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MEMPHIS

A NEW MUSICAL

*Educational
Guide*

WWW.MEMPHISTHEMUSICAL.COM

MEMPHIS

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Introduction

How to Use This Guide

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the *Memphis* Educational Guide! These materials have been generated to serve as a catalyst for educational enrichment beyond the performance.

Inside this resource you'll find a wide variety of research, questions, activities and worksheets that may either stand alone or work in sequence as a unit of study. Feel free to photocopy pages from this guide to distribute to your students. For easy navigation of these materials, we have structured the guide into four sections: **Before the Show**, **After the Show**, **The Memphis Project**, and **Resources**.

The first section, **Before the Show**, provides information about the production and historical background along with corresponding suggested extension activities. Here, you'll find the Plot Synopsis, Character Descriptions, and the Writers' Biographies. Additionally, articles shaping the historical context of *Memphis* have been included to give your students an understanding of the social and political landscape.

The second section, **After the Show**, features a theme-based approach to exploring *Memphis'* content in your classroom. These activities and discussion prompts are designed to stimulate critical thinking and experiential learning.

The third section, **The Memphis Project**, is a class project focusing on community explorations in oral tradition and performance. This initiative is intended to culminate in an original interview theatre performance written by your students.

The **Resources** section provides information for delving deeper into the world of *Memphis* with texts, videos, websites and more.

We hope that this guide and the dynamic performances will inspire your students to further explore issues of segregation, musical identity and cultural celebration.

Enjoy the Show!



Breaking Down the Standards for Learning

The *Memphis* Educational Guide supports learning in the following areas:

National Standards for Learning

English Language Arts
United States History
Life Skills
Technology
Fine Arts

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater

- I. Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Design and Technical Theater, and Directing
- II. Developing Theater Literacy
- III. Making Connections
- IV. Working With Community and Cultural Resources
- V. Exploring Careers and Lifelong Learning

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Music

- I. Music Making
- II. Music Literacy
- III. Making Connections
- IV. Community and Cultural Resources
- V. Careers and Lifelong Learning



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Before the Show
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Plot Synopsis

Act One

Huey, a young white man, visits the underground Beale Street Club to listen to rhythm and blues (*Underground*). When confronted by the owner, Delray Farrell, about his attendance at a black club, he explains his passion and connection to the music being created there (*The Music of My Soul*).

A couple of weeks later, Huey's infatuation and excitement for this music grows. While working at Collins Department Store, he completes tasks poorly and begs Mr. Collins to be reassigned to the record department where he guarantees results. Reassigned, at first he appeases Mr. Collins with his musical selections, but eventually Huey gives into his temptation to play black music in the store (*Scratch My Itch*). Despite the popularity and record sales he generates, Huey is immediately fired for selling "race records."

Now a regular at the Beale Street Club, Huey takes a liking to Felicia Farrell, a young black singer. Even though there are no prospects in sight, Huey promises that he'll get her music on a mainstream, middle of the dial radio station (*Ain't Nothin' But A Kiss*). Delray, who is also Felicia's brother, expresses his distrust of Huey.

The next day, Huey solicits himself to a variety of radio stations, but is continually met with rejection (*Hello, My Name Is Huey*). Eventually, one of the radio station owners, Mr. Simmons, recognizes Huey from the ruckus at Collins Department Store and invites him into the studio to observe a "real" rhythm and blues disc jockey. However, when the DJ leaves the booth for a break, Huey seizes the opportunity and locks himself inside. Giving himself a big introduction, he plays a race record on the mainstream radio station (*Everybody Wants To Be Black on a Saturday Night*). Just as Mr. Simmons is about to have Huey arrested, the radio station phones begin ringing off the hook with requests by young white teenagers to play more. Mr. Simmons concedes and gives Huey a two-week tryout without pay, which he ecstatically accepts.

As things appear to turn around for Huey, his mother, Gladys, informs him that a brick with an angry note attached was thrown at her through their window. Huey acknowledges the adversity challenging him because of his new job, but emphasizes the positive changes he has been able to stimulate (*Make Me Stronger*).

Later that month, Felicia surprises Huey at his home

with a copy of her first record for him to play on the radio. Amidst their excitement, Gladys enters. As Huey begins to defend Felicia, Gladys hurls the record to the floor causing it to break in two. Felicia apologizes for causing trouble and rushes out of the house. Huey catches up to Felicia, promising her that everything will come together and that she should still come to the radio station the next day (*Colored Woman*).

At the radio station, Huey surprises Felicia by inviting the musicians and back-up singers from the Beale Street Club to perform with her live on the air. Completely enthused about the idea, he has everything set up and gives her a grand introduction. However, as she sings, Huey gets caught up in the moment and announces that he hopes she'll kiss him (*Someday*). Felicia's brother Delray becomes extremely concerned and tries to explain to Huey that he is a danger to Felicia (*She's My Sister*). Shortly after Delray leaves, Felicia secretly returns and kisses Huey (*Ain't Nothin' but A Kiss - Reprise*).

Now a local celebrity, Huey boasts of his radio success and presents his mother with a brand new house. Completely elated, she rushes into the house that she would otherwise never be able to afford (*Radio*). Later that evening, Huey and Felicia meet up in public before attending a party in honor of Delray Records at the Beale Street Club. As they talk about their future, Huey proposes to Felicia. She brings up segregation laws, but admits that she would marry Huey if she could. Filled with emotion, they kiss on the street just as a gang of white men intervene. They tear them apart, hold Huey down and severely beat Felicia. As Delray begins to kick-off the party at the club, Huey enters carrying Felicia and desperately crying for help. A frenzied Delray directly blames Huey for the incident and attempts to attack him. To stop this, a silent Gator speaks for the first time giving a prayer for change (*Say a Prayer*).

Act Two

Two years later, Huey's professional success continues to grow as Mr. Simmons expands from radio to TV, making Huey the host of an afternoon all negro show for teenagers (*Crazy Little Huey*). With Huey's developing clout, he is able to put more of his friends



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from the Beale Street Club on mainstream programming (*Big Love*). At the peak of his local success, Felicia introduces and romanticizes about the idea of moving North. Huey remains adamant about remaining in Memphis, where he feels like he is king of the world.

Due to her brother's connections, Felicia is able to audition in a studio for a producer from RCA Records (*Love Will Stand When All Else Falls*). Feeling threatened, Huey crashes the audition in an attempt to keep Felicia in Memphis. However, the producer is amused by Huey's antics and offers to have his television show checked out for national broadcast-



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Extension Activity: What Am I Seeing?

In preparation for your visit to see *Memphis*, have your students use the internet to check out the official website for the Broadway production (www.memphisthemusical.com). Once on this site, have your students peruse production pictures, videos and more. Before attending the show, discuss what they expect to see at the performance. Have students create a list of predictions, and hold onto them. After the show, revisit these lists and see what comparisons emerge.

National Standards for Learning:

NL-ENG.K-12.7: Evaluating Data, NL-ENG.
K-12.8: Developing Research Skills, NT.K-12.5:
Technology Research Tools

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the

Arts: BP-T.9-12.4: Working With Community
and Cultural Resources

ing. Delray, Felicia and Huey are overjoyed by the opportunities awaiting them and the prospect of making it big (*Stand Up*).

As everyone at the TV studio is frantically making final preparations for the producer from New York, Huey refuses to cooperate with any changes the network has recommended. Huey's mother encourages him to seize this opportunity and embrace leaving Memphis for his personal happiness (*Change Don't Come Easy*). Huey appears to understand and begins the show having given in to the network's recommendations. During a commercial break, the network representative expresses his interest in Huey's show, but with the stipulation that all the performers must be white. The show comes back from break, and a rebellious Huey does a striptease while singing (*Tear Down the House*) to the horror of the network representative.

Huey breaks the news to Felicia and refuses to move to New York (*Love Will Stand When All Else Falls – Reprise*). She makes a guest appearance on his show and performs live. During her performance, Huey declares his love for her by kissing her on-camera causing an uproar on the set. A furious Mr. Simmons immediately fires and denigrates him. Felicia makes one final offer for Huey to join her, but unable to leave Memphis, he helplessly refuses and lets her go (*Memphis Lives in Me*).

Years later, a chastened Huey disc jockeys for a radio station at the end of the radio dial with only one listener. In the middle of his broadcast, Felicia drops in and discovers that he's still living in the past. She informs him of her concert in Memphis featuring white and black back-up dancers, and acknowledges that she thinks it's in part due to Huey. Hoping that she can get Huey public recognition again, Felicia invites him to join her onstage. Although he is apprehensive at first, Felicia helps Huey to rediscover his passion for music by having him recount his journey in the face of adversity while following the music of his soul (*Steal Your Rock 'n' Roll*).



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Character Descriptions

Huey Calhoun – Young white man determined to bring “race music” into mainstream culture, and break a segregated society’s racial barriers. He is a determined and passionate individual who impulsively acts upon his beliefs.

Felicia Farrell – Young black singer at the Beale Street Club that dreams of taking her music beyond the local constraints of Memphis, Tennessee. She is passionate and tenacious.

