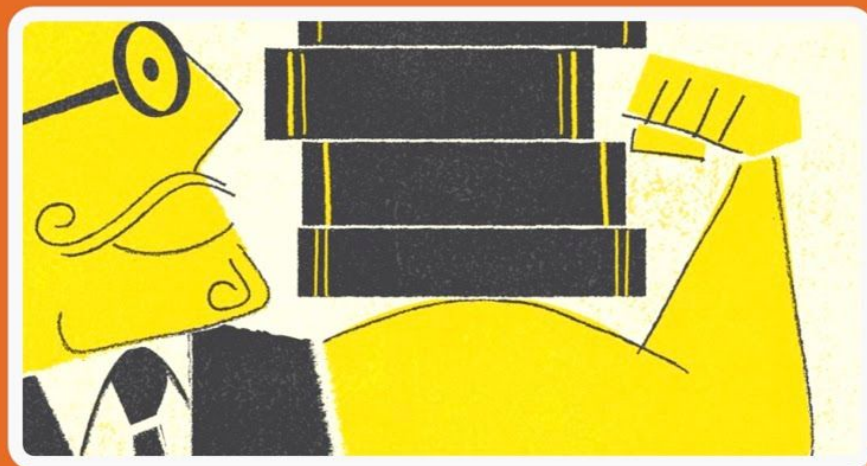


BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY'S YOUNG COMPANY PRESENTS

# The World's Strongest Librarian



## TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACKET

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# Welcome to Young Company!

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## About BYU Young Company

The Young Company serves as a training ground for both BYU actors and teaching artists wanting to work in theatre for young audiences. The group performs in front of 16,000 young people each year on topics that deal with everyday struggles encountered by people of all ages.

## What is a dramaturg, and why do they make teacher's packets?

As described on the website for LMDA (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas,) dramaturgs today have a variety of responsibilities. "Working in theatres and playwrights' organizations, in colleges and universities, and on a project-by-project basis, dramaturgs contextualize the world of a play; establish connections among the text, actors, and audience; offer opportunities for playwrights; generate projects and programs; and create conversations about plays in their communities."

In an effort to "create conversations" about the Young Company productions in our local communities, the dramaturgs at BYU create teacher's packets to share with all educators who will participate in these touring shows. We hope you will use them to enhance the experience your students have and further engage with the performance in ways that are meaningful specifically to your students. We hope you'll discover helpful approaches to learning more about the form and content of our productions in the attached lesson plans and activity ideas!

## Welcome Letter

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This story is inspired from the memoir written by Josh Hanagarne, a librarian who works at the Salt Lake City Library. Josh's memoir describes his experiences with Tourette Syndrome (Tourette's) that started in his childhood. Josh tried every treatment imaginable to get rid of the disorder, to no avail. Eventually, he discovered that reading and lifting weights gave him enough control over his body to not tic. Those moments of respite from the tics allowed Josh to see that he was still in control and could lead a fulfilling life even with Tourette's.

Reading has always been a vital aspect of education, and many studies have come out to explain the different positive effects that reading can have on children and adults alike. While much of school focuses on exercising the brain, less effort is put into helping kids understand how to exercise and take care of their bodies. With obesity becoming more of a problem in our society, we hope that by placing an equal focus on the mind and the body that children will be able to see the importance of these habits in their own lives.

None of the changes in the show or in our lives come about in massive tidal waves. Instead, change happens drop by drop. It is the daily efforts of the kids coming to the library that eventually allows them to save the library, and each of us has the potential to make a huge difference in the world with small decisions that seem unimportant at the time. The best hope we can have for this play is that children come away understanding that they have the power to change their lives and the world through their small, daily actions. As shown by the example of the kids in the show, we believe that "great things are done by a series of small things brought together" (Vincent van Gogh).

We hope that you enjoy the show and see the many different ways that it can influence the children who come to see it.

Greta Gebhard  
Dramaturg

# Theatre Etiquette

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Just like the performers, the audience also has an important role to play. Because some of the students may not have attended a play before, below are expectations to help them prepare for our performance!

- Remember to use the restroom before the show.
- No photography, please, and be sure to turn off your cellphones.
- Before the play starts, quietly follow the actors' instructions when they are seating you.
- Remember to sit flat on the floor with your legs crossed. This allows everyone to see the actors better and prevents limbs from falling asleep during the show.
- During the show, follow the actors' instructions when you are asked to participate.
- Don't speak with your neighbors during the show. We want everyone to be able to hear the actors.
- Please enjoy the show and laugh when you think it's funny!
- You can clap at the end.

