



Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day Event Resource Guide

In Partnership with the Ruby Bridges Foundation





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Introduction

Letter from Ruby Bridges

Dear “Walker”,

Thank you for your participation in The Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day! By joining me today, you have made it clear that you are ready to take steps to building a better future where racism, and all forms of bullying, have no place. We are walking together today and talking about ideas I have been discussing with kids throughout the country for years! The solution is really very simple: Treat others as you would want them to treat you. Basically, practicing the golden rule...

This is such an exciting day for me. Sixty-four years ago, I stepped out of the Marshall’s car and walked into my new school. I was a kid alone, surrounded by adults, and I didn’t understand why some seemed so angry while others were kind. It took me a long time that year to understand what was happening and why. My parents had only told me that I was starting a new school, and that I “better behave”. Looking back, I am grateful that I didn’t know what it was all about. In fact, I often say it was because of my innocence that I was able to learn the lesson that has shaped my life. That lesson is simple: kindness comes from someone’s heart no matter what they look like. We cannot look at someone and know whether they are bad or good. I had no idea at the age of six that I had already become an activist. It was years later when I started visiting schools and talking to kids like yourself, that I realized my journey as an activist had begun on my first day of school at William Frantz Elementary.

I am hoping that you realize that by participating in the walk today, you too are an activist. Some changemakers inspire others through simple actions while others take on a louder role. But each person has an important part in shaping our future. Every day you can decide to be kind, to help each other out, and to say no to bullying. I know that if we can commit to making that change together today, and each day going forward, that we will change the world together. Please take time to sit with your class or your family or even a group of friends and talk about the questions I have included. The first step to activism is to activate your heart. You must be the change within yourself in order to inspire it in others. I along with my team is committed to you, and the work you are embarking on today. We ask that you keep in touch with us and that we will reach out to you from time to time to check in and learn about your progress. Please keep in mind that we can all make mistakes and sometimes we all may need a reminder. The best thing to do is to recommit, reread your pledge and you can get right back on track. Together, one step at a time we can commit to a better tomorrow, and to stomp out racism and bullying!



With love,

Ruby Bridges

Founder of Ruby Bridges Foundation

Participate

Get Started

Sign up for Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. In order to track the impact of this movement, we are requesting school's basic information like school name, location and number of participants.

Start Planning

Before your Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

Step 1: Create a Committee

If you have a group of AAA School Safety Patrollers or other student leadership group consider electing these students as the **"Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day Committee"** to help plan. Once you have your members, assign each member a role for the committee - such as community outreach leader, fundraising leader, route planner, secretary, social media lead, etc. An adult should act as an advisor for the student committee (Teacher, Administrator, PTA or Community Member).

Step 2: Build Your Event Strategy

Prompt the committee to brainstorm about the following:

- What is your goal for hosting Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day? Is it to have your entire school participate or just your classroom? Is it to have 100% attendance? Is it to have everyone learn Ruby's story? Is it to simply have fun? Define your goal, and think about how you will know if you accomplish it.
- Will you create a route for everyone to walk? Where will it start and end? Will you need to create a map?
- What should students wear or bring with them on the day of the walk?

- How will you get the word out about your walk to school day? (Posters, announcements, word-of-mouth, etc.)
- How will you ensure that every student who wants to participate will be able to? Think about wheelchair accessibility, traffic safety, participation from home, etc.
- Will you need to collect permission slips?
- What resources do you need to host your event? Do you need to fundraise? Do you need volunteers?
- Do you want to invite special guests, such as school board members, elected officials or news media? How will you get in contact with them?
- Think about if you want to host a friendly competition between classrooms. Whichever class has a higher student turnout wins!
- How can your Committee Advisor help you succeed in planning your event?

Planning is a major part of any event and requires time, effort and dedication. These young leaders will sharpen their leadership skills as they think through the details of how to make the day a success. Encourage them to write down their ideas and consult others for their opinions too.