Debray Farrell – Owner of the Beale Street Club and Felicia’s overly protective older brother. He yearns to make his sister a national success.

Gladys Calhoun – Huey’s hard-working mother. She has great difficulty supporting Huey’s personal and professional affiliations with the black community.

Mr. Simmons – Owner of the WHDZ Memphis radio station and, eventually, Huey’s boss. While he is not comfortable with Huey’s actions, his financial gains through Huey outweigh his distaste.

Tator – The bartender at the Beale Street Club. He is very attentive, but does not speak.

Bobby – Beale Street Club frequenter that works during the day as a janitor for Mr. Simmons’ radio station.

Jordon Trant – A record producer from RCA Records interested in signing Felicia to the label.

Martin Holton – A network representative from the American Broadcasting Company interested in bringing Huey’s show to a national audience.

Reverend Calvin Hobson – The spiritual leader of the First Baptist Church. He is both passionate and inspiring.

Buck Wiley – A conservative white man who is the host of “Boppin’ with the Blues” on Mr. Simmons’ radio station.

Mr. Collins – Owner of Collins Department Store who fires Huey for playing “race music” in his place of business.

Clara – Mr. Collins’ store employee.

Frank Dwyer – An advertising client of Mr. Simmons who loves Huey’s ability to sell his products.

Ethel – A Beale Street Club frequenter who becomes Bobby’s fiancé.

Extension Activity: Instant Playwrights

What makes playwrights unique from other forms of writers is their ability to use written dialogue to express an idea. Have your students take a crash course in playwriting by writing on a blank piece of paper the number "1" followed by a colon. Ask them to skip a couple of lines and label a number "2" followed by a colon. Have them continue to write the "1:", "2:", "1:" sequence until they reach to bottom of the page. Let them know that these numbers represent nameless characters in a play they will have one-minute to write. Have your students write down the first line for number 1: "I told you not to do that!" Then on your signal, give them sixty seconds to fill up the page. (Note: the emphasis for this activity should be speed and filling up the page rather than what the characters are saying.) Once the minute is up, have students pair up and volunteer to read their scenes aloud for the rest of the class. Ask the class to listen for character, relationship, conflict and action. After each scene is read, see how much the audience is able to piece together by just one page of dialogue.

National Standards for Learning: NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing, NA-T.9-12.7: Analyzing, Critiquing, and Constructing Meaning, NL-ENG.K-12.4: Communication Skills, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.2: Theater Literacy, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

About the Writers



David Bryan (Music & Lyrics) As the keyboard player, songwriter and founding member of Bon Jovi, David Bryan has seen and learned a lot about music and the music business in the past 20 years. The journey includes selling 100 million albums, traveling the world and playing to millions of people in 50 countries, circling the globe 15 times and living through the rock and roll years, the grunge years, the rap years and everything in between. As the band celebrates its 20th year together with the release of the box set, "100,000,000 BON JOVI FANS CAN'T BE WRONG," David is enjoying the schedule being a member of such a successful band allows. In his time off from recording and touring with Jon, Richie and Tico, David began a career as a composer and lyricist of musicals. Aside from *Memphis*, David also collaborated with Joe DiPietro on a musical version of *The Toxic Avenger*, which began previews Off-Broadway on March 18, 2009. David has also written and released a solo record, *Lunar Eclipse* (Rounder/Universal) an instrumental collection with a single vocal bonus track highlighting all of the aspects of his training and influences - blues, classical, jazz and of course, rock and roll. In addition to writing songs for Bon Jovi, David continues to write with and for other artists. The most successful cover of a Bryan song may be Curtis Steiger's rendition of "This Time," which was a major international hit for him. David has also dedicated his time to become a national spokesperson for VH1's Save The Music Program, traveling across the country to many of the 43 cities which participated in the program in 2001. He is also an Honorary Board Member of "Only Make Believe," a program dedicated to the principle that freeing a child's creative spirit is a valuable part of the healing process.



Joe DiPietro (Book & Lyrics) Broadway and national tour: "Memphis," *All Shook Up*. Off-Broadway, "The Toxic Avenger" (written with David Bryan,) *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *The Thing About Men*, and *Over the River and Through the Woods*. Future shows include his reworking of *Babes in Arms* and the new Gershwin musical, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. Upcoming regional productions include the comedy, *The Last Romance*, and the one-woman musical, *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*. His work has had thousands of productions across the country and around the world.

The Birth of Rock 'n' Roll

Read the following article aloud to your class to provide your students with relevant historical background information. Have them complete the suggested extension activity to stimulate further discussion.

"It's the music of my soul!"
—Huey Calhoun

Rebellious. Driving. Soulful. It was the new sound of a young generation hungry for change. A change that defied the rigid structures and conservative standards of Tin Pan Alley, and synthesized a variety of musical genres into one eclectic sound: Rock 'n' Roll.

In the early 1950s, this new sound was considered to be "race music" as its origins were strongly influenced by the black musical roots of rhythm and blues, soul and gospel. In this era of segregation, even the radio was a venue of divide. Center of the dial radio stations, which were easily accessible, were designated for traditional music and standards being produced by Broadway composers; while left of the dial, commonly distorted, radio stations were allotted for black music. This was until a disc jockey by the name of Alan Freed began to play the Rock 'n' Roll sound as featured music on his middle of the dial radio station in the early 1950s. He is also noted for coining the term "Rock 'n' Roll."

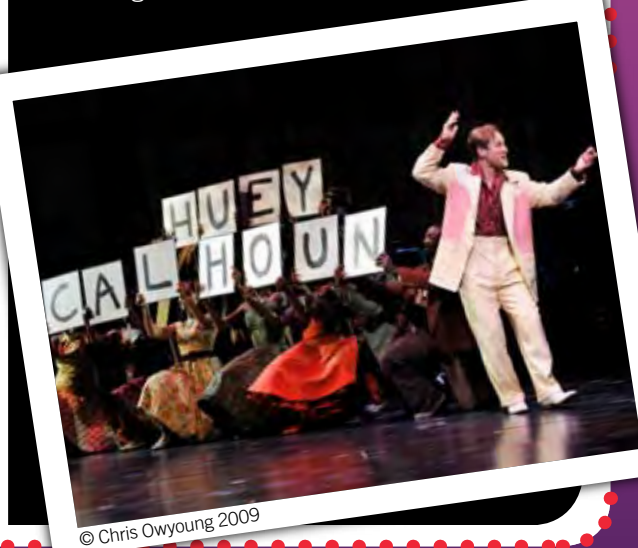
Early forms of Rock 'n' Roll began with artists like Bill Haley and the Comets, who would often take and adapt the earlier works of black artists. Other artists like Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins were able to fuse their sounds with a country feel. However, the sound found its father when a Tupelo, Mississippi truck driver, by the name of Elvis Presley, entered the scene. Playing his first concert in 1954 in Memphis, Tennessee, he not only began to dominate the airwaves, but generated much controversy as his voice was often criticized for sounding too black. However, this didn't stop his hit era, spanning from 1954–1963, which resulted in major financial gains for the recording industry and brought Rock 'n' Roll into the mainstream media.

Extension Activity: The ABCs of Rock 'n' Roll

Test your students' knowledge of Rock 'n' Roll! Divide your class up into two teams. Have each team form a line in front of a large sheet of poster paper with the letters "A" – "Z" written out vertically. On your signal, have students race one-by-one to fill-in words that are relevant to Rock 'n' Roll (i.e. people/bands, instruments, songs, etc.) using each individual letter as the start of a word. (Note: Teams must respond in sequential order!) The first team to complete their chart and sit down in an orderly fashion wins. After the relay, ask your students to review the responses. What are the commonalities and differences between the two lists? Are there any responses they don't know?

National Standards for Learning: NL-ENG. K-12.4: Communication Skills, NL-ENG. K-12.11: Participating in Society, NL-ENG. K-12.12: Applying Language Skills

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-M.9-12.2: Music Literacy, BP-M.9-12.3: Making Connections



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Extension Activity: Exploring The Great Migration through Literature

Many strong literary works came out in response to The Great Migration. Find a literary work like Langston Hughes' poem, "The South," to share with your class. After having read the work, ask your students the following questions:

1. What does the work reveal about life in the South? In the North?
2. How does the writer feel about The Great Migration?
3. Is there a solution the writer is suggesting?
4. What do you think black migrants found once they moved to the North? What aspects of life were better, worse, and/or the same?

