



EDUCATOR GUIDE

NEATE: Eddie's Ordeal

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Description:

Eddie Delaney loves his dad. But often he wishes that he'd lighten up. His father, an African-American lawyer who grew up during the civil rights movement, has tall dreams for his only son. Floyd Delaney came of age at a time when America saw the achievements and struggles of black men not just as a reflection on themselves, but on their communities, their families, their race. Along with other foot-soldiers of the Movement, Floyd sacrificed to make a better future for the next generation. He thinks Eddie views life too casually. Eddie needs his father to understand that he can only be himself.

In Eddie's Ordeal, a title in Just Us Books' chapter book series NEATE, Eddie and his dad are finally beginning to connect. They bond over basketball and Eddie's good marks. Then Eddie, who is in eighth grade, gets a D in language arts. His father takes the news worse than he ever imagined. Though Eddie just earned a starting spot on the Bulldogs, his parents make him quit the basketball team. Eddie, who's usually good-natured, becomes resentful. The gap swells between him and his dad.

Eddie's friends, the NEATE crew, try to figure out how they can help. They take turns working on language arts assignments with Eddie. They encourage him to make up with his dad. They dig into Mr. Delaney's past to uncover a clue about why he's so tough. What they discover takes them back to a pivotal time in African-American history, reconciles Eddie and his dad and permanently alters how father and son see each other.

Themes:

Generations; family relationships; civil rights movement; friendship; no-pass, no-play rules; conflict resolution

Pre-Reading:

Based on the book's title and cover photo, what do you think the book will be about?

Discussion Questions:

Why is there a gulf between Eddie and his dad?

How does it grow?

Describe the personalities of each of Eddie's friends.

What does NEATE do about the situation with Eddie and his dad? What do you think of

their plan? Would you have done something similar?

What's the hardest part of school for Jasmine?

Why does Liz start feeling bad? How does she cope with her feelings?

What's the turning point for Eddie and his dad?

Why was it important for young people to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement? How do you think they felt?

How do Jasmine and Liz resolve the tension in their friendship?

What happens at the end of the story? Was it what you expected?

Classroom Activities

Interviewing: When Eddie learns the story behind a photo of his dad as a young man, he discovers a side to his father he never knew. That opened the way for them to begin to talk and get to know each other in a new way. Ask students in your class to find a photo of one of their parents and then interview that parent about it. What story did the student first imagine when they saw the photo? What was the reality? Did the student learn anything new about the parent?

Writing:

A. Eddie thought he knew all of his father's achievements. Then, he finds out that his dad sat-in at a whites-only Raleigh lunch counter. Discuss the role of young people in the Civil Rights Movement. Then, talk with students about standing up for their rights. Why is it important? How is it hard? Students can write about a time when they had to stand up for what they believed. How did they feel before, during and after? How did others react to them? How did the experience change them?

B. Have students write a new ending for Eddie's Ordeal where Eddie makes the shot. How does he feel? How does the crowd react? What's the interaction between him and his dad? They should remember to use detail and dialogue to make the scene come to life.

Art: Play a movie like *Eyes on the Prize* that shows students how children, some the same age they are, fought for our rights. After viewing the film, give them magazines and encourage them to create a collage based on their thoughts and feelings. Eddie's mom was an artist. Talk to them about legendary black collagist Romare Bearden and other prominent black artists. Each student can share their work of art with the class and discuss its meaning.

Theater: Assign parts of the story and turn it into Reader's Theater. Those who don't get character roles can be narrators. You can make it really interactive by having children sing freedom songs, mime a basketball game, invent cheers and make simple props.

Music: Have kids learn the history of songs civil rights veterans sang during the movement such as Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, This Little Light, We Shall Overcome, Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around. Have they heard them before? What's the origin? What do they mean? Teach them a couple of songs.

Conflict Resolution: Jasmine and Liz are both DuSable Junior High School pop-stars-in-training. First, their talent draws them together and then pulls them apart as Liz struggles to deal with feelings of jealousy. Talk to students about healthy competition and resolving conflicts between friends. Why do uncomfortable feelings surface? How can they be resolved? Students can write about a time a friendship was challenged and how they turned it around.

Research: Eddie's Ordeal mentions several names, groups and events important to black history. Write the following words on index cards: Daisy Bates, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, NAACP, Jim Crow, Civil Rights Movement, Romare Bearden, Patti LaBelle, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Roberta Flack, Alicia Keys and Mariah Carey. Put the cards in a bowl or hat and have students pick one. They can research that topic and then share what they've learned in creative ways such as doing a performance piece, writing a poem or creating artwork.

Teamwork: Eddie's friends worked together to figure out what was happening with his dad. Have kids pick a project they can do together.

Intergenerational relationships: Eddie and his dad come from two different generations. Have students talk to an elder about his or her life as a child. Ask them to share their discoveries with the class.