



Post-Visit Activity: Characteristics of an Activist

Grade Level: 2 - 5

This program helps fulfill Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in Social Studies, including:

B.4.7, C.4.1, C.4.3, C.4.5, E.4.12, E.4.14
B.8.7, E.8.3, E.8.7, E.8.14

Subject: United States History, Civil and Labor Rights

Time Required: One to two class periods

Objective

- To analyze the content and tone of an oral history transcript and determine how Reverend James Randolph influenced his son, A. Philip Randolph, an accomplished labor and civil rights leader in the 20th century.
- Allow the student to understand the various forms citizenship can take.

Materials Needed

- Two large pieces of butcher paper
- Paper and pencils/ crayons for each student



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Procedures

1. Ask the class to brainstorm a list of character attributes they think a labor or civil rights activist must possess. Ask one student to record the list on a sheet of butcher paper.
2. Ask students to analyze the oral history transcript (either by reading their own copy or by listening to a fellow student read or describe it), paying particular attention to the attributes that A. Philip Randolph stated his father wished him to have.
3. Ask the group to brainstorm a list of character attributes that A. Philip Randolph's father felt were meaningful to possess. Ask one student to record the list on a sheet of butcher paper.
4. Post both lists, and conduct a brief class discussion on the lists' similarities and differences.
5. Review the character attributes listed by students as well as the information that they learned in the exhibit, *Pullman Porters: From Service to Civil Rights*, about A. Philip Randolph. Ask which, if any, of the attributes they believe Randolph possessed. Place a check mark next to that (those) attribute(s).
6. Ask students to refer to the lists and documents and write a single paragraph response to the questions, "Which attributes of A. Philip Randolph's character contributed to his success as a labor and civil rights activist?" and "What actions did A. Philip take that contributed to this success?" For younger students, ask them to draw a picture that provides an answer to the above question.

Follow Up

Encourage students to search library resources to find additional information that gives adjectives that describe Randolph's character. Direct students to add any new or different traits they find to the class list.



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A Father's Advice: Reverend James Randolph to Asa Philip Randolph

"Reminiscences of Asa Philip Randolph", July 11, 1972. From the Columbia University Oral History Research Office Collection, and extracted from the book, *A. Philip Randolph: A Life in the Vanguard*, by Andrew E. Kersten.

[My father] said: "You have the ability to speak. Your brother has the ability to speak. You have books here that I've bought for you to read, in addition to your school work, and your school leaders and teacher, they love you and have faith in you, they believe you're unusually gifted chaps." He said, " You've got to make use of that, and this is what I'm trying to do for you, in order that you will not only be trying to make a dollar for yourself or become rich, but will create conditions that will help the people farther down who don't have your opportunities or don't have your gifts." He said, "This is the thing that we as a group must do, and you're not going to live merely by getting something here and there from people clandestinely. You've got to do things yourselves that will help other people as well as yourself." He said, "This is why we stand apart in this community, but at the same time there is no Negro in this area who is too low for me to get out of my bed and go to help, if he is being assaulted by white racists. I may not know him, but if he's permitted to be subjugated and brutalized by white people and Negroes don't help him, you are providing the basis for yourself being the objects of attacks and persecution by white people. Consequently, the problem of one Negro is the problem of all of us...."