National Standards for Learning: NSS-USH.9-12.9: Era 9: Postwar United States, NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies, NL-ENG.K-12.9: Multicultural Understanding, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

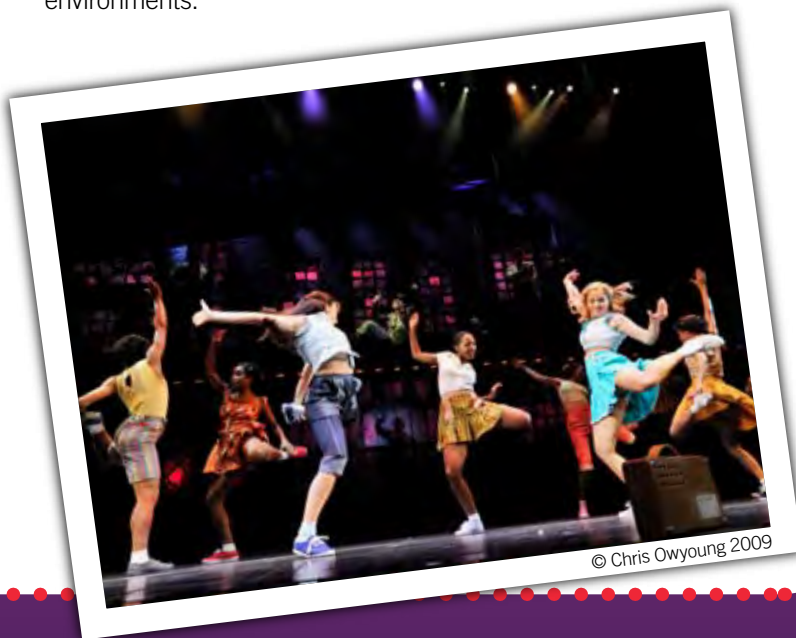
The Great Migration

Read the following article aloud to your class to provide your students with relevant historical background information. Have them complete the suggested extension activity to stimulate further discussion. (Note: The Great Migration becomes a focal point of *Memphis*, as the characters look to move North for the prospect of living without segregation and for career advancement.)

In the wake of extreme adversity in the South, many black people viewed the North as the "promised land." The Jim Crow Laws designating that public facilities, schools and transportation be separate, paired with the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, generated great fear and uncertainty amongst the black community.

The Great Migration was a movement that spanned from 1910–1970, which resulted in a surge of six and a half million black migrants moving from the South to the North. In fact, in 1910 there was 80% of the black population living in the South, while there only remained 25% by 1970. Popular destinations in the North were major cities such as New York City, Chicago and Philadelphia. This was largely due to the need for factory workers in the Industrial North, and the rumor that black workers could earn three times as much compared to their jobs in the South.

While segregation was not legal in the North, it still presented a wide range of challenges for black migrants. Prejudice and racism still existed (often referred to as "de facto segregation"), while blacks frequently had to face poor living conditions and dangerous work environments.



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Civil Rights in the 1950s

Read the following article aloud to your class to provide your students with relevant historical background information. Have them complete the suggested extension activity to stimulate further discussion.

Throughout the 1950s, the Civil Rights Movement made strides towards an America rooted in equality. Challenged by racial prejudice, it took the leadership, boldness and commitment of many people to yield key achievements in law and attitude. Significant breakthroughs include: Brown versus Board of Education, Rosa Parks' personal protest, and the Little Rock Nine, among others.

A unanimous ruling in the 1954 Brown versus the Board of Education case in Topeka, Kansas declared segregation in schools is unconstitutional. This was highly symbolic in overturning the previously accepted policy of "separate but equal" produced from the 1896 court case, Plessy versus Ferguson. Additionally, this victory was led by NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) attorney Thurgood Marshall, who later went on to become the first black justice appointed to the Supreme Court.

NAACP member, Rosa Parks, took a brave stance in 1955 on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She was arrested for refusing to give up her seat located in front of a white passenger's seat (a southern custom of the time). In response to her situation, a boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr. was held until buses were desegregated on December 21, 1956.

At Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, the first black teenagers to attend the previously all-white school were blocked by the state's National Guard (as directed by the Governor of Arkansas). Their circumstance drew the attention of President Eisenhower, who sent in federal troops to protect the students. While every day was a challenge for the "Little Rock Nine," as they came to be known, they prevailed in the face of adversity by continuing their education despite ongoing death threats and extreme racism.

Other notable accomplishments during the 1950s include: Gwendolyn Brooks becoming the first black Pulitzer Prize winner for *Annie Allen* (1950), Juanita Hall becoming the first black Tony Award winner for playing Bloody Mary in *South Pacific* (1950), Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* becoming the first play produced on Broadway by a black playwright (1959), and Berry Gordy founding the Motown Records label in Detroit (1959).

Extension Activity: Colorism

During the Civil Rights Movement, many strong leaders fought years to combat the prejudices based upon the color of a person's skin. This is also a prominent issue in *Memphis*. Are perceptions of skin color different today? Ask your students to write a response to the following questions regarding their views on skin color:

Colorism: a form of discrimination based upon skin color where people receive different treatment socially and/or professionally.

1. How would you describe your skin color/tone/shade?
2. What does skin color mean to you? What does it represent?
3. Have you ever experienced or seen colorism?
4. What steps do you take to celebrate your skin color?
5. What steps can we take to protect our community from colorism?

Once students have had adequate time to respond, see if anyone would like to volunteer to share their responses with their peers. (Note: Due to the personal nature of this activity, do not force students to share if they are not comfortable.)

National Standards for Learning: NL-ENG.K-12.9: Multicultural Understanding, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society, NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills, NSS-USH.5-12.10: Era 10: Contemporary United States

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

1950s Civil Rights Timeline

1950 – **Gwendolyn Brooks** becomes the first black Pulitzer Prize winner for *Annie Allen*; and **Juanita Hall** becomes the first black Tony Award winner for playing Bloody Mary in *South Pacific*.

1951 – **Mary White Ovington**, NAACP founder, dies.

1954 – **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas** declares in a unanimous ruling that segregation in schools is unconstitutional.

1955 – **Rosa Parks** is arrested for refusing to give up her seat at the front of a bus; and **Emmett Louis Till** (14-years-old) is brutally beaten and murdered by white men for allegedly whistling at a white woman. The men were acquitted and later revealed that they committed the hate crime.

1956 – **Desegregation of buses** is ordered resultant of a year-long Montgomery bus-boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

1957 – **The Little Rock Nine** are constitutionally prohibited from attending Central High School (Little Rock, Arkansas). President Eisenhower has the students escorted in by federal troops.

1958 – **Cooper v. Aaron** overturns a district court decision enabling the Little Rock school to postpone desegregation due to continual threats of violent acts.

1959 – **“The Hate That Hate Produced,”** a documentary about the Nation of Islam, brings **Malcolm X** to public attention; **Lorraine Hansberry’s** *A Raisin in the Sun* becomes the first play produced on Broadway by a black playwright; and **Berry Gordy** founds the Motown Record label.

A Message From Our Sponsors (About Theater Etiquette)

Read the following radio announcement about theater etiquette aloud to your class (or use a student volunteer to share the message). After the reading, ask your students to identify other characteristics of a strong audience member. Additionally, this makes a great opportunity to discuss the logistics of your field trip to the theater (i.e. pick-up / drop-off, transportation, lunch, etc.).

Hockadoo! This is Huey Calhoun, your handsome host of *Memphis*, the number one show in New York! Comin’ at you from the big Broadway stage! Before we send you back underground with that smokin’ hit “Scratch My Itch” by Wailin’ Joe, the good folks from the show have a couple things to tell you about bein’ a red hot audience member...

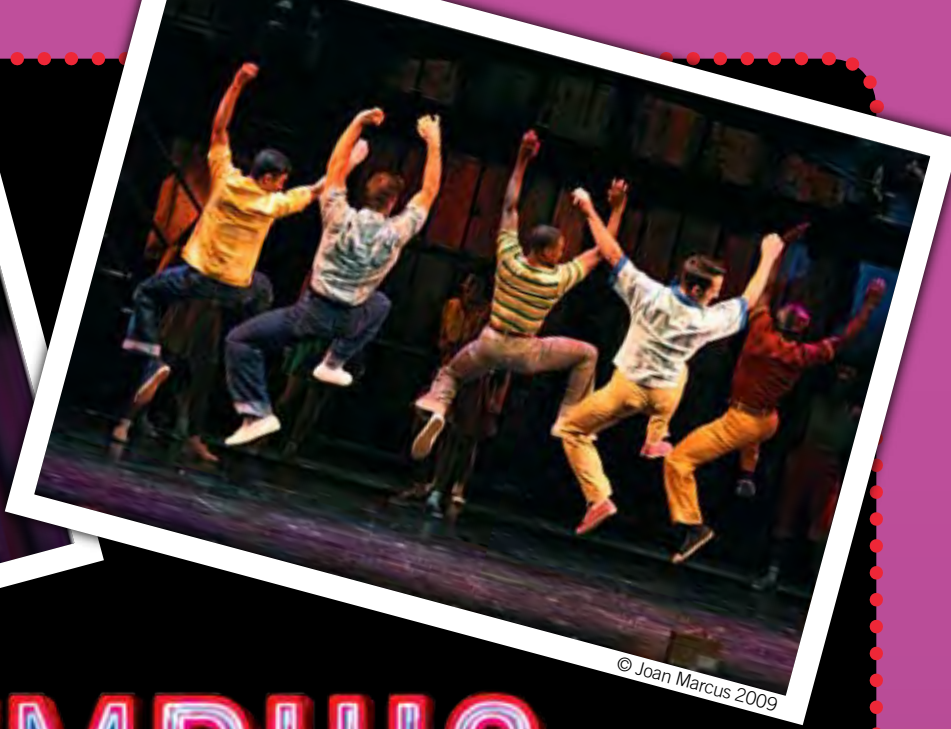
First, before taking your seats, be sure to pass on by the little boys and girls rooms... Folks, there ain’t nuttin’ worse then doin’ an uncomfortable dance in your seat during the performance. Not to mention, you won’t want to miss the sweet sound of my voice up on that stage!