## Wiggle Workout

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### **Workouts and Stretching**

In small groups (5-10 members), stand in a circle facing each other. The students will take turns going around the circle introducing some kind of physical movement. This can be jumping jacks, squats, sit ups, arm circles, leg raises, etc. Once a child has introduced a movement, everyone in the circle does 10 repetitions of that movement. Continue around the circle until each student has had a turn. It is totally ok for students to repeat movements if they can't think of something new. After each group has gone all the way around the circle, have the class combine into one large circle. The teacher will lead the students in some basic stretches like hamstring stretches, or the arm across the front of your body.

Discuss with the students how it makes them feel to be active and take care of their bodies.

## Play Synopsis - *The World's Strongest Librarian*

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Josh Hanagarne is a normal librarian. Well, almost normal. He is working to earn the title of the World's Strongest Librarian through his weightlifting. Josh has a small weight room in the basement of the library, and he uses a vlog to keep track of his progress. Josh is in charge of a storytime at the library, and is notorious among the kids who know all about his strength abilities and interesting takes on fairy tales.

During one of his storytimes with Peyton, Bobby, and Quintessence, Miss Garcia, Josh's boss, interrupts to tell Josh that the library is going to be closed down for budgetary reasons. Josh meets Bruce, like Bruce Banner, a kid with verbal and physical tics playing a video game. No amount of encouragement from Josh convinces Bruce to try reading. Josh helps the other kids with their research and keeps trying to connect with Bruce. He meets Bruce again as Bruce is researching about Tourette's right after a doctor's appointment.

Eventually, the kids learn that the library will be closing soon. They demand at least one feat of strength from Josh before it is too late. He impresses them by doing pushups with a pile of books on his back. He requires them to do pushups in return, and discovers the kids unable to do even a single pushup. Thus begins Words and Weights, a program to help kids with both their minds and their bodies.

The last day the library will be open, the kids come into the weightroom one last time. Miss Garcia pulls Josh out to make it easier on the kids. However, when they are asked to leave at closing time, the kids decide to start a read-in to protest the library being closed down. They barricade the door, refuse to come out until the library is saved, and spend their time reading and working out. Quintessence gets the idea to advertise their protest, and it soon gets on the news. Josh comes back to try and get the kids out, but soon receives a call from the mayor that a fitness company saw the protest and wants to pay to keep the library open. After their celebration, Josh realizes that Bruce is actually himself as a kid, and they manage to accomplish one major feat of weight lifting together!

## Before the show...

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### **Activity Title: Whisper Down the Lane**

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

### **Materials Needed: none**

In groups of 10, students sit in a large circle. A teacher or other adult chooses a student to start and whispers a book title in their ear or shows them a title written on a slip of paper. This should be something that all the kids are familiar with, like a book discussed in class, one that is popular, or a common fairy tale. The starting student then whispers one sentence about the beginning of the book to the student to their left. That student will then say a second sentence about what happens next in the book to the student on their left, but *only* their sentence. This student will also whisper a sentence to their neighbor and so on, until the story gets passed to the first student.

As an example, if the story is *Charlotte's Web*, the first student might say, "Wilbur is a pig that was saved by Fern." The second student then turns to their neighbor, but cannot say the first sentence. Instead, they might say something like, "Because Wilbur is a pig, he might one day be eaten." The third student might say something like, "Fern believes that eating pigs is bad" and so on until the last child has added to the story. The starting student then says in full voice the last sentence as they heard it from their neighbor, and then reveals what the actual story is. Since each student only hears one sentence of the story, it will most likely not follow the traditional storyline.

Students will then be able to share their experience listening to and creating the next sentence. Discussion questions might include the following:

- How did you come up with the next section of the story?
- If you didn't know exactly what story your neighbor was talking about, what did you do?
- Why do you think the story changed so much?
- Is this a story you would want to read if it were written down?
- What does this game teach us about storytelling?



## After the show ...

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### **Activity Title: Ideas for Small Victories**

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

### **Materials Needed: Postcards or paper, writing utensils**

Discussion question: Mr. Josh encourages the kids exercise their brains and their bodies. What can you do in your life to implement some of his ideas?

