

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Tell all your friends NOT to ride the bus. They must walk or get a ride with someone. The bus company will lose a lot of money. That way, hopefully, we can force the bus lines to change this terrible law!

Rosa Parks: That would be fantastic, Martin! I'll tell all my friends.

Martin Luther King Jr.: Are you sure you're up to it? There will be a lot of people angry at you. And the newspapers may not be nice. But we'll be right beside you.

Rosa Parks: Let's do it. Someone has to do something. It has to change.

Rosa and Martin shake hands.

Narrator: The boycott lasted for over a year and the bus lines lost a lot of money. Finally, the bus laws were changed in Montgomery, Alabama. Then, Black people could sit anywhere they wanted on the bus.

## **One Day On a Bus**



## **A Rosa Parks Play**

by Bob Jensen

A LearningIsland.org  
Moment in Time Skit

*Editor: Caitlind L. Alexander*

LearningIsland.org

©Copyright 2004 Bob Jensen. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, or stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted by any form or any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without written permission of the publisher.

If you have paid any amount of money for this book, it is a violation of copyright laws. Please contact us at LearningIsland@yahoo.com.

One Day on the Bus, A Rosa Parks Play for Children/ Bob Jensen

Summary: A brief play regarding the day Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man.

1. Rosa Parks. Juvenile Literature. 2. Civil Rights. Juvenile Literature. 3. Martin Luther King Jr. Juvenile Literature.

Created in USA

Play:

RL: 3.6

W: 583

Policeman 1: Come with us.

Narrator: The policemen take Rosa off the bus with her hands behind her back. They take her to jail.

The policemen lead Rosa to the table.

Policeman 1: I'm going to fingerprint you.

Policeman 1 takes Rosa's fingers and presses one finger at a time pretending to take fingerprints.

Narrator: She calls Martin Luther King, Jr. to come visit her in jail.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rosa, what happened?

Rosa Parks: I got arrested JUST for sitting near the front of the bus and I refused to give up my seat to some WHITE guy.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: I'm sorry that happened! I have an idea. Let's boycott the bus lines.

Rosa: That's a great idea, but what do we do?

White Man: She's right here!

Bus Driver: Get up colored girl.

Rosa Parks: No.

Bus Driver: Well, I'm going to have you arrested.

Rosa Parks: You may go on and do so.

The bus driver walks off the bus and up to two the policemen standing at a nearby corner.

Bus Driver: Officer, there's a colored girl sitting near the front of the bus and she won't get up. Please come and arrest her.

Policeman 1: Show us where.

Both policemen follow the bus driver onto the bus. They step up to Rosa.

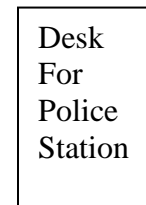
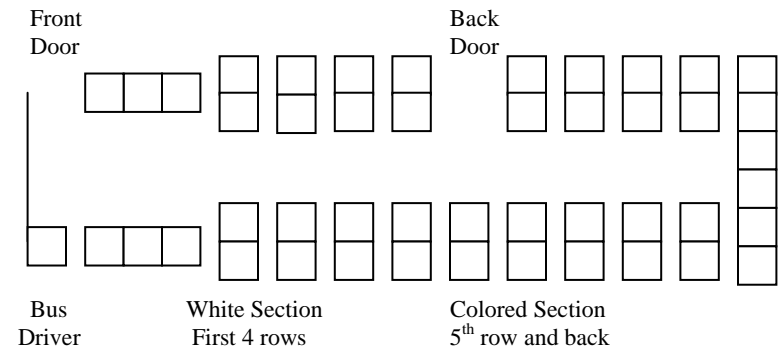
Policeman 1: You're under arrest.

Policeman 2: You know the law.

## A Note To Teachers

This short play is to help children understand what life was like for African-Americans in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. Hopefully it will also help them see the courage of a woman named Rosa Parks.

To begin, set up the room in the following manner:



The play is historically accurate from all published accounts of what happened on December 1, 1955.

