

# FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

## Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights

### Goals

As a family you will be able to:

Identify different kinds of pictures, including drawings, paintings, photographs, snapshots, film and television

Examine how representations of African Americans changed over time.

### Audience

Parents, grandparents, or caregivers may use this activity with their children. The activity is intended for children from age five and up.

You may use this exercise in conjunction with a visit to *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* or as a stand-alone activity.

### FAMILY ACTIVITY: CHANGING PICTURES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

American civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois wrote that in 1910, the year he founded the illustrated *The Crisis* magazine for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, images of African Americans “were an innovation” in popular culture. This activity will explore how visual depictions of African-Americans, including portraits, snap shots and illustrations, defied that convention and challenged racial prejudice, throughout the Twentieth Century, and especially during the period of the modern civil rights movement.



*For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* is organized by the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County in partnership with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Through a host of media—including photographs, television and film, magazines, newspapers, posters, books, and pamphlets—the project explores the historic role of visual culture in shaping, influencing, and transforming the fight for racial equality and justice in the United States from the late-1940s to the mid-1970s. For All The World To See includes a traveling exhibition, a website, online film festival, and a richly illustrated companion book.

This guide is an accompaniment to the online exhibition, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*:

<http://www.foralltheworldtosee.org>

## A NOTE ABOUT GRAPHIC IMAGES

Some of the images in *For All the World to See* are graphic in nature. They are included because of the vital role they played in the modern civil rights movement.

## DURATION

Approximately one hour before visiting the exhibition and another after the visit.

## MATERIALS

Access to *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* either online, in the companion book, or at a physical venue. Focus on these images:

*Colored: Seated in Rear*, 1929

*We Serve Colored: Carry Out Only*, 1931

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/segregation.php>

As well as:

Magazines

Family photos

Home movies and videos

Paper and pencil

## BACKGROUND READING

Berger, Maurice. *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/book/>

## PART I. PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

As a family, gather current magazines and newspapers, family photos, home movies and videos, or any other items with images of people. Study the variety of pictures by asking of each:

What kind of picture is this?

What are the people in the picture doing?

What are they wearing?

What objects surround them?

Then invite your family members to consider questions about gender, race, ethnicity or identity.

How are women represented in these pictures? Men?

Do you see people of different races or ethnicities? How are they depicted?

For whom was this image made? An individual? A mass audience? A certain group of people?

Why was it created?

What role, if any, did prejudice play in shaping the way people were represented in this picture?

## **PART II. VISITING THE EXHIBITION**

Bring a small notebook and pencil for each family member so that you may:

Sketch your own versions of two or three portraits, ideally from different sections of the exhibition. Encourage family members to work with different pictures.

Take notes about your responses to those portraits using the following questions to get you started?

What kind of picture is this? A snapshot, photograph, newspaper or magazine illustration?

What are the people in the picture doing?

What are they wearing?

What objects surround them?

How is race or identity treated in the image?

What role, if any, did prejudice play in shaping the way African Americans were represented in the image?

As soon as you can, share your notes and sketches from your visit to *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*. Ask each other why you selected certain images.

### **PART III. ANALYZING THE PICTURES**

Lay your sketches and notes on a table so that everyone can see and recall the exhibition. You may also refer to the website or book so that you can study the original image. Ask everyone to reflect on their sketches and notes. You may use the questions above to prompt conversation. Invite your children to organize the pictures by time period. Approximate if you do not have the actual date. After looking at the pictures, pose the following questions for discussion:

How have pictures of African Americans changed over time?

How do these pictures shape our ideas about race? About history? About identity?

How do you think pictures might have influenced in the civil rights movement?

What role did prejudice play in shaping the way African Americans were represented in these pictures?

How has American visual culture changed or remained the same since the beginning of the struggle for civil rights?



*For All The World To See* was organized by the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County in partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution.



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*For All the World to See* was designated a "We the People" project by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The goal of the "We the People" initiative is to "encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture through the support of projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation's history and culture and that advance knowledge of the principles that define America."



*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*



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