Now, when those lights go out before the show, that doesn’t mean it’s time to lay a big ol’ smooch on your woman! It means it’s about that time to get those records spinning and performances burnin’. So, make sure you ain’t got those naggin’ noise makin’ devices on!

Aw heck, folks, listen up, these performers are gunna make your grandma faint, your grandpa lose his teeth, your little ones stand up and shout! (Especially for that Felicia Farrell!) Mm-mmm... Why, her singin’ is so hot, it’s gonna melt everythin’ in your icebox! And Little Ol’ Huey ain’t too bad neither! Ladies and Gentlemen, if you absolutely love the performances you see, I want you to get up on your feet, clap, cheer, and holler a big ol’ “Hockadoo” for the performers! Can’t wait to see you there! Hockadoo!



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After the Show

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Ideas to Discuss

After seeing *Memphis*, use the following discussion prompts to debrief the themes, characters and context of the show.



1. In *Memphis*, Huey's infatuation with both the music and Felicia causes him to make her a promise to get her air-time on a middle of the dial radio station. However, he has just been fired from a job and has a history of not being a strong employee. Would you consider Huey's actions responsible? Or is it okay to make promises that are considered a far reach? Why, or why not? How about when he takes a radio disc jockey job for no pay, while his mother is working the night shift and struggling to make ends meet?
2. During Huey's time of disc jockeying, he receives a number of threats, including a brick thrown at his mother through the window of their home. Do you think Huey goes too far? Is he a danger, not only to himself, but the people around him? What would be your breaking point? Would you consider him a bold hero or naive?
3. Throughout the show, Delray is distrustful of Huey and his promises. Do you believe his skepticism is fueled by prejudice? If so, is he perpetuating racial divide? Is he afraid that Huey is unaware of the collateral linked to his actions? Is he jealous of the opportunities Huey is able to bring to his sister? Or is it a combination of beliefs and emotions?
4. When Huey is asked to read his first advertisement on the radio, he panics because he is illiterate. In society, especially today, it is extremely difficult to live without literacy. How would your life be affected if you couldn't read? Think about all the directional signs, books, magazines, text messages, menus, etc. What modifications would you have to make in your life to survive?
5. Huey is able to get and keep his job because he stimulates financial gains for advertising clients and, ultimately, the radio station. However, his tactic for doing so is considered to be questionable. What strategy does Huey use to advertise? Is this strategy still effective today? Why, or why not? In your opinion, what are the most effective methods of advertising?
6. During The Great Migration, many black people migrated North for the prospect of living without segregation and for career advancement. What effects do you think The Great Migration had on Northern Cities? How did this affect America on the whole?
7. As Huey's radio show becomes number one in Memphis, he is swept away in celebrity. Teenagers ask for autographs and newspaper photographers snap his picture when he walks down the street. How does celebrity change Huey? Or does it? How do you think celebrity changes people today? Why do you think the concept of celebrity exists in our culture? Will it ever fade? Why, or why not? Are celebrities better positioned to implement change? Why, or why not?
8. Huey is able to take an existing medium, the radio, and use it as a means of stimulating community. Do you think the radio still has the same potential? Does the radio still have the same media power today as it did in the 1950s? Why or why not? Additionally, what kinds of communities are created on the radio today?
9. Often when people discuss issues of race and culture, the term "tolerance" is used as a path to civility. However, is tolerance enough in today's America? What implications does the term "tolerance" have? How about "celebration"? What are the differences between these two terms? What action steps can you take to celebrate culture?
10. Despite Felicia's persistent offerings, Huey opts to remain in Memphis. Why do you think he decided to stay in Memphis? Do you think he made the right decision? Do you believe he purposely sabotaged his network audition? Why or why not?

Change Don't Come Easy: Surmounting Segregation

Understanding the Other

Ask your students to read the following scene from *Memphis* on page 16. After reading, open up a dialogue with your students by using the following discussion prompts:

1. What are your immediate reactions to the scene?
2. How did Felicia react to Gladys' comments? Do you agree or disagree?
3. How did Huey handle the situation? Is there anything more he could have done, or steps he could have taken to prevent this negative interaction?
4. What are some possible reasons Gladys would react the way she did?
5. If you could coach one character through this scene to produce a healthy outcome, who would it be? What would you tell him / her?

Ask your students to write a letter to either, Huey, Gladys or Felicia addressing this conflict. This can either be a letter of support, encouragement or guidance. Students should illuminate the perspectives of the other characters to be persuasive and provide constructive ideas on how to positively move forward.

National Standards for Learning: NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies, NL-ENG.K-12.6: Applying Knowledge, NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills, NA-T.9-12.7: Analyzing, Critiquing, and Constructing Meaning

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

Historical Speech Collage

Have your students research famous Civil Rights Movement speeches such as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream." Ask students to read these speeches and select one section that resonates with them. As a class, create a sequence to these sections to generate an oral presentation. Ask your class to read their historical speech collage out loud.

Thinking Further – Have your students memorize and stage their historical speech collage, then share their work with other classes in your school.

National Standards for Learning: NSS-USH.9-12.9: Era 9: Postwar United States, NL-ENG.K-12.7: Evaluating Data, NL-ENG.K-12.8: Developing Research Skills, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society, NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing, NA-T.9-12.5: Researching By Finding Information To Support Classroom Dramatization

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections



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Understanding the Other

(Excerpt from *Memphis*)

HUEY - Mama. Hi.

GLADYS - Who is this?

HUEY - Mama, this is, uh, well this is the girl I was telling you about.

GLADYS - Have you lost your mind?!

HUEY - Mama –

GLADYS - Playin' their music is one thing –

HUEY - Now Mama, she's a singer, a fine singer –

GLADYS - This is a good Christian household –

HUEY - She's a Christian –

GLADYS - She ain't nothin' but a colored girl!

HUEY - Mama!

FELICIA - I should go –

HUEY - Mama, look, she made this record! I'm gonna play it on the radio tomor ... --

(GLADYS slaps the record out of HUEY'S hands, breaking it in two. A beat. FELICIA picks up the two halves of the record.)

FELICIA - I'm sorry to have bothered you, ma'am.

(FELICIA rushes out of the house.)

Troup Yourself

To explore the idea of segregation, ask your students to move into an open area of the classroom. Request that the class organize themselves into groups with other people who share their same eye color. This should be done without talking, although the students can get non-verbal help from their classmates. Students should be encouraged to stand alone if they don't believe they belong in a particular group. Once students have grouped themselves, ask each individual group to say what they believe their grouping commonality was out loud.

Continue the activity a few more times, trying different visible qualities such as shirts, hair color, and so on.

After the activity, ask your students:

1. If you stood by yourself at any point, how did that feel?
2. If you were part of a larger group, how did that feel?
3. Did you group yourself with others under a different commonality? If so, how did you feel when you realized the group's commonality was different?
4. How does this activity relate to *Memphis*? Were there moments in the show that illuminate these ideas?

National Standards for Learning: NL-ENG.K-12.2: Understanding the Human Experience, NL-ENG.K-12.9: Multicultural Understanding, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society, NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

Comparing Roy Rogers to Wailin' Joe

Huey causes a ruckus in *Memphis* when he starts playing "race music" instead of the accepted "white music" at Collins Department store and at WHDZ when he locks himself in the DJ booth. Using the lyrics on the next page, as well as the recorded music for both Roy Rogers' "Happy Trails" (an example of accepted "white music" from the show) and Wailin' Joe's "Scratch My Itch" (an example of "race music" from the show), have your students compare the two songs with the following items in mind:

1. Setting and content of lyrics
2. Plots
3. Musical representation of characters
4. Vocal range
5. Instruments used in the songs

Draw a Venn diagram on the board and ask students to identify the differences and similarities between the two songs.

National Standards for Learning: NA-M.9-12.6: Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music, NA-M.9-12.7: Evaluating Music and Music Performances NA-M.9-12.9: Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture, NSS-US.5-12.9: Era 9: Postwar United State

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-M.9-12.2: Music Literacy, BP-M.9-12.3: Making Connections



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Lyrics from Roy Rogers' "Happy Trails"

HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.
HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU, KEEP SMILIN' UNTIL THEN.
WHO CARES ABOUT THE CLOUDS WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER?
JUST SING A SONG AND BRING THE SUNNY WEATHER.
HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU, 'TILL WE MEET AGAIN.

