

☀ Values

- Faith
- Self-Control
- Courage
- Conviction
- Trust in Her Family
- Social Emotional Learning

☀ Reflection Questions

Have you heard people calling your friends racial names? Do you speak up for them?

When you are faced with a tough situation, from where do you get the courage you need?

Melba says the truth told by reporters kept her alive. How can the media help /hurt?

What do you think we can do in this school /country to be more tolerant of each other?

☀ Lessons Learned

At each moment of our life, we have a choice, to have faith and trust or to be afraid.

When we work together, we can find the power to rise above the dark times.

Sometimes unknown people are helpers, like the Quakers who gave Melba a new home.

Our families can pass on a legacy of the courage of our convictions and working for justice.

When Melba Pattillo Beals was 15 years-old, she was one of the youngest leaders of the Civil Rights movement as she helped integrate her high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. She kept a diary of her experiences: walking the gauntlet between classes, avoiding slaps and insults as well as experiencing the kindness of strangers who came to her aid, and kept her alive. During the long school year, she wrote about what it was like to get up every morning “and go off to war.” Her mother’s words gave her courage, “Make this day the best you can.”

☀ Language Arts: SEL & Diversity

Ask students to imagine they are news reporters interviewing Melba Beals about her life at 15. List 10 questions to ask her and write an article, remembering the who-what-when where-why-how of news reporting with an exciting headline to attract attention. Arrange pen pals with suburban/ inner city children. Create list of possible topics to discuss. Read Melba’s book, *Warriors Don’t Cry*. Keep a diary of their thoughts and feelings. The 30th anniversary of Central High’s integration was held in August 1997. Review news reports and have students write a story about the healing between people at this event. Make a list of words that your friends or family say to you that gives you courage. Read *From and Acorn to an Oak* (p. 164). Compare the experience of a white student, Elena Hanggi during integration with Melba’s experience. How did it affect each of them?

☀ Social Studies: Diversity

Have students act this story out as a play. Facilitate a dialogue before and after the play. Show videos about the civil rights movement and study *Brown v. Board of Education*. Discuss current issues in the 1990’s like affirmative action and race discrimination. Invite a speaker from the Quakers or other groups committed to peace and social justice. Promote interracial and intercultural understanding using the Teaching Tolerance project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (see our book’s Resource Section free materials)

☀ Community Service: Service Learning

Organize a multicultural fair for students and parents with arts, crafts and ethnic foods. Sponsor a roundtable discussion to explore ways intercultural / interracial understanding could be improved in your community.