All children should be involved in the play. Those who do not have speaking roles will be riders on the bus. To help children understand how life was back in 1955, the riders on the bus should draw their race from a hat or bag.

Since 2/3 of the bus riders in Montgomery were African-American, 2/3 of the papers in the hat should designate that race. All students should wear a name tag which shows their race to everyone else in the play.

Those who draw African-American must observe all rules which were in place in 1955. This includes paying their money to the driver, then stepping out and going in the back door. They should also take seats only in the back end of the bus. The first four front facing rows are reserved for white riders.

If you wish to add a further feeling of reality, designate that the drinking fountain or other items in the room are reserved for whites only. Those who draw African-American race papers may not drink from the water fountain or use the other items.

After the play, be sure to discuss with children their feelings. Each child who wishes should be allowed the chance to talk about their feelings.

White Man: Get up colored girl!

Rosa Parks: No.

White Man: I said get up!

Rosa Parks: And I said No!

White Man: If you don't get up, I'm going to tell the bus driver.

Rosa Parks: Go ahead. Suit yourself.

The White Man walks to the front of the bus and speaks to the driver.

White Man: Bus driver, there's a colored girl sitting near the front of the bus and she won't get up.

Bus Driver: Show me where.

White Man: OK.

He leads the bus driver to where Rosa is sitting.

Scene 1: A bus stop in Montgomery, Alabama.  
Several people are waiting to get on the bus.

Narrator: This is the story of Rosa Parks. It's December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. Rosa Parks was finished working one day and she got on the bus to go home. At that time, the law said that colored people must sit near the back of the bus in the Colored section. If a white person got on the bus, they sat at the front of the bus. If there were no seats in the white section, the first row of colored people had to give up their seats.

Rosa and the other people enter the bus. The white people enter first. Those who are colored must pay for their ride. Then they step off and enter the back door of the bus.

Rosa Parks: (walking to her seat slowly) I'm so tired! I'm so tired! I'm so tired!

Rosa takes a seat in the first row of colored people.

Narrator: After Rosa Parks sat down, the White Man enters the bus through the front door. He steps up to Rosa.

## **Introduction: The Rosa Parks Story**

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks got on the bus. She hadn't planned on causing a problem. But she was tired. She just wanted to sit down.

When the bus filled up, a white man ordered her to give him her seat. Rosa refused.

In Montgomery, Alabama, black people, called colored then, were told to pay the driver, then exit and get on the back of the bus. Sometimes the driver would close the doors and drive away before they reached the back doors.

If the bus got full, black people had to give up their seat. They would have to get up and move toward the back of the bus. If there were no seats, they stood. If there was no standing room, they had to get off the bus.

Rosa decided not to obey the rules. She knew that she would be arrested and fined. She no longer cared. The time had come to fight.

In truth, Rosa was not the first woman to refuse to give up her seat. Martin Luther King and the other black leaders were waiting for the right person. Two people had already been rejected as not right. One young woman wasn't thought to be upstanding enough. They didn't think the second

woman was strong enough for the fight. They knew the press would be hard on her.

But Rosa was perfect. She was a hard working married woman. She had lived an honest life. This was also the first time she had been arrested.

The leaders approached Rosa. They urged her to help them with the cause. Rosa agreed.

Numerous flyers were printed up. Everyone spoke to everyone else they knew. They all said to boycott the bus.

Two-thirds of the bus riders were black. Without their money, the bus system would lose a lot of money. But it was still a hard fight.

People would give each other rides. Many people walked. Many black taxi drivers also did their part. They agreed to drive black people around for a dime, the same as it would have cost to ride the bus.

For over a year the people stayed off the bus. Finally the Montgomery bus system gave in. Not only could blacks sit anywhere they wanted on the bus, they no longer had to give up their seat. And they could enter through the front door.

Because of one woman's act of courage, the laws in Montgomery, and in many other cities, changed forever.

## **The Skit**

Characters:

Rosa Parks: A 42 year old black seamstress.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: A young black preacher.

Narrator:

Bus driver: A white man.

White man: Passenger on the bus.

Policeman 1: White policeman.

Policeman 2: White policeman.