SOME TRAILS ARE HAPPY ONES,
OTHERS ARE BLUE.
IT'S THE WAY YOU RIDE THE TRAIL THAT COUNTS,
HERE'S A HAPPY ONE FOR YOU.

Lyrics from Wailin' Joe's "Scratch My Itch"

WOO!
COME ON, BABY NOW
WON'T YOU SCRATCH MY ITCH!
YOU GOT ME BOILING AT A BURNIN' FEVER PITCH!
I TRIED SOME LOVE CREAM,
PUT SOME HONEY ON IT, TOO!
BUT THE ONLY THING
THAT CAN CURE MY ITCH IS YOU!

COME ON, SCRATCH/SCRATCH/ SCRATCH
SCRATCH/ SCRATCH MY ITCH!
SCRATCH/SCRATCH/ SCRATCH
SCRATCH/SCRATCH MY ITCH!
BABY, BABY, BABY
BABY, BABY, BABE
BABY, BABE,
YOU'RE GIVIN' ME A TWITCH!
SO SCRATCH MY ITCH!

The Music of My Soul: Exploring Musical Identity

Music Journaling

Throughout *Memphis*, a variety of singers from the time period are mentioned and discussed. Have your students explore the performers of the time by creating a listening log comparing three of the following singers and their music. (Use the same criteria from the previous activity.)

1. Ella Fitzgerald
2. Perry Como
3. Patti Page
4. Elvis Presley
5. Jerry Lee Lewis

After they have completed their musical journals, hold a press conference in your classroom with you in-role as the editor-in-chief and your students in-role as reporters. Ask them to report their findings to you for a big article your newspaper is about to publish on music of the 1950s. Be sure to have your students respond with comparisons and similarities between these different performers.

Thinking Further – Have your students research other popular singers from the 1950s either in preparation for the “press conference” or for a share day.

National Standards for Learning: NA-M.9-12.6: Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music, NA-M.9-12.7: Evaluating Music and Music Performances, NA-M.9-12.9: Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture, NSS-USH.5-12.9: Era 9: Postwar United States

New York City Department of Education’s Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-M.9-12.2: Music Literacy, BP-M.9-12.3: Making Connections

Soundtrack of Your Life

A vital aspect of *Memphis* is each character’s personal connection to music, in particular their identity through Rock ‘n’ Roll. Have your students take out a piece of paper and write down the names of ten songs that could serve as their self-portrait. These can either be their favorite songs, songs that have significant meaning or simply songs that describe an aspect of their personalities. Once completed, have students burn CDs of their musical self-portraits and create original album covers as a supplement. Begin a weekly tradition of exchanging self-portrait CDs within your class, so each student has an opportunity to hear the music of their peers’ souls.

Thinking Further – Have students keep a journal of their weekly listening addressing: What they learned about each person through their self-portrait CD, what they were able to connect to, and identifying their favorite part of the CD. At the end of the experience, you can compile the class’ favorite aspects of each self-portrait and give them to students as positive keepsakes.

National Standards for Learning: NA-M.9-12.6: Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music, NA-VA.9-12.1: Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes

New York City Department of Education’s Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-M.9-12.1: Music Making, BP-M.9-12.3: Making Connections

Memphis Lives In Me: Pursuing a Dream

Middle of the Dial Dreams

In the show, each of the lead characters has big dreams and challenges that create an obstacle for success. Have your students identify the dreams, obstacles and tools / tactics used by the following characters.

Draw a grid with three columns on the blackboard (or on chart paper). Label the left column “dreams,” the center “obstacles,” and the right “action steps.” Beginning with Huey, ask your students to identify his goals and dreams. Continue onto the “obstacles” column and have students name the challenges that stand in the way of achieving his dreams. Finally, have students begin to specify the action steps he takes to overcome his obstacles. Ask them, “Do you think he was successful? Why, or why not?” If not, have your students offer alternative action steps he could have taken. How could these new action steps possibly have helped Huey achieve his goals?

Repeat this activity focusing on Felicia, followed by Delray.

National Standards for Learning: NL-ENG.K-12.2: Understanding the Human Experience, NA-T.9-12.7: Analyzing, Critiquing, and Constructing Meaning

New York City Department of Education’s Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: PB-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

School Reunion: 2019

What will the story be behind your students’ success? Ask your students to dream ahead and think about what they’ll be doing ten years from now. Will they be living out their dream? Achieve all of their accomplishments? How will their work, challenges and personal choices in school help them get there?

Set up your classroom with four chairs at the front and take on the role of “School Reunion: 2019” host! Introduce the talk show and let your students (or studio audience) know that today you’ll be having three special guests on your program.

Select three volunteers to be the “special guests” and invite them to sit in the chairs at the front of the classroom. Be sure that they know they’re playing themselves, but ten years from now!

As the host, interview the guests one at a time about where they are, how they got there and their reflections on school: How did it influence them? Prepare them? What were their biggest fears and challenges? What was their proudest moment? Who inspired them? (Note: Be sure to take questions from your studio audience, too!)

National Standards for Learning: NA-T.9-12.2: Acting, NL-ENG.K-12.2: Understanding the Human Experience, NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies, NL-ENG.K-12.11: Participating in Society, NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills

NYCDOE Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections

Art in Context

In 1957, after the milestone court hearing of Brown versus Board of Education, nine black teenagers attempted to attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. However, on their first day of school the governor ordered the National Guard to prohibit them from entering the previously all-white institution. In response, President Eisenhower deployed federal troops to protect and escort the young women. While the students were allowed to attend the school and pursue their education, they were continually met with crowds taunting, insulting and threatening their lives. One of the young women, age fifteen, was quoted saying, "I tried to see a friendly face somewhere in the mob... I looked into the face of an old woman, and it seemed a kind face, but when I looked again, she spat at me." Despite the circumstances, these young people displayed the utmost courage and tenacity in pursuit of their dream of equality in education. Find a photograph or painting that showcases this event or a similar circumstance, such as Norman Rockwell's painting, "The Problem We All Live With." Using a photograph or visual artwork as a springboard, have your students identify what they see.

Ask your students to take out a piece of paper and write a monologue detailing what one of the black students is thinking and feeling. Imagine what it must have been like to be confronted by armed soldiers on your first day of school!

Once completed, see if any volunteers would like to read their monologues to the rest of the class.

National Standards for Learning: NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing, NA-VA.9-12.4: Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures, NA-VA.9-12.6: Making Connections between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines, NSS-US.9-12.9: Era 9: Postwar United States

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-T.9-12.4: Working With Community and Cultural Resources





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MEMPHIS

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The Memphis Project
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Stand Up: Student Experiential Learning Initiative

Using “Stand Up” (music on the next page) as the theme for your project, have students interview a member from the community. This can be anyone from a parent or mentor to a school administrator or teacher. The interview should be focused on a time when this person had to take a stand in order to achieve a goal or dream. Be sure to encourage your students to be as detailed as possible. Share the following pointers to help them conduct a strong interview:

1. Have questions prepared before the interview. (It may help to have the whole class generate a couple of questions that are used in every interview such as: “Has there ever been a time in your life when you had to take a stand? If so, when? Can you describe the event?”)
2. Be sure to look the interviewee in the eyes and speak clearly when asking a question.
3. As the interviewee is speaking, try to note-take as much as possible.
4. If you have a voice recorder, use that in the interview so you can focus on the questions and responses. This will also alleviate the pressure of writing everything down and allow you to transcribe the interview at a later time.

After the interviews have all been conducted, students should write out a transcription of the responses. This then becomes their first draft of a monologue! Have them pair up and workshop their monologues with their partners. Partners should listen and respond after the reading with their favorite parts of the story. Additionally, each student should use this opportunity to think about what parts of the story they would like to cut, expand upon or reword.

Ask your students to make edits to their monologues and submit them to you. Once you are in receipt of all the monologues, create an order for your performance. (Note: to break up the monologue performances, try incorporating segments of the song “Stand Up.” Or use it as a framing device for starting and ending the play!)

Have students memorize their monologues for homework as you rehearse your play during school time. Once prepared, hold a performance at your school of your original play, *Stand Up!* The performance can be as big as a public performance or as simple as an interclass share.

Alternative Idea – Have your class pair up with another participating class and conduct the interviews based on the same criteria.

National Standards for Learning: NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing, NA-T.9-12.5: Researching by Finding Information to Support Classroom Dramatizations, Understanding the Human Experience, NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills

New York City Department of Education’s Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.1: Theater Making, BP-M.9-12.4: Working With Community and Cultural Resources

Steal Your Rock ‘n’ Roll: Student Performance Initiative

Photocopy the provided sheet music for everyone in your class and draw their attention to the lyrics of the song. Let students know that this song is directly from *Memphis*, and ask for volunteers to read the lyrics aloud for the rest of the class. After reading, ask your students the following questions:

1. What is happening in the song? What in the lyrics makes you think that?
2. How do the characters feel? Why?
3. Have you, or someone you know, ever had to “Stand Up?” If so, when?
4. How does one “listen to their soul?”
5. What does Rock ‘n’ Roll represent in this song?

