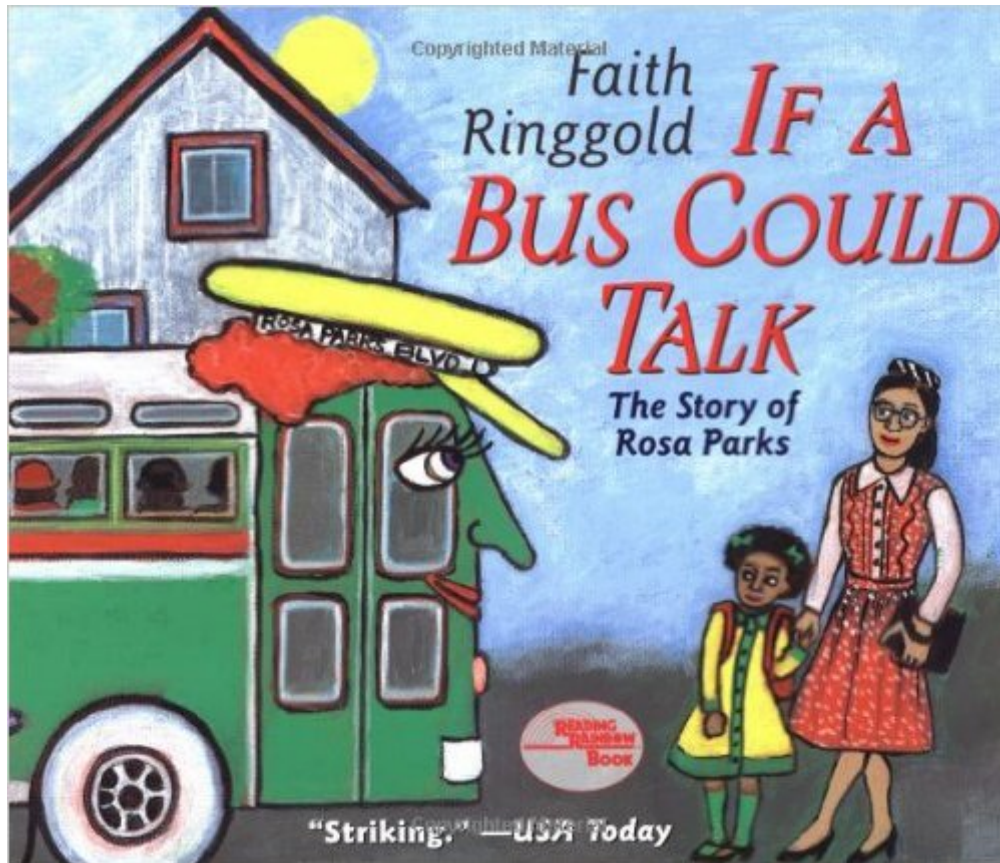


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# If A Bus Could Talk: The Story Of Rosa Parks



## Synopsis

If a bus could talk, it would tell the story of a young African-American girl named Rosa who had to walk miles to her one-room schoolhouse in Alabama while white children rode to their school in a bus. It would tell how the adult Rosa rode to and from work on a segregated city bus and couldn't sit in the same row as a white person. It would tell of the fateful day when Rosa refused to give up her seat to a white man and how that act of courage inspired others around the world to stand up for freedom. In this book a bus does talk, and on her way to school a girl named Marcie learns why Rosa Parks is the mother of the Civil Rights movement. At the end of Marcie's magical ride, she meets Rosa Parks herself at a birthday party with several distinguished guests. Wait until she tells her class about this!

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790 (What's this?)

Series: Reading Rainbow Book

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Aladdin (January 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689856768

ISBN-13: 978-0689856761

Product Dimensions: 11.8 x 0.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (38 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #40,877 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > United States](#) #36 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s](#) #75 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s](#)

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

What would you do if a bus with eyes, nose, red hair, and a yellow cap pulled up to your bus stop? When the door opens and a voice calls out, "Step on up, young lady," Marcie does just that. It will be the ride of her life, for she hears the courageous story of Rosa Parks straight from Rosa's bus itself. This story spans a spectrum of detail in 32 pages: from Rosa McCauley's childhood in Pine

Level, Alabama, to her marriage to Raymond Parks, to that fateful bus ride on December 1, 1955, to her continued struggle for equality after the boycott. The artistic style of Faith Ringgold leaps from the page in dramatic acrylic color on canvas. The suggested reading age for this book is 5 - 9. Yet it is not a quick read. Text is detailed enough to make some younger listeners restless. Vocabulary is challenging enough to daunt some older beginner readers. But don't let that deter you from sharing *If a Bus Could Talk* with your children. No doubt they take their integrated schools, pools, movies, and restaurants for granted. If anything, this story will get THEM to talk!

