

## Gather @Grand Speaker Series



In 1946, Branch Rickey (Harrison Ford), legendary manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, defies major league baseball's notorious color barrier by signing Jackie Robinson (Chadwick Boseman) to the team. The heroic act puts both Rickey and Robinson in the firing line of the public, the press and other players. Facing open racism from all sides, Robinson demonstrates true courage and admirable restraint by not reacting in kind and lets his undeniable talent silence the critics for him. **The movie can be rented for \$3.99 on Amazon or rented on You Tube if you have an account**

### 42 Film Study Guide (Movie # 5)

- 1 The movie begins in 1945. Describe how Harold (Publicity Chief for the Dodgers) responded when Mr. Rickey discussed integrating Major League Baseball. **What was the “code” that Harold said Mr. Rickey would be violating? Do you think you would have taken such a risk in 1945? What about today, would you stand up for injustice if you knew that you could be outcast from certain groups/activities in your life?**
- 2 Why did Mr. Rickey choose Jackie Robinson to integrate Major League Baseball? **What are your thoughts about the criteria Mr. Rickey used to select the first black player to try to integrate Major League Baseball? Was the criteria fair or appropriate? Do you think this type of criteria is still used today when recruiting or drafting college or professional athletes or when recruiting/hiring Blacks for the work force?**
- 3 When Jackie Robinson was in his first game with Montreal, Branch Rickey said that Jackie was “superhuman”. Clay Hopper (manager of the Montreal Royals) said, “That is still a nigger out there.” Mr. Rickey said, “He understood that his attitude and cultural heritage came from his mother’s ... **Remember Dr. Alfred Blalock from *Something the Lord Made*, what was Dr. Blalock’s response to racism and injustices at Johns Hopkins University? What was Branch Rickey’s method of dealing with racism and injustices in Major League Baseball? Based on these two examples, what advice would you give**

**your children about what to do if they see racism or an injustice occur toward an African American person?**

- 4 Phillie Phanatic Manager Ben Chapman was relentless with his racial taunting and verbal attacks towards Jackie Robinson on the baseball field. Later Chapman offered to take the photo with Jackie. Harold (Publicity Chief for the Dodgers) was infuriated. He said that Chapman was trying to save face. Mr. Rickey said that people like Phillie Phanatic manager Chapman were creating sympathy for Jackie Robinson. **Do you think the press response was positive or negative? What role did the press play in creating sympathy for Jackie Robinson's efforts to integrate Major League Baseball?**
  
- 5 Mr. Rickey was motivated by his love for great baseball and correcting a mistake that he made earlier in life. The sheriff in Florida who demanded that Jackie Robinson get off the baseball field was motivated by a culture of hatred. He said, "Negroes can't play baseball with white boys. The Dodgers ain't changing our way of living." Early on Jackie said that he had the guts for the challenge to integrate baseball. He said that he was changing the world and refusing to let the world change him. **As we continue on our journey to end racism, what stakeholders and supports will we need to help achieve our goal?**
  
- 6 **What is the definition of a stereotype? What stereotypes have you heard in the movies we have viewed? If a stereotype is true, is it okay to say it? If you hear a stereotype that is not true, what should you do? Be prepared to explain your answer.**

**Resolve Challenge for March & April**

Discuss racial bias in sports today. Jackie Robinson played his first game in Major League Baseball April 15, 1947. During the movie, one sportscaster said that, "Negroes would run whites out of baseball because physiologically they have a longer heel bone which gives them an unfair speed advantage. That was seventy-four years ago. Today, some stereotypes continue. Some still believe that African American athletes are gifted athletically but not intellectually. African American athletes are usually given credit for their "natural athleticism," while whites are credited for their "hard work," "discipline" and "knowledge of the game"; as if African American athletes are naturally given the gift of great athleticism, and white people become great athletes through hard work, discipline and intelligence.

- A. Choose a sport you enjoy playing or watching.
- B. Research racism that exists in that sport. Then respond to the following questions:
  - **Describe racist incidents that have occurred regarding the sport you chose.**
  - **How has racism affected African American athletes playing the sport your chose.**
  - **Before your research, what did you believe to be true about some black and white athletes in the sport you chose? Has your thinking changed after your research?**

**Sample stories taken from the headlines are on the next page:**

- While Serena Williams was solidifying herself as the Greatest of All Time of women's tennis and, arguably, the greatest female athlete in any sport, there was endless chatter and scrutiny across various media platforms about her physique. The discussion centered on why her body doesn't fit into society's idea of femininity and beauty; on why she isn't skinny and white and blonde like Maria Sharapova or Caroline Wozniacki. One Serena adversary tweeted, "the main reason for her success is that she is built like a man."
- In 2020, Houston Texans football player Deshaun Watson made a poor decision that contributed to a Texans loss. In a Facebook post that became public, Lynn Redden, the superintendent of the Onalaska school district north of Houston, wrote, "When you need precision decision making you can't count on a black quarterback." "For him to say something like that let people know that, even though we have so many black quarterbacks doing all these great things, we've made strides but we haven't made enough."
- There is a stereotype that "Black people don't swim." The stereotype has been cemented in U.S. history over generations. Historically speaking, stereotypes, discrimination and lack of access to pools, regardless of economic status, have kept black people out of the water. After experiencing blatant racism at pools and public spaces, some parents don't want to risk putting their children in similar situations. Swimming pools have been spaces that have been very racialized. In 2016, Simone Manuel was a 19-year-old Olympic rookie. She won four medals—two gold—and became the first Black swimmer to win an individual swimming gold. Her star was just ascending. "Her growth extends well beyond the swimming pool," said Greg Meehan, her coach at Stanford as both a collegian and now as a professional. "In 2016, she was thrust into a leadership role as a barrier-breaking African American woman. I guess, the stereotype is wrong, "Black people can swim."