Using the sheet music provided, teach your students the song. Now, knowing what the song means and having identified personal connections students should put the song in their bodies by moving in the way the music makes them feel. Be sure they are singing with strong diction and clarity. How does performing the music change their initial analysis? Or does it?

National Standards for Learning: NA-M.9-12.6: Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music, NA-M.9-12.8: Understanding Relationships between Music, and Other Arts, and Disciplines Outside of the Arts

New York City Department of Education’s Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: BP-T.9-12.3: Making Connections, BP-T.9-12.4

Steal Your Rock 'n' Roll

Words & Music by
David Bryan
& Joe DiPietro

Rubato (colla voce)

HUEY: What would I say to them?

HUEY:

I lis-tened to ad - vice from folks smart - er than me,

1 2 3 4

Hmm, and I ig - nored it. FELICIA: Stubborn as a mule.

5 6 7 8

9

I lis-tened to ha - tred from folks rich - er than me,

9 10 11 12

Hmm, and I de - plored it. FELICIA: Good thing.

13 14 15 16

17

I lis - tened to — mu - sic — from folks dark - er than —

B F# G#m

17 18 19

me, — and you know — I a - dored —

E B F#

20 21 22

23

Rock tempo (♩ = 148)

3 it. FELICIA: Come to the concert, Huey. +Horns

A B/A A B/A A/B *fp*

23 24 25 26

27

FELICIA:

First comes a point in ev - 'ry - bo - dy's life — when they

S A Ooo Ooo

A B

26a 27 28

got - ta stand up — and face — a fight. — There comes a point in ev - 'ry -

fp ————— *fp* —————

Ooo face — a fight. — Ooo

C#m A

29 30 31

- bo - dy's life — when they got - ta won - der if they done — right. — I

Ooo got - ta won - der if dey done — right. —

B C#m D

32 33 34

swal - lowed my — fear, — Fol - lowed my heart right — here, — and

swal - lowed my — fear — Heart right — here —

D A E D A E

35 36 37 38

F
through it all, one al-might-y thought stood clear. _____ Li -

S
A
Ooo _____ thought stood _____ clear. _____

C#m A F#m G Gsus4 G

39 40 41 42

43

F
- sten to the beat, lis-ten to the beat _____ Play _____ it, O-bey _____ it. _____

S
A
Play _____ it, O-bey _____ it. _____

"SL 2 rows diagonals"

F C/E Dm7 C Dm7 C/E

43 44 45 46

HUEY:

H Oooh oh oh Lis -

F Love it with, Love it with your feet.

S A Love it with your feet.

F C/E G Gsus4 G

47 48 49 50

H - ten to your soul. Lis-ten to your soul. Heed it, ya need it.

(FELICIA)

F Heed it, ya need it.

F C/E Dm7 C Dm7 C/E

51 52 53 54

H
let it make — you whole. — — — — — And if ya

F
Let it make, — — — — — let it make — — — — — you whole. — — — — —

S
A
Let it make — — — — — you whole. — — — — —

F C/E G Gsus4 G

55 56 57 58

59

H
lis-ten to the beat and hear what's in your soul, — — — — — you'll nev-er let an-y-one steal — — — — —

S
A
Oh, — — — — — in your soul. — — — — —

F C/E Dm7 G

59 60 61 62

64

H
— — — — — your rock — — — — — 'n' roll! — — — — —

G F

63 64

Resources

Production Based Websites

www.memphisthemusical.com – The official website for the Broadway production of *Memphis*.

www.itheatrics.com – Official website for iTheatrics, music theatre education consultants.

Additional Websites

www.rockhall.com – Official website of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum; offering a variety of education programs, including distance learning for students.

www.nrm.org – The official website of Norman Rockwell, including an online collection featuring, "The Problem We All Live With."

www.memphislibrary.org – Official website for the Memphis Public Library and Information Center, providing timelines and databases that archive the area's history.

www.naacp.org – The official website for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "a civil rights organization for ethnic minorities in the United States."

reportingcivilrights.loa.org – A companion site to the Library of Americas, presenting "reporters and journalism of the American Civil Rights Movement."

Texts

Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965 by Juan Williams (Penguin Books, 1987)

Journey from Jim Crow: The Desegregation of Southern Transit by Raymond Arsenault (Columbia University Press, 2006)

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963 by Taylor Branch (Simon and Schuster, 1988)

Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970 by John A. Kirk (University of Florida Press, 2002)

Reporting Civil Rights: American Journalism 1941-1963 edited by Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Bill Kovach, and Carol Polsgrove (Library of America, 2003)

There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975 by Jason Sokol (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2006)

We Shall Overcome: A History of Civil Rights and the Law by Alexander Tsesis (Yale University Press, 2008)

Video / DVD

4 Little Girls (A Spike Lee Documentary) (HBO Home Video, 2001)

Historic Civil Rights & Black History Films DVD (Quality Information Publishers, Inc., 2004)

Jailhouse Rock (Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1957)

Ruby Bridges (Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2004)

The Rosa Parks Story (Xenon, 2003)

The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till (Velocity / Thinkfilm, 2006)

Recordings

Ella (Fitzgerald): Sweet and Hot (Decca Records, 1955)

Elvis (Presley) Recorded Live on Stage in Memphis (RCA Records, 1974)

Jerry Lee Lewis (Sun Records, 1957)

Patti Page Live At Carnegie Hall (DRG Records, 1998)

The Very Best of Perry Como (RCA Records, 2000)

MEMPHIS

Educational Guide

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WWW.MEMPHISTHEMUSICAL.COM
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Created by the Good Folks at



iTheatrics.com

AM 55 60 70 80 100 120 140 160 kHz

MEMPHIS

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Before Elvis, before the Beatles, there was the story of **MEMPHIS**. Loosely based on legendary events, **MEMPHIS** tells the story of white DJ Huey Calhoun, who is drawn to an all-black club on Beale Street where he discovers “the music of his soul” - and a dazzling black singer named Felicia Farrell whom he is determined to catapult to stardom. Despite simmering racial tensions, Huey decides to fight for integrated airwaves, charting a course that dramatizes the breaking down of black-white barriers in both Christian circles and the community at large. Through sheer force of personality he manages to transform his show into a local sensation by spinning rhythm & blues records previously unavailable to white listeners. The wider audience gleefully adopts the infectious rhythms but stops short of embracing Huey’s growing love for Felicia, whose talent positions her for national fame. As cultural forces threaten to keep them apart, the ill-fated pair march on toward their destinies - and the civil rights movement, and rock ‘n’ roll, are born.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

MEMPHIS is more than a just a feel-good story. It explodes with energy and exuberance and has an unmistakable Judeo-Christian core that one rarely experiences on Broadway. There are moral challenges and setbacks that confound the young idealists and illustrate the hazards we all face in a fallen world. The show captures a volatile period in American history – not everyone accepted a color-blind radio dial, or world.

Winner of four 2010 Tony® Awards including Best Musical, **MEMPHIS** features a Tony®-winning book by Joe DiPietro and a Tony®-winning original score by Bon Jovi co-founder and keyboardist David Bryan. Directing is Tony® nominee Christopher Ashley and the cast stars Tony® nominees Chad Kimball, Montego Glover and Michael McGrath, among other standouts.

Currently running at Broadway's Shubert Theatre, **MEMPHIS** will launch a U.S. national tour in October, 2011. Affordable group pricing begins at \$26.50 for students. Group sale fundraising opportunities are available for churches, youth groups and faith-based organizations looking to share in the joy of this unique and groundbreaking production. To purchase tickets and inquire about fundraising opportunities for your group, please contact Janette Roush at JanetteRoush@akanyc.net.

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

MEMPHIS is a compelling faith-oriented musical that can't help but spark spirited discussion. It provides an opportunity to discover the many ways in which we can challenge ourselves to more authentically live out our Christian faith and positively impact our world. This theatrical production is rich with meaning not only through its dialogue and lyrics, but also through its imagery and spiritual themes. Its layered storyline and engaging characters produce an abundant harvest of material for lively group discussion.

Understanding the themes of the show – love & tolerance, forgiveness, fear as the root of bigotry, persistence in the face of obstacles, and the value of sacrifice and suffering – is of prime importance and the reason why we prepared this Discussion Guide. With this booklet in hand, you or another leader are well prepared to facilitate a fruitful group discussion about **MEMPHIS**. This guide provides prompts for group discussion by isolating a theme, identifying various characters' responses, and selecting song lyrics or dialogue that best illustrate that theme. There are also selected Scripture quotes for your group to study in-depth, as well as discussion-provoking questions relating to the show's most captivating scenes.

The guide, of course, works best with groups that have seen the show! The songs from the soundtrack were specifically selected to help you set

the tone and furnish the context for your discussion. It is recommended that you announce the section you will be covering ahead of time to facilitate discussion the following week. This will allow your members to listen and reflect in advance if they so desire.

DISCUSSIONS

In an effort to help you reinforce the themes and messages of **MEMPHIS**, we recommend that you begin with the target song from the soundtrack, recall its corresponding scene, and then follow up with questions and Scripture found herein. The questions should draw your group members into a conversation about what they have just heard and remember from the show. It is not necessary to tackle these topics in any particular order, or all in one session. Feel free to go at your own pace.

