

Helping Hands from History

For caregivers and children preschool and under:

Objectives

- Participants will:
 - a. Play instruments and march to a rap.
 - b. Watch a film on how February became Black History Month.
 - c. Explore famous African Americans through stations.
 - d. Sing spirituals and freedom marches and march to the rap.
 - e. Listen to a story.

Materials

Mascot with rap (Intro is on p 4. The remainder is on pp 5, 6),
Pictures (Carter Woodson, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Mary Bethune, Langston Hughes, Matthew Henson),
Musical instruments,
T.V. or computer,
Calendar,
Instructions for each station (pp 7, 8),
Follow Your dreams Little One, by Vashti Harrison,
Harriet Tubman, by Isabel Sanches Vegara,
Rosa Parks, by Lisbeth Kaiser,
Keep On: The Story of Matthew Henson, by Deborah Hopkinson

Stations:

- **Harriet Tubman:** board book, blocks, North and South signs, Harriet Tubman puppet and dollhouse figures
- **Langston Hughes:** photo of him, illustrated copy of *City* by Langston Hughes (p 9), morning and evening pictures, *Fisher-Price* Little People town and figures, small fabric squares for each figure
- **Rosa Parks:** board book, bus pull toy with one figure painted to look like Rosa Parks, traffic signs
- **Matthew Henson:** book, tray with ice cubes, polar bear, walrus, Inuit and Matthew Henson figures (You may use white, clear, and gray Duplo's instead of ice.)
- **Mary Bethune:** divided container, little girl figure, mini book or Bible, school house, adult Mary, boy and girl figures, building

In preparation for your learning event, print off the rap, instructions, and poem, and the pictures of each hero from the internet. Glue print-outs to cardstock. Laminate each item for durability. Collect all of the objects for the stations.

This activity includes caregivers. It may also be done with a larger group of preschool children provided you have four adults for each station. Older toddlers and preschoolers may be divided into four groups and spend between ten and fifteen minutes at each station. Use a timer to stay on track with this. If your group contains mainly very little ones, allow the children to choose where they want to go. **While small items cause less concern with supervised stations, please exercise caution when including baby and toddler participants.

Introduction

- **Sing** the [Welcome Song](#).
- **Hold up** the mascot with the rap, musical instruments, and pictures.
- **Say:** "(Mascot) has a rap, some pictures, and instruments. I wonder what we are going to do with these?" (Children may respond).
- **Pass** out the instruments so that each child has one.
- **Recite** the rap as the children play their instruments.
- **Say:** "These are pictures of the people in the rap. We are going to learn about these people today."

Lesson

Main Point: African American heroes did amazing things in this country even though they were oppressed.

- **Show:** Carter B. Woodson video on *Learning with Lamby*.
- **Say:** We celebrate Black History Month in February.
- **Hold up** the February month on the calendar.
- **Say:** That is this month! Hooray!
- **Divide** the children up into four groups **or** allow children and caregivers to explore the different learning areas.

Close/Music and Movement

- **Gather** the children back in circle time.
- **Allow** the children to tape a picture of each hero beside their name as they sit down.
- **Say:** "We certainly learned about a lot of heroes. They did amazing things, even though hard things were happening to them."
- **Sing** [Walk with Me](#) and [All Night, All Day](#) (It is at the end of this Lamby video if you need the tune).
- **Invite** the children to repeat the rap again with you as you march around the room.

Book Time

Read *Follow Your Dreams, Little One*, by Vashti Harrison.

Helping Hands from History

*These are some people who helped
our country;*

They were there to help in the fight.

*These are some people who stood
against injustice,*

Oh they stood for what was right!

*Carter Woodson did something neat,
which makes February extra sweet.*

Harriet Tubman freed many people.

Rosa Parks sat on the bus.

Matthew Henson explored the arctic.

*Mary Bethune: reading was needed
and she made a fuss!*

Langston Hughes wrote with a pen.

Now we have finished. It is the end!

Harriet Tubman:

1. Place the South and North signs far apart from each other in your learning area.
2. Invite the children to help you make different buildings and a river out of the blocks.
3. Show the children the Harriet Tubman puppet. Put it on your finger.
4. Say: "Harriet Tubman saved many people by helping them to get from the south to the north."
5. Give each child a figure and have them move the figure from one end to the other, crossing the river and hiding in the houses.
6. If time permits, you may read the board book to them.

Langston Hughes:

1. Show the photo of Langston Hughes to the children.
2. Read the poem to the children. Explain that he wrote that poem.
3. Hold up the morning picture. Allow them to play with the city playset.
4. Hold up the night picture.
5. Have the children put blankets on all of the figures and make them go to sleep.

Matthew Henson:

1. Show the book about Matthew Henson to the children.
2. Summarize the book for them.
3. Children may use the items to act out Matthew and the Inuit people going to the North Pole.

Rosa Parks:

1. Use the bus and the figures to dramatize Rosa's story: She was tired and decided to stay seated on the bus and not give her seat to a person who was white, so she was taken off the bus and sent to jail. This started a bus boycott. Everyone started walking instead of taking the bus until the rule changed. Take the figures off the bus and have them walk.
2. They may play with the bus, people, and traffic signs.
3. If time permits, read the board book to the children.

Mary Bethune:

1. Use this script:
 - When Mary was a little girl she wanted to read. (Hold up girl doll.)
 - But she was told she couldn't! (Hold up the book and make an x with your finger.)
 - Mary was going to learn to read. She walked a long way to school. (Act out with doll and schoolhouse).
 - Mary learned to read! (Hold up book).
 - When Mary grew up, she started a school to teach other black children how to read. (Hold up other building, adult Mary, and the children).
2. Children may play with the figures.

City

by Langston Hughes

*In the morning the city spreads its
wings,
Making a song in stone that sings.
In the evening the city goes to bed,
Hanging lights about its head.*

Note: *This poem is a favorite of mine both for its imagery. It is also special to me because it was used for a recitation competition in the public school system for which I worked in the 1990s. This competition was held both by our school and the entire system.*

Photos

Harriet Tubman



Langston Hughes



Matthew Henson



Rosa Parks



Mary Bethune



Carter B. Woodson



QR Codes for Links



Welcome Song

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=si-k1sqvb00>



Walk With Me

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=lEiDD9bXJi0>



All Night, All Day

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=7FqhZHNG7T4>