

Benjamin Baird, 8th grade
2013

"The Problem We All Live With"

Norman Rockwell

1963-1964

Social Realism

Oil

147.5 cm x 91.5 cm (3.5 ft x 3 ft)

An iconic image from the civil rights movement in the United States, it depicts Ruby Bridges, a six-year-old African-American girl on her way in to an all-white public school in New Orleans on November 14, 1960 during the process of racial desegregation. Because of the threats and violence against her, she is escorted by four U.S. deputy marshals. The painting was originally published as the centerfold in the January 14, 1964 issue of Look magazine.

Questions:

1. Observe the painting. List three things that strike you immediately when you look at it.
the girl is really short compared to the white men.
nigger is painted on a wall in the background (KKK) is also there
the white men all have gold rings to symbolize they are rich
the girl has her right leg out first and the white men have their left legs out (perspective + looking different)
2. What do you think Ruby felt like that day?
she was probably scared nervous and maybe a little proud
3. Why do you think Ruby and her family decided to go through with the integration?
as a protest to the discrimination of black people
4. What impact did her courage have on others?
other black people had courage and any black men/women could be like her

Compare

5. Research Norman Rockwell paintings from the Saturday Evening Post. Find and print three examples. Describe these paintings and compare and contrast them from this painting. *one of the paintings shows a picture of a boy about to jump the high dive. it links this most pictures are of people, white people doing everyday things, around 1961 he started to paint mixed race pictures! one painting shows mixed races and shows the golden rule*

6. Discuss the professional risks that Norman Rockwell must have taken to paint this in another magazine (he was a white artist). *he might have been abused or discriminated for saying black people were equal*

Social Justice

7. How would you stand up for what you believe in and go against society, if you felt you were advocating for the rights of others? *I would gather more people so i could gain power and make unabated protests to get my point across*

Steinbeck vs Me

8. Read the excerpt from John Steinbeck's Travels with Charley. Were his observations similar to yours? List two similarities or differences. *he did notice how small the girl was to the two guards, he noticed the white dress, he didn't catch how she tried to stop but she couldn't, he also noticed how the girl did not look at the crowd*

9. Watch "Many Rivers to Cross: Ruby Bridges." Discuss.