First, introduce the discussion by saying something like, "We're going to talk about several topics – love & tolerance, dispelling fear, sacrificing for others, etc. We have some music from **MEMPHIS** that we are going to play and then analyze what we experienced in the show to see what we can learn from it."

Next, give a brief overview of the scene and play the song you have selected. Then open up the floor for discussion using the questions and Scriptures provided. You can close each session by giving the brief "Lesson to Learn" provided at the end of each topic. Keep in mind that you do not have to get through all the material in order to have a successful discussion! Also remember that discussion times go best when you allow freedom but still provide the framework that points to lessons in God's word.



LOVE AND TOLERANCE

HUEY: "The Music of My Soul"

When I was a young boy, my daddy sat me down.

He said, "Son, don't you never go to the dark side of town.

I'm talkin' downtown Memphis, see that's where the black folk play."

And I said, "Yes sir, Daddy," and then I snuck down anyway!

Then one day my daddy died, and we laid him in his grave.

And my mama she cried and cried and cried and prayed that he be saved.

But all I felt was pity, for he never understood.

How could people be so bad who made me feel so good?

Huey honors the Fourth Commandment by loving his parents unconditionally despite their bigotry. He communicates warmth and affection toward his mother Gladys throughout the first act despite her persistent prejudice and disapproval of his color-blind love. This filial love helps facilitate her breakthrough transformation from villain to hero in the second act.

DELRAY: "She's My Sister"

The danger is deep you want to put her in, I don't care about you but she's my sister! I'm a God-fearing man, a Christian through and through,

But you can bet I'll protect my baby sister!

She's my one and only flesh and blood!

Be careful with the one I love!

She's my sister!

Delray demonstrates a strong sentiment of love and protection for Felicia. Their parents died when they were young, leaving them nothing but each other, and they went on to build a successful blues club together. But now Huey comes along with an eye toward taking Felicia and her unique musical gifts away. More worrisome to Delray than the inevitable loss of income is the budding romantic attraction between them that threatens Felicia's very safety in segregated Memphis. Only later when Gladys identifies with his bigotry and conflicted feelings does he realize he's "gotta change [his] intolerant ways."

GLADYS: "Change Don't Come Easy"

I was taught to hate them, was taught to denigrate them

I was taught they're lesser in the good Lord's eyes.

Can't drink from the same fountain

I'll scream it from the mountain!

I'm through buyin' their blasphemous lies!

It's not apparent to the audience at first, but Gladys has an innate longing to connect with those fellow human beings from "the dark side of town" whom she'd spurned her entire life. So, goaded on by her son, she decides to visit the "colored church" that Huey is "always babblin' on about" in search of tolerance. Placing her weakness in God's hands, she sets forth on a slow and painful, but ultimately rewarding journey of repentance and renewal.



QUESTIONS

What other examples of love and tolerance can you identify in the story? Do you have a particular person or group of people that you find difficult to tolerate? What sort of effort have you made to turn yourself around and change your heart? To whom have you turned for spiritual guidance or direction? What is the best example in your life of having turned your attitude around toward someone in the name of Love?

READ: 1 John 3:18

Discuss the difference between loving one another in theory and in actual practice. What can we do to improve our ability to show love for others, including strangers, more sincerely?

READ: Romans 12:9-10

Discuss to what extent we turn to the Lord as a means of elevating, or "super-naturalizing," our limited human efforts to love. What sort of new standards can we adopt to help prevent back sliding?

LESSONS TO LEARN

We should accept that changing our attitudes takes time and effort, and that a prudent first step is to learn tolerance, which over time can blossom into love. But through it all we must repeatedly turn to God, who is our primary help, hope and source of consolation and strength. This elevation to an intimate dependency on God is achieved through prayer, humility and sacrifice. Hopefully we will not wait for a crisis in our life to begin asking God for greater love of our neighbor!

FORGIVENESS: THE KEY TO PEACE & HEALING



FELICIA: “Love Will Stand When All Else Fails”

Now I finally see!

There’s one way to live, be kind and forgive,

I have power in me!

Follow where I lead, I’ll meet ev’ry need.

We will endure what life has in store.

Felicia knows that her talent, her beauty, her power are all gifts from above, and that without the Holy Spirit inside her she would be nothing. Huey, on the other hand, thinks his qualities of charm and persuasiveness are attributable only to himself.



GLADYS: “Change Don’t Come Easy”

He told us to pray some, he told us to sway some,

He told us the good Lord made us equal inside.

He told us we were sinners, he told us we were winners,

He told us to change or our spirits would die.

Gladys receives the gift of forgiveness – of her husband for his racism and of her son for his choices. She also makes the decision to forgive herself rather than wallow in the self-loathing that is the destruction of many. As she lets go of the hatreds and resentments, she experiences cleansing and her bigotry melts away.

GATOR: “Say a Prayer”

Say a prayer that change is comin’,

Say a prayer that hope is round the bend.

And if you pray that change is comin’, oh Jesus

Then may what you pray come true, Amen.

Gator arguably provides the most breathtaking example of forgiveness and healing in the entire show. Early on it is revealed that he is rendered mute by witnessing his father’s lynching as a five year-old. Though he doesn’t speak (Felicia remarks, “Sometimes folks don’t think there’s anythin’ left to say.”), he is a beloved fixture at Delray’s club. Drawn to Huey’s good heart, he begins venturing out and accompanying him to the radio station. Then, after Felicia is severely beaten by racist thugs and Delray threatens to take his revenge on

Huey, Gator bursts through his prison walls and shouts out, “STOP!” before launching into a stirring rendition of “Say a Prayer.”

Against the furious tide of hatred swelling up around them all, Gator sings about the change in people’s hearts that Jesus will bring if only we will forgive one another our trespasses. Amen!

QUESTIONS

What has been the most difficult instance of trying to forgive someone in your life? How quickly did you come to realize that negative feelings toward a transgressor don’t necessarily disappear once you decide to forgive, that forgiveness is an ongoing enterprise? Are you inclined to approach forgiveness from an emotional or intellectual starting point?

READ: Ephesians 4:31

Consider the following questions: What is the evidence that bitterness has put down roots in your life? How has Satan perhaps gained an advantage in your life because of issues of unforgiveness? What can you do to immediately address the problem?

READ: Colossians 3:13

Discuss to what extent forgiveness has to do with obedience. Since forgiveness goes against our nature, we must forgive by faith, whether we feel like it or not. We must trust God to do the work in us that needs to be done so that the forgiveness will be complete. He completes the work in His time.

LESSONS TO LEARN

Our culture gives us permission to cling to old resentments, hurts and unresolved conflicts, but the Word of God provides us with a higher standard. In the spiritual life, it is important to realize that we cannot hold onto, nurture or desire anything that is bad since it is inherently contrary to God, who is Love. We must want only that which is good, for ourselves and others, in conformity with God’s will. This takes discipline and a refusal to be anxious and easily discouraged.

God wants us to forgive as He has forgiven us. The cost of forgiveness is high, but Jesus has already paid the price. He wants us to follow in His steps and walk the road of forgiveness that leads to blessing, relying on Him along the way for the strength we need to maintain peace in our hearts. We must continue to forgive (our job) until the work of forgiveness (the Lord’s job) is accomplished in our hearts.

DISPELLING FEAR AND OVERCOMING BIGOTRY

MR. COLLINS (to Huey, who has just sold 29 records in a matter of minutes): “Son, this is nigger music. And there ain’t no niggers here. You will pack your things and go.”

Hopelessly locked into bigoted thinking, Huey’s boss believes there is Perry Como for the whites and “race music” for the blacks, and never the two shall meet. The possibility of brotherhood and a common musical culture is pre-empted by his segregationist mindset. Even his profit motive as a store owner gets cast aside.

TEENAGE GIRL & CHOIR: “Make Me Stronger”

*Pick me up, lift me higher,
Give me strength I never had.
For I can’t be weak too much longer –
Oh Lord, Lord, Lord make me stronger!*

After a shocking scene when a white father slaps his teenage daughter for listening to “race music,” the same white girl enters a black church causing the music to STOP and the people to stare. We see the fear on both sides as the cycle of violence and misunderstanding threatens to continue. But the girl arrives to build a bridge, and through her innocence, brings peace.

*Feel his love, feel his power,
Move a mountain, change the world!
For I can’t be weak too much longer –
Oh Lord, Lord, Lord make me stronger!*

The young girl’s courage also dispels fear and offers a glimpse into a brighter future. She likes how it feels and recognizes how different it is from what she’s been taught.

FELICIA: “Colored Woman”

*Some got chances, some got choices
Some got freedom in these states
Colored women got few chances
Got few choices on our plates.
Mama told me there are limits
For dark-skinned girls stuck in a white-skinned world.*

Felicia is reluctant and fearful of Huey’s offer to come to the radio station after his mother, in a racist rant, shatters her recording – and her dream.