After a few answers, distribute postcards or paper to students. Direct students to think of small ways they could change things in their lives. This could include things like self-care or self-improvement. Ask them to think of appropriate steps that they could achieve, like trying to read a higher level book or learning how to do 5 pushups or watch less tv. Then give students the remaining time to write a short plan for how they will accomplish it. Help them to see that it doesn't need to be a big change, but just a small thing.

# Lesson Plans

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## Lesson Plan #1

### **Using Strengths in a Community in *The World's Strongest Librarian***

**Grade:** 4th

**Length:** 45-50 minutes

**Materials:**

- Dictionary
- Chalkboard or whiteboard

**Standards:**

TH:Cn11.1.4.a. Respond to community and social issues and incorporate other content areas in drama/theatre work.

Utah State Social Studies Standard 3, objective 1: Describe the responsibilities and rights of individuals in a representative government as well as in the school and community.

**Objective:**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of using their strengths to contribute to a community by presenting an idea of how they will contribute to their classroom.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of recognizing strengths and gifts in themselves and others by creating a tableau of their classmate's strength.

**Hook (10 minutes): Human Knot**

Have the class stand up and play the human knot game. Each student should grab hands with two different people they are not standing beside, then all work together to untangle themselves. Teacher can participate or side coach. If it is a larger class, you can split into two groups.

Once the class has successfully untangled themselves, have them do it again, grabbing hands with new partners this time. This time through however, the teacher will first go around and whisper instructions to each child. To half of the students, whisper to go do it like before and work together. Whisper to the other half of the students that they not pay close attention

and be less helpful--not disruptive, but less helpful. Once the instructions have been whispered, the students form the knot once again, grabbing hands with new partners, and undoing the knot.

Let the class work at it until either they succeed or they are stuck. Have them return to their seats for a short discussion and reflection of the activity. Ask:

- *Was this activity hard? Why or why not?*
- *Was it easier the first time or the second time? Why?*
- *What role did working together have in accomplishing your goal?*
- *Would you say that a task is easier when you work together or collaborate?*

### **Learning Engagement 1 (5-10 min): Different Strengths Discussion**

Lead the discussion by asking questions like:

-When playing the human knot, did everyone do the same things? Comment on different strategies you saw used, different ways people helped, how their different perspectives and personalities affected how they undid the knot.

Explain: *“Everyone has different strengths. When we talk about strengths, we don’t just mean being physically strong, being able to lift 340 pounds like Josh in the play. That’s one way of being strong.”* Continue discussion by asking:

*What is a strength?* A gift or a talent, something we’re good at.

*Why do we have strengths?*

*What are some strengths of characters in the play?* (Josh: librarian, knows books and where they are and how to find that information, working out. Quintessence: knows about politics and government, knows about protests, determined. Bobby: supportive, excited with his friends. Etc)

*Why don’t we all have the same strengths?* If everyone was good at math, and no one was good at cooking, food would be gross. If everyone’s strength was being a doctor, we wouldn’t have great elementary school teachers!

### **Learning Engagement 2 (10 min): Different Strengths Tableaux**

While students are still in their seats, have them think about strengths that they have. Throw out ideas like subjects in school, sports, listening, smiling, puzzles, maps, computers, cleaning, making friends, etc. Share some of your own strengths. Direct them to get into partnerships and explain the activity.

Students will interview their partner about some of their strengths, pick one to demonstrate, and show us in a tableau.

Explain that a tableau is an image or picture made from people freezing in a position. It can be used to create literal scenes or symbolic images. In this instance, you will be using tableaux to create scenes together as a class. If your class is unfamiliar with tableaux, take a moment to

model it for them. You could have them offer up suggestions to you of things to freeze as, which you can then model for them so they understand what is expected of them when they create tableaux.

In their tableau of their partner's strength, they will not move or make any sounds--just create a frozen picture to show a strength. When students have discussed with their partners, and you can see that everyone is ready, have each partnership go up to the front of the class, one at a time, and show their tableaux of each other. After showing the tableau, ask the student what the partner's strength was. Ask the class how they could tell what he/she was portraying. Remind the students that it's okay that we might have the same strengths or different strengths from other people.