The title is promising, but misleading. "If a Bus Could Talk" implies an entertaining story for the beginning reader; but, the concept is lost as the story drags from the first few sentences. The gimmick of the driverless bus is mishandled, and one soon wonders why the author thought it necessary add a gimmick to a true story that is inherently interesting when skillfully told. One might speculate that someone early on criticized the book as being a Civil Rights manual for young adults rather than a picture book for children; hence, the story was prefaced with the garbled mess that makes up its first few pages of text. Perhaps that part was hastily added. The suggested audience is the five-to-nine age group. Any healthy five-year old will be dozing from page one. Once it becomes obvious that the prose is better suited to an older child, though, the biography itself becomes quite informative. By the third or fourth page, the talking bus is forgotten, except for the convention of including a quotation mark at the beginning of each paragraph. The story becomes a straightforward account of Rosa McCauley Parks' life story. As such, it is compelling. The KKK is mentioned early on, with dramatic descriptions of midnight raids that must have been terrifying to a black child growing up in the hostile environment of segregated Alabama. The book mentions torture, beatings and lynchings--quite graphic for a picture book. But it goes on to provide good, detailed biographical material on Rosa, from childhood into adulthood. It tells of her mother, Leona's, determination to have Rosa educated beyond the shamefully lacking, bare-minimum education provided for black children by the state of Alabama before 1960. At age eleven, Rosa went to a girl's school in Montgomery, and then "on to high school at Alabama State Teacher's College for Negroes," but was forced to drop out of school due to illness and death in the family. She did go on to get her diploma, but later on couldn't get a job that would utilize her skills. Meanwhile, she took a job at a department store, doing sewing and alterations. Here, the storyline gets a little disorganized. It gives an early account of discrimination by bus drivers and explains in detail some of the insults that black people were forced to endure under the segregation laws. This might be the perfect lead-in to Rosa's famous protest, but instead, the story jumps to Rosa's

marriage to Raymond Parks and goes off on a tangent about Mr. Parks' association with the NAACP. It details Rosa's attempts to get registered to vote and how she managed to do it. Then it jumps to the "fateful day" when Rosa Parks took "this very bus" and refused to give up her seat. Her arrest follows. The book once again bogs down in a quicksand of factual details of the Civil Rights movement, describing the efforts of the NAACP, the Women's Political Council, and local black ministers to organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott. It gets a little preachy. The young Dr. Martin Luther King and his speeches are mentioned, including his arrest and the bombing of his house as a result of his involvement in the boycott. This section barely maintains the book's pretext of being a picture book, once again sounding like a ninth-grade essay on Civil Rights. Finally, though, the storyline manages to straggle back to its simpler form and includes a few pages about freedom songs and birthday cakes. The illustrations are wonderfully rich in expressive color and soul. They beg for a simpler text. The positive thing about this book is that it is a good, factual, biographical account of the life of Rosa McCauley Parks, probably of interest to an older child who wants to make a study of the 1960's Civil Rights movement. It is a good reference work. Its failure is that it was published in a picture-book format that is too young for its ideal audience. It should have been a chapter book.

My 3 and 1/2 year old likes this book but it is a bit wordy and also gets into more advanced topics that I don't really want to get into now. I don't want her to read so much about African Americans as victims while she too young to understand more of the story. It is good - I just change some of the words while reading. As she gets older, I'll read it word for word.

I chose this book because it was recommended for children 5-9. My very intelligent 5 year old had to have MANY words defined for him and got little out of the story. I'm a social studies teacher, and when he recently noticed the difference in skin color, I sought out a book on civil rights to help him understand what had happened and how we are all the same. This book would have been much more appropriate for a 9 year old than for him.

My 4 year old son is really interested in history and has latched on to the story about Martin Luther King Jr. and how he changed the world. This story about Rosa Parks tells the whole story about how she came to be an activist and the impact her single act of passive resistance had on the civil rights movement. My son loved it when he could recognize King in the story. The talking bus makes this story magical and really appealing to children, my son will get it off the bookshelf and ask for it

to be read to him.

This book is a really good Biography for young children. If you are looking for a book that is age appropriate - this one is it! I especially appreciated the depiction of the Klu Klux Klan...so often children's biographies leave that part out...and it is reality!

My 7 year old read this book as one of this projects for February 2013 Black History month and loved it. He has quite the imagination so the thought of a bus talking thrilled him. He had actually seen this bus in Detroit's Henry Ford Museum, so it made the story more relevant to him. Great way to couple discussion of today's current events on news about some states' efforts to limit voting rights in 2013 with this historical lesson that showed when people limited rights to eat at lunch counters and to ride buses. Illustrations are great engaging. Highly recommend it.

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