

Reflection on the children's march

[Family](#), [Children](#)



As I watched the video entitled, " The Children's March", I just sat with mouth open as I watched the absolute dedication and passion for a cause. The kids decided to pick up the cause when the adults sat and did nothing in an effort to put an end to segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. As a teacher who strives to make multicultural education a daily routine within the classroom, I really think about how a unit in civil rights would be of huge benefit to kids in the 2nd and 3rd grades. This age to me is an age where they still have some of their usual belief that there is inherent good in everyone.

It, unfortunately, is also an age where many students witness or experience racism on different level, whether it is towards a relative, or towards themselves. I think about the absolute power and solidarity that kids can find in watching a video like this as part of a civil rights unit and how it can often bring solidarity and belief in what's right to a classroom. I have personally seen this in a 3rd grade classroom that my son was in 2 years ago and it served to jump-start a belief within the classroom that " we are all in this together".

It really made for a cohesive and caring classroom atmosphere and the 3rd graders really seemed to understand the true dynamics of the civil rights movement. Some very endearing conversations were had between my son and his parents and to this day, his understanding of racism and the civil rights movement is an understanding of equality and concern that it could happen again. As a Jew, he is even more in tune with this so has made a connection between this movement and the Statement, " Never Again" as

was uttered by millions of Jews before they were killed in the German gas chambers.

One of the things that strikes me as an educator is a similarity in what the kids did in Birmingham, and the approach that I believe will have to happen in order to create truly multicultural classrooms. First and foremost, too many of our educators that have been teaching for a long time are not prepared for change in the classroom. In our staff developments, more attention needs to be paid to having a truly inclusive multiculturally diverse classroom. Secondly, we are going to have to learn from our students. They come to us each year with a wealth of experiences and beliefs.

It is our job as educators to figure out how to best make that unique characteristic a part of our diverse learning community within the classroom. If our kids are so accepting of each other and the similarities and differences that we all bring into the school, then we as educators need to realize that creates an initial bond within our classroom that is hard to break. Just as our parents disliked having people of color, or people with different sexual preferences around, our children today are growing up with that reality and they really don't think anything of it!

Being in a class with kids of different ethnic backgrounds is part of the unique tapestry of that class. Ultimately, having a classroom where multicultural diversity is our responsibility as educators. There will always be stumbling blocks that try to derail that effort, but as our kids overcome those barriers, so shall we as teachers. Let the kids help us understand that we're really not so different and that all any kid wants to do is learn and be accepted for who they are..... a kid!

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