### **Learning Engagement 3 (10 min): What's a Community? (City and classroom)**

Ask students: *What is a community?* Let's look it up in the dictionary, because I'm sure Mr. Josh would be very proud if we did.

After looking it up, explain the definition and that a community is a group of people with something in common. Maybe it's where they live, maybe it's the same interests, maybe it's the same goals. That's a community. Explain that we might be a part of many different communities at the same time--church communities if people have the same religion, neighborhood communities, city communities, even our classroom is a community because we're here to learn together.

Ask the students about the people we need in a city community. You can write the ideas on a chalkboard/whiteboard. They may include firefighters, policemen, doctors, teachers, mayor/government figures, construction worker, grocery store worker, mailman, car repairman, plumber, etc.

Ask what happens if one of these people is missing from the city community. Help them realize that everyone plays an important part in the community.

*What about our classroom? Isn't that a community?*

Ask students to think about how they can use their strengths to help the classroom. Maybe it's by being good at math and helping someone else, maybe it's being good at cleaning and making sure the room is tidy, maybe it's being friendly and kind to others, maybe it's listening to the teacher. Emphasize again that our strengths are different and that each is important.

### **Learning Engagement 4 (10 min): Classroom Tableau**

Break students into groups and explain that they have 5 minutes to come up with an idea of how they can contribute to the classroom community. They will prepare a tableau and then show it to the class.

When each group is finished planning, have them perform their tableaux in front of the class. Ask the class to make observations about what they see--not trying to guess it, or make positive or negative comments, just observations. After sharing observations, invite the group performing to share what their tableau is about. Then change the statement to begin, "I can contribute to my class by...". If the group share that their tableau was about being kind to people in the class, the group will repeat with you, "I can contribute to my class by being kind to my classmates."

We don't have to be physically strong, like Mr. Josh, to contribute to our classroom. Mr. Josh wasn't just physically strong, but he was good at being kind, reading, exercising, and he used those strengths to help the children at the library. You can use your strengths to contribute to your city community and our classroom community.

## Lesson Plan #2

### Small Achievements and Large Victories in *The World's Strongest Librarian*

**Grade:** 5th

**Length:** up to 80 minutes (flexible, could break into 2 lessons)

**Materials:**

- Piece of paper for each student (for the river)
- Two lines of tape along the floor (more detail in hook instructions)
- A piece of paper for each student to write down their goal and plan

**Standards:**

TH:Cn10.1.5a. Explain how drama/theatre connects oneself to a community or culture.

**Objective:**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of how small achievements lead to greater achievements by creating an individual plan to achieve a goal that they have.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of tableau work by creating a series of tableaux that represent a goal they want to achieve.

**Hook (10 min): Get Across the River**

Set up for this activity includes a piece of paper for each participant, and two parallel lines on the floor (taped or already existing). The lines should be about 10-15 feet apart.

The objective is for all the students to make it across the “river.” They each have one piece of paper, but they cannot rip or fold it. You can set down a piece of paper in the “river” and step on it. If someone is not stepping on a paper, even for a moment, it gets “washed down the river” and they lose that piece. If someone steps in the water and not on the paper, they also get “swept downstream.” It is up to the students to figure out how to get everyone across.

After the activity, discuss what happened.

*What were your strategies?*

*What went well?*

*What didn't go so well?*

*What was the goal?*

*What did you do to achieve that goal?*

*There were small steps that got you closer and closer to your goal--you couldn't just be across the river all at once.*

### **Learning Activity 1 (15-20 minutes): Group Tableaux**

Bring up how in *The World's Strongest Librarian*, Mr. Josh had a lot of big goals. He wanted to lift 340 pounds, he wanted to help the kids stay active and healthy in both body and mind, and he wanted to keep the library open. How did Mr. Josh work to achieve these goals? What little goals did he set to get to the big ones?

To continue to illustrate how small elements work together to create greater things, introduce the students to group tableaux. A tableau is an image or picture made from people freezing in a position. It can be used to create literal scenes or symbolic images. In this instance, you will be using tableaux to create scenes together as a class.

If your class is unfamiliar with tableaux, take a moment to model it for them. You could have them offer up suggestions to you of things to freeze as, which you can then model for them so they understand what is expected of them when they create tableaux.

