzz of a bumblebee"

Why is it important for bees to spend time in flower gardens? Bees are necessary for pollination and pollination is a necessary step in the reproduction of seed plants. Pollination is the process of moving pollen from one flower to another; without pollination, a flower cannot reproduce.

Bees travel from flower to flower to collect nectar and pollen grains. The pollen collects on the hind legs (in dense hairs known as the pollen basket). As the bees fly from flower to flower, some of the pollen grains are transferred to the stigma of other flowers. The nectar that the bee collects provides energy for the bee while the pollen provides protein.

If it's the right season and the weather permits, go outside and watch some bees busy with the task of pollination.

### **Independent Learning Project:**

Have your student compile a list of "Bee Buzz Words." Once he has his list, tell him



to create an illustrated bee dictionary providing a picture and definition for each word.

### **Botany: Types of Flowers**

Blooming Mary calls Tricia Ann a zinnia. Does your student know what a zinnia is? Spend some time outdoors finding all types of flowers and use a flower guide to determine what kind of flower it is.

Spend some time in the seed section of a local store and let your student choose some different types of flowers to plant; she may even find some zinnias! (If your current season is early or late spring, consider starting some plants indoor with peat pots if they can be transplanted at the right time.)

### **Chemistry: States of Matter**

When someone says that someone "can't even scald water" it's another way of saying, "he can't even boil water!"

Matter is defined as something that occupies space, has mass, and makes up the observable universe. Think of things around you that qualify as matter. There are three states of matter-- solid, liquid, and gas. Water is matter in its liquid form. Does your student know how to transform it into a gas? A solid? Boil some water. What happens when it reaches its boiling point? Can your student see the steam? This is water in gas form, but it's still water. What happens if you freeze water? It changes to a solid! Remind your student that whether it's in its solid, liquid, or gas form, it's matter.

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## ***ART***

### **Detail**

Point out to your student how Tricia Ann is wearing a bright blue dress with yellow daisies. Are the other people in the story wearing bright clothes? No, they seem colorless compared to Tricia. Why did the illustrator choose to paint the heroine in this fashion?

### **Medium: Watercolors**

Ask your student if he can determine what medium was used to create this

pictures? (watercolor) If your student is interested, pull out the watercolor paints and let him be an artist today.

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## ***JUST FOR FUN***

### **Make Homemade Pretzels**

*recipe adapted from [www.letsallcook.com](http://www.letsallcook.com)*

Ingredients:

Bread recipe:

1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon dried yeast  
1 cup warm water (100 -110 degrees F)

4 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 cup warm water (100 - 110 degrees F)  
2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons baking soda mixed with 4 cups boiling water  
1 egg beaten with 1 teaspoon water

Toppings: sugar and cinnamon mix, Kosher salt and parmesan cheese for sprinkling

### **Directions:**

Prepare the bread dough:

In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the first 3 ingredients for the "Starter". Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a small plate. Set aside to allow the yeast to activate, 5 to 10 minutes. Place the remaining ingredients into a large mixing bowl and add the starter mixture. Using a large wooden spoon, stir until a sticky dough forms. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 5 minutes until the dough becomes smooth and elastic. Add more flour if the dough is too sticky. Place the dough into a large oiled bowl and turn to coat. Cover the bowl with plastic

wrap or a tight fitting lid or plate. Let the dough rise in a warm place, until doubled in size - about 1 hour. Punch the dough down and knead lightly until smooth.

Shape into pretzels:

Now divide the dough into 4, 6 or 12 pieces. Roll each piece into a rope, very thin, a little bigger than a pencil if your making 4 you can roll it about cigar size and 36 inches long. Shape into an upside down U shape on your table. Bring the ends together and twist them. Flatten the ends with your fingers and bring to the top of the pretzel and press in the dough to secure, making it look like a pretzel. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Now let the pretzels rise for a 30 minutes or till about double in size. Bring the 2 tablespoons of baking soda and 4 cups water to a boil in a large pan. Gently drop one of the pretzels in and count to 10, then lift out with a strainer or pancake turner. Repeat. Brush with beaten egg and water solution. Sprinkle with coarse salt, parmesan cheese, cinnamon sugar, poppy or sesame seeds. Bake in a hot oven 400 to 450 degrees (225 degrees C) for 12 to 15 minutes or until well browned.

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