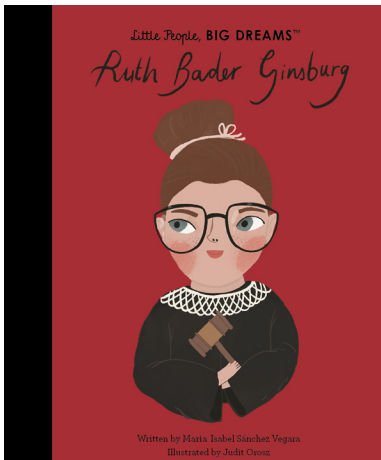


Little People, BIG DREAMS™

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born in 1933 and grew up during a time when women's intelligence and work were not valued. She earned a scholarship to Cornell University and went on to law school, even graduating at the top of her class. Despite her accolades, she struggled to find a job because she was a woman who had a family. Ruth fought for equality and fairness throughout her whole life, but especially as a member of the United States Supreme Court. She continues to inspire people to do what is right and dream big dreams for ourselves and our world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. How did Ruth's mother influence her life?
2. How can you tell that school and learning were important to Ruth?
3. Who else was important in Ruth's life?
4. What were some of the important cases that Ruth had to decide?
5. Why is Ruth Bader Ginsburg a dreamer we should know and admire?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. On p. 4, readers learn that Ruth's mother had to stop going to school so that she could help pay for her brother to go. This happened often during the time when Ruth was a young girl because boys were believed to be smarter and therefore more deserving of an education. Lead a discussion about fair versus unfair and have the students share their opinions.
2. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country, and Ruth was only the second woman to be asked to be on it at the time (p. 12). Would the students like to be a Supreme Court judge and have to make such important decisions? Why or why not?
3. Ruth had a good friend on the Supreme Court, Antonin Scalia, but they often disagreed (p. 13). Ask

the students if they have ever had a disagreement with a friend. What did they disagree about? How did they resolve it?

4. Ruth's powerful disagreements were called "dissents," and one of her famous lines is "I dissent!" which we see on page 14. Ask the students to share a decision that has been made in their lives to which they would say "I dissent!" For example, maybe they disagree with not being able to eat candy for breakfast at home. Or maybe they disagree with having to wear shoes at school. Allow the other students to share if they feel the same or differently about what their classmates are sharing and why.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. When Ruth's mother died, Ruth made a promise that she would do all of the things her mom would have wanted to do (p. 5). Model how to brainstorm hopes and goals for the future. Provide art materials so that students can create their own dream boards or dream lists.
2. Ruth studied in Sweden after law school and saw how women were treated fairly there when it came to accomplishing their goals while also raising children (p. 9). Have the students think about an important caretaker in their life; it can be their mother but could also be another family member if that is who they live with. Have them make a thank you card for that caregiver to show their appreciation for how hard they work.
3. Ruth not only fought for equal rights for women, she fought for fairness for everyone. One example of this was her fight for equality for male caregivers. Have students think of famous pairings of which they like both or of which both are equally important: peanut butter and jelly, salt and pepper, dogs and cats, etc. Pair up the students and have them each choose to be one side of the pair to argue its importance. For example, one child would represent peanut butter and talk about how it holds the sandwich together or can be smooth or crunchy, while the other student in the pair would represent jelly and talk about how it is sweet and tastes like fruit. Then have them switch roles to argue the other side and keep things fair like Ruth did for both men and women.
4. Ruth is known for her lace collar that she wore over her judge's robes. Provide students with white construction paper collars similar to what Ruth would wear and allow them to decorate them in any way they wish.
5. Ruth's mother taught her to be independent and brave and to always think for herself. This helped Ruth to make important decisions and to do what was right, even when it was difficult. Present a variety of social situations to the students and ask them to think like Ruth. What is the right choice? How can they think for themselves in these situations? Possible scenarios:
 - You and a friend are playing at the playground and another child wants to join. Your friend says no because the child is wearing an orange shirt and he doesn't like orange. What would you do?
 - Your dad brought home a bag of candy to celebrate your sister's birthday and tells you not to eat any until she gets a choice. The bag is open on the counter and no one is around. You don't think anyone will notice if you take just one piece. Should you?