Once the class is familiar with tableaux, invite 6-8 students to the front of the class to help create a group tableau. Begin by having the group decide on a location in secret. This can be anywhere -- a restaurant, the seashore, Mars, etc. Once the group has silently decided on what their location should be, have them begin to create the scene adding participants one at a time. The rest of the class must try and identify what the location is based on what the group shows. One student will start the tableau, give the class a chance to guess, then another will join until they create the full scene.

The idea behind this is that the students will be unable to identify the location of the scene until there are a few students in the tableau. This reinforces the concept that it takes many small things (many small tableaux) to create something greater (the full scene).

Repeat the activity a few times, allowing different groups of students a chance to create tableaux. Once you have finished, gather the class together for a discussion. Ask:

- How difficult was it to identify the scene when there was just one person in the tableau?
- How did having more people in the scene help you guess the location?
- How does this activity relate to the activity we played earlier with the paper?
- What was the goal of this game?
- How did you all achieve this goal?

## **Learning Activity 2 (20-25 minutes): Individual Goals and Tableaux**

Transition into discussing the goals that we have as individuals. Bring up Mr. Josh and his goals again. Ask the students if they have any big goals for their future. What do they want to achieve? What small things can they do to achieve them?

Send the class to their seats and ask them to write down a big goal that they have. Tell them to really think about what they want to achieve in life, and set a real goal for themselves. Then have them spend some time considering this goal. Tell them to write down four smaller steps they could do to build up to that goal.

Give the students enough time to do this thoughtfully. Once the class has written down their goals and their four steps, tell them to stand up and find a place in the room where they have space to themselves. Keep the room quiet during this activity. Tell them that when you call out the word 'Goal', they are to make an individual tableau (so frozen in an image by themselves) that represents the goal they set for themselves. Give them a countdown: 3...2...1...Goal.

Give them a moment in their goal tableau. Tell them to think about their goal and the steps they've planned for themselves. Then tell them that when you call out One, they will transition into a tableau representing the first step in their plan. When they are ready, call out One. Make verbal observations about the changes you see.

Do this same process for Steps Two, Three, and Four. Once the students have developed a tableau for every step along the way, practice going through them all quickly together: call out Goal, One, Two, Three, Four. Give them time to change or adjust their tableaux as they see fit.

## **Conclusion/Assessment (10-15 minutes): Performing Steps in Tableaux**

Now that students have written their goal and steps, and created tableaux for the goal and steps, group all the students into groups of 4-5. They will share their goals and steps with each other, showing their steps through tableau. When they've discussed and shared their tableaux, the class will make an audience. Each group will take a turn standing at the front and presenting their tableaux. Call out "One.....Two.....Three.....Four" to signify when to change to each step of their tableaux, giving enough time for students to observe each step. The whole group of 4-5 students will perform simultaneously to help students not feel self-conscious about performing alone in front of everyone.

After each tableau, ask students for feedback:

- *What were some goals you saw?*
- *Did you see someone that has a goal similar to yours?*
- *What did you notice about their bodies in the tableaux of each step?*



Remind the students that they can make big goals and work towards them with small achievements, just like Mr. Josh did.

## Peaceful Protest in *The World's Strongest Librarian*

**Grade:** 6th

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

- Teacher- in- role object (clipboard, notebook, scarf, hat, etc.)
- Something for the students to write on

**Standards:**

Utah State 6th Grade Social Studies Standard 4: Students will understand current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world.

TH:Cr1.1.6c. Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

**Objective:**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of character motivations by creating a scene in a group where characters stand up for something in a peaceful way.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of peaceful protests in history by creating a scene in a group re-enacting a real-life peaceful protest.

**Hook (5-10 minutes):**

Begin by asking the students if there has ever been a time in their life where they had to stand up for something that was right. Have a few students share, or share a time from your own life you had to do the same. Ask the students who share:

- Why did you stand up for that?
- Was it hard? Why or why not?
- What happened because you stood for something right?

**Learning Activity 1 (20 minutes): Teacher-in-role**

Lead the class discussion on standing up for what is right, connected to the performance of *The World's Strongest Librarian*. Ask:

- Where did you see characters standing up for what is right in *The World's Strongest Librarian*?

- How did the characters protest injustices?

Be sure to bring up the “read-in” the students take part in during the show. Ask the class:

- What was the motivation for the students to hold a read-in?
- Why was the library important to them?
  - (Be sure to address the economic situation of the children in the play -- for many of them, the library is the only place they can go to access books and read for free.)