*Now along comes a man whose skin is white and pale,
A shiny fool full of shiny tales.
He says he’ll make the people hear me.
He’ll force this world to finally see me.
Is he a lie like every other man,
Or Lord—could he somehow help to free me?!*

The first step toward overcoming bigotry is to face the deep-seated fear that engenders it. Life is risk and as we learn from the Parable of the Talents, God wants us to take risks.

QUESTIONS

What other examples of fear and bigotry are you able to identify from the show? Have you ever stepped out of your comfort zone to make a personal connection with someone you had been avoiding out of fear? Have you learned to trust in God when you take the risk of extending your hand to another person?

READ: II Timothy 1:7

God didn’t give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-control. At all times, we must take care to pray and not lose heart, for Jesus tells us that God will bring about justice for those who cry out to him day and night, and he will not delay long in answering them.

READ: Hebrews 13:6

With good courage we say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do to me.” Use this passage to reinforce your commitment to sharing the Good News and spreading a Christ-centered view of life.

READ: Psalms 27:1-3

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers come at me to do me harm, they will stumble and fall. No matter what long odds I shall face, my heart shall not fear. I will be confident because my God gave me life and everything I have, and He is with me now.



LESSONS TO LEARN

We all know in our hearts what is inherently good, true and beautiful. But life has a way of draining us of this pure vision, and if we’re not careful, replacing it with a mindset that sows discord. People of the light respond to this purity and embrace it. They help to lift up their brothers and sisters out of a sense of common good. But this attitude is hard-earned through prayer, humility and self-denial. God works through people who are open to the Holy Spirit. There would be no racial harmony in our society if it were not for those who allowed love to conquer their fear. Sin – original sin and indulgence in personal sin – instills fear in our hearts and blinds us to God’s providential action in the world.

PERSISTENCE IN THE FACE OF OBSTACLES

HUEY: *“Hello, My Name is Huey, Sir”*

*Hello, my name is Huey, sir!
I know this might sound screwy, sir!
But oh! I know the kind of music
people crave!
You see, I’m on a mission, sir,
To be in a position, sir,
Where we can make this red-hot music
all the rave!*

Tirelessly searching for a DJ job after drawing his inspiration from Felicia and the others at Delray’s club, Huey is on a mission that involves far more than earning a salary. He persists and maintains his good cheer through multiple rejections out of love and fidelity to his calling. He perseveres in service of his vision to share “the music of his soul,” which is a healed, rational, color-blind society.

HUEY: *“Radio”*

*How many times did I hear it?
How many times did they try?
To somehow break my spirit,
To somehow make me die?
“Huey, you’re odd, crazy and slow. Not
much to look at –”
Well, maybe that’s so.
They tried so hard to drag me down low,
They didn’t count on – the radio!*

Huey is committed to racial integration through music. “I ain’t scared of no damned bullies throwing bricks,” he told his mama. Despite the myriad obstacles, he remains secure in his identity – but we begin to see an arrogance, a hubris that eventually becomes his undoing.

FELICIA: *“Stand Up”*

*You’re the man I love and the brother
I need,
But you both been getting on my nerve!
So we goin’ up north,
To where the Yankees live,
and live the life that we deserve!*

Although nervous about venturing into the unknown, Felicia is determined to follow her dream. She finally stands up to both Delray and Huey and makes the decision to go to New York in search of greater fulfillment. She loves them both but is now listening to the spirit inside her which is telling her to break through the obstacles and follow her destiny to a bigger national stage.

Inspired by her example, Huey persists toward his goal by placing speakers outside the studio so that white kids can start enjoying the music too. Sadly, he continues taking personal credit for his growing success instead of giving it to God. For this, he pays a price.

QUESTIONS

Have you been inclined to hog the credit for your accomplishments rather than acknowledge God’s generous hand at work? Have you made an effort to conform your life to God’s will so as to remain under His umbrella of grace? Have you been aware of the fact that God needs people to serve as conduits of His grace in the world?

READ: James 1:2-7

Noah continued to build the ark despite being laughed at and mocked. Moses persisted against Pharaoh. Joshua went from slave to military commander through persistence. Discuss to what extent you have or have not been ready to struggle, to fight, to be tempted and tested. It is, after all, part of being a Christian.

READ: Hebrews 10:35-36

Paul persisted through “a personal affliction,” physical threats, attacks, stoning and beatings. Our Lord Himself persisted through the greatest of hardships to meet the requirements of His life. Being a Christian involves denying ourselves, picking up our crosses and following Him. There’s no avoiding the challenges and obstacles of this life, but the key is to face them with LOVE, not resentment.

READ: Ephesians 4:7-8, 14-16

We are either growing in the spiritual life or diminishing; there is no standing still. We are either accessing the grace God has apportioned for us or cutting it off through sin and selfishness. Consider the ways in which you have made gains in life as a result of self-denial.



LESSONS TO LEARN

Faith is a journey, and part of that journey is coming to recognize our own identity and value. Felicia, Gladys and Gator experience this transformation most starkly. Pushing through the challenges in their lives, they demonstrate an ability to grow and embrace their destiny.

Good people tend to stray off God’s path because their behaviors cause them to lose interest over time. They live exteriorly and stop praying. Our faith cannot depend on our feelings, emotions and sentiments. Our interior life should be cultivated no matter how we feel. We should persevere in prayer no matter what.

THE VALUE OF SACRIFICE AND SUFFERING



BOBBY: "Big Love"

*If they could just see deep inside,
They'd see that my heart can sing.
I got my soul and I got my pride, and I got
me one more thing –
Open your eyes, I got a surprise,
Call me Big Daddy, cause Big Daddy's got
Big Love!*

Huey first meets Bobby Dupree when the big man is mopping floors at WRNB. What Bobby always wanted to do was sing songs, but nobody ever gave him the chance – until Huey made Bobby a surprise singer on his first-ever television broadcast. Bobby is a humble, self-effacing character who patiently accepts the modest work and suffering God gave him in life. But he continues to dream his dream, and his faith and cooperation with grace eventually allow God to raise him up.

HUEY: "Memphis Lives in Me"

*I'm just a man from Tennessee,
Can't be what I can't be.
All I know is Memphis lives in me.
I couldn't even try
To run away, say goodbye
Here I was born and here I'll die
Just a man from Tennessee.*

Huey explains in song why he lets Felicia go – because at the end of the day, he loves Memphis more. Four years later he is pretty much a has-been DJ, "way, way up on the radio dial," with only a single radio listener to his credit. One day, Felicia walks into his studio and reveals that she's

engaged. Huey hits rock bottom and wallows in his pain, alcohol his only relief. Could it be that he forgot God and came to rely too much on himself? Could it be that he lost his willingness to sacrifice for another? Thankfully, he picks himself up and moves forward.

FELICIA & HUEY: "Steal Your Rock 'n' roll"

*Listen to your soul, listen to your soul,
Play it, obey it
Love it with your feet!
Heed it, you need it
Let it make you whole!
And if you listen to the beat
And hear what's in your soul –
You'll never let anyone
Steal your rock 'n' roll!*

The rollicking, triumphant ending of MEMPHIS seems to underscore that it's only when we listen to and obey our conscience – "the music of our soul" – that we can reside in truth and walk in God's light. Sometimes our conscience urges us to make difficult choices. Our willingness to accept the sacrifice and suffering that these choices may entail usually determines whether we remain in the light or veer off the path and into the weeds.

Living in the fullness of divine grace is a bit like swimming with goggles – everything is a clear, full-color, vivid vision with the goggles on. But when we take them off everything is a blur. Maintaining a selfless, sacrificial nature is akin to keeping our goggles on.

QUESTIONS

What is your general attitude toward sacrifice and suffering? Have you recognized compassion as a necessary component in the Christian life? Do you recognize that we need to be "another Christ" in order to share Him with others?

READ: 1 Peter 4:12-14, 16

Suffering has a triple value: 1) It proves our love for God – how much we're willing to suffer for someone is the measure of our love for him/her; 2) It helps us achieve oneness with God – it conforms us to Christ in His Passion; 3) It enables us to help others – our neighbors benefit when we pray and pour ourselves out for them.

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:8-11

We need to take up our crosses and follow Christ. There is no other way on the Christian path. Salvation was won by the cross and we'll win our own by the cross also. We need to change our thinking and actually embrace it when it comes. We find it in the ordinary duties and challenges we face each day. We need to accept them.

LESSONS TO LEARN

The word "compassion" means "to suffer with." The word "sacrifice," from the Latin *sacrificium*, means "to make sacred." We can only change the world by suffering with others and "making all things sacred" – a process that must begin with ourselves.

By changing our hearts we truly can change the world. It has a greater impact than election outcomes, great inventions, even million-dollar contributions. Changing our hearts requires daily forgiveness, charity and sacrifice. We must resolve to tolerate each other without fear, without resentments or grumbling. We cannot do it without first learning humility and patience, but we can be assured that if we travel this path, our love will spread like perfume and we will be richly blessed.





AM 55 60 70 80 100 120 140 160 kHz

MEMPHIS