Step 3: Organizing Your Walk

There are many ways to participate in a Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. The most important component of this day is to learn about Ruby's story and focus on how we can be leaders in making our schools and communities better today. Have your Ruby Bridges committee think about factors that may affect the walk to school day and the best way to host the event. Use the ideas below as inspiration. Remember that every school can participate in their own way!

- **If your school is located in an unsafe area, has traffic safety hazards or tight sidewalks/streets**, consider hosting your walk to school day on the playground or in the halls instead. Establish a starting point and walk with purpose around campus and back into the classroom. Make sure to have plenty of adult volunteers or teachers present to make the walk as safe as possible.
- **If your school is virtual or uses a hybrid learning format**, consider doing a walk to school every day throughout the week so every student has a chance to participate

or organize a walk at home by learning about Ruby and walking in place or around the neighborhood with a family member or friend.

- **If your school experiences harsh weather conditions in November or is in a rural/remote area**, consider hosting an indoor walk or parade through school hallways or in the gymnasium.

Step 4: Create an Event Schedule

Once you have your strategy, it's a good idea to build the event schedule for your Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, so you can start organizing the committee's time, and start getting the word out. Below is a sample event agenda that you can use for inspiration for your own Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.

Time	Action
7:15am	Everyone meets in front of school by the designated meeting spot. Take a group photo, pass out any materials needed for the walk, etc.
7:45am	Teachers, families, community members and students walk together from school (Point A) to Point B.
7:45am - 8am	Families and students may join in along the way! See map.
8:15am	Arrive back at school.
8:30am	Convene at the gym for a school assembly. The Ruby Bridges committee may say a few words, take the pledge, read Ruby's letter to students, or conduct an inside walk around the gym as a closing event. Remember to make time to read through Discussion Questions and have a dialogue about what Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day is and why it's important. Discussion Questions can be found at the bottom of this guide.

During your Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

Day of Operations

It's the day of your school's Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day! It's important that the Ruby Bridges committee and all adults are prepared and ready for their role during the event. They may need to convene 15-30 minutes before to ensure everything goes smoothly.

Day-of Considerations:

- If you haven't already, pass out any materials needed during the walk (e.g. map of the route, posters, banners, t-shirts, etc).
- Which adult will be taking photos and videos during the walk? Make sure to have a backup just in case!
- Who is responsible for keeping everyone on schedule? Do they have an eye on the time?
- Are all volunteers accounted for? If not, make sure to contact them.
- Have fun and enjoy your walk!

After your Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

Debrief

How did your school's walk go? Open up a conversation about what went well and what could be improved on for next year with student participants. Think about your experience walking to school and what Ruby's experience was like as she walked to school in 1960. Document thoughts and ideas for next year's walk so you don't forget! Share out any photos or videos taken, if applicable, and use [#RubyBridgesWalktoSchoolDay2024](#) or [#RBWTSD2024](#) when posting to social media.

Ruby wants to hear from you! Send a short recap of how your school's walk to school event went and what lasting impact it will have on the participants.

Share your event summary, photos, videos or other event details with us by visiting rubybridges.foundation.

Discussion Questions

Please take time to give these questions thought and discuss within your class and also with family and friends. We look forward to reconnecting with you after The Walk to School Day and hearing about your progress as well as your answers on how to make the world a better place.

1. Do you know what The Golden Rule is? What do you think it means? Do you follow it? How can you help others remember to follow the golden rule even when it seems difficult? As a class? As a family? As a community?
2. What is your idea of a hero? Do you know any heroes? Why did you choose that person? Do you have any of those qualities? Can you try to be like those qualities?
3. What is an activist? How old do you need to be to become an activist? Do you know any activists?
4. Where do activists learn to be activists? Do you need to march in a protest to be an activist?
5. Is there anything you would want to change in the world? What is it?
6. Can you think of small steps or small changes that you can make to get closer to that change? Are there ways to help others learn how to make small changes?