Tell the class that an important part of a good play is what the character’s motivations are. Have the class imagine that they are children who are part of the read-in. Have them pull out paper and write down in a few sentences explaining why they feel like it is important to keep the library open. What is their motivation for being a part of the read-in?

Once all of the students have written down their individual motivations, transform the room into the read-in at the library from *The World’s Strongest Librarian*. This can be done by having the class work together to move tables and desks to form a small, room-like space for the students to sit in. Use whatever is in your classroom to make the space more authentic: put in stacks of books, include beanbags or pillows, etc. When you are finished, there should be a space that is designated as the weight-room in the library where the read-in took place, and a space that is outside of the read-in.

Have all the students enter the read-in space and get settled as if they were actually part of the read-in. Tell them to remember the motivations they gave themselves earlier for why they are a part of the read-in. Tell them that a reporter for a local news company is coming to see what is going on in the community library, and will be calling them to ask them questions about why they are doing a read-in. To avoid more than one student ‘answering’ the phone when the reporter calls, designate one student that the reporter will be calling, who will then pass the phone around to others. Remind them to be respectful of the reporter and each other; they are all working toward the same goal.

Using a small costume item (like a hat or a scarf) and/or a prop (like a clipboard or notebook), step into role as the reporter. Remember, the students will follow your lead on how committed the roleplay you are. There is no need to be excessive, but the more committed you are to playing the reporter the more likely the class will respond to you. Your character should know nothing about the plot of *The World’s Strongest Librarian*, and so will learn everything from what the students tell you.

Using a phone, ‘call’ the students in the read-in. Introduce yourself and begin asking the students questions about why they are doing the read-in. Have the student you initially ‘call’ pass the phone to other students so that you can interview others. You will need to improvise your questions a bit depending on the response you get from the students, but here are a few ideas to start interviewing:

- Why are you holding a read-in?
- How important is the library to you?
- What would happen to you if there was no library for you to visit?
- Why is reading important to you?
- What have you learned by coming to this library?

Continue to ask questions until you, as the reporter, have learned everything you need to know to write a good article about the read-in in the newspaper. Thank the students and hang up the call. Step out of role as the reporter and ask the students as a whole:

- Was there anything you learned while being one of the students in the read-in?
- In the play, the read-in was successful. Why do you think that is?
- What are some examples in history of peaceful protests that were successful?

### **Learning Activity 2 (20 minutes):**

Tell the class that peaceful protests have been some of the most influential movements in history. Just like how in a good play the characters have clear motivations, people who take part in peaceful protests also have strong motivations behind what they are doing, usually to change something that is unjust. The children in *The World's Strongest Librarian* were motivated because the library was somewhere they could go to read and learn, which they couldn't get many other places because of their economic situation. If the library closed down, they would no longer be able to learn as much and would fall behind their more privileged peers. People in history have also been motivated by injustices.

Transition to having the students look up peaceful protests in history. Tell them that they will look up peaceful protests individually to get an understanding of:

- Why the protest occurred (what the motivation behind it was)
- Who was involved
- When it occurred
- What happened as a result of it

You can provide articles about protests or have them find their own online. Have the students help you put the room back together as you transition to the research.

Give the students time to find a story about a peaceful protest. Mingle throughout the room and visit with the students to see how their research is going. You may encourage them to find recent examples of peaceful protest, such as the situation with Colin Kaepernick and the NFL.

### **Conclusion/Assessment (10 minutes):**

Once the students all have a story about peaceful protest, have them get into groups of 3-4. Have them share the stories they found with their groups, then tell them to pick one of those

stories to act out as a scene for the class. Tell them to keep the scene simple. It should be able to come together in just a few minutes. Once they have chosen their story have them practice acting it out in their groups. Remind them to be thinking about the motivations of the people in the story and how they can show that through the scene.

When you see they are ready, have the class gather back together. One by one, have the groups act out the scenes they created. Look for how clearly the motivation behind the peaceful protest is portrayed, as well as how well the students understand the historical event. After each performance, ask the students:

- What was the motivation for these people?
- Why did this peaceful protest occur?
- What happened as a result of the protest?

Once everyone has performed their scenes, ask the whole class:

- What role has peaceful protest played in our history?
- Why do you think it is effective?
- How can we use principles of peaceful protest today?