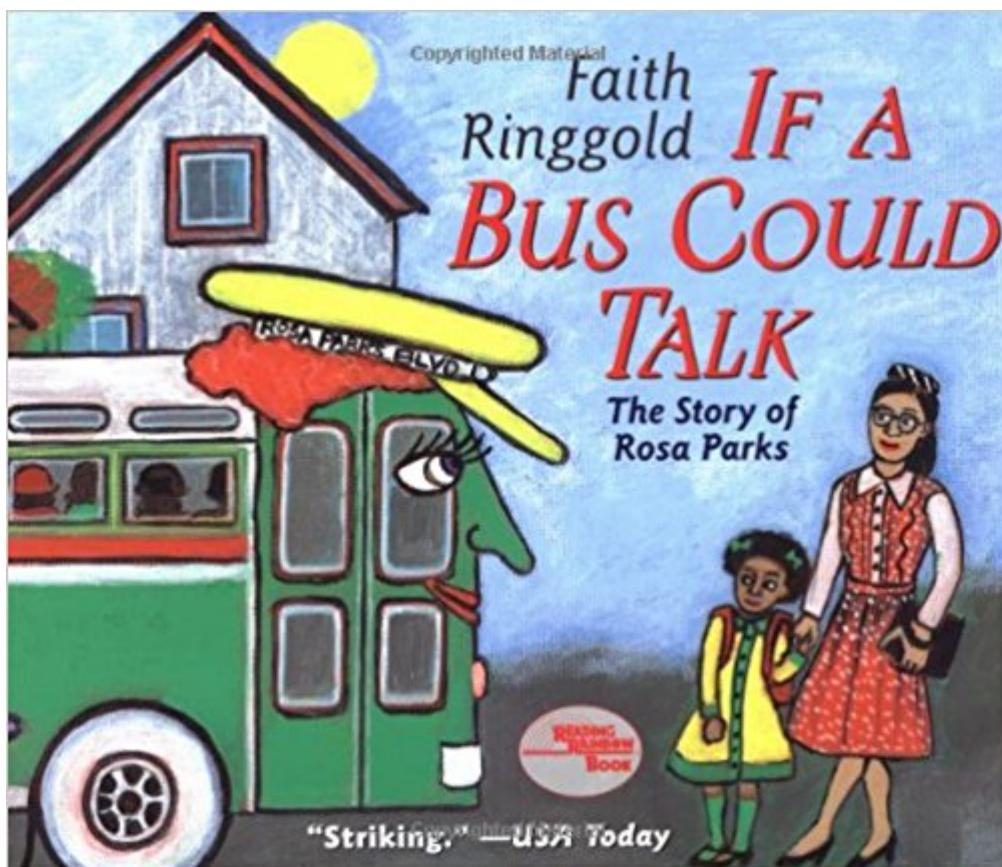


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# If A Bus Could Talk: The Story Of Rosa Parks



## **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**

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #53,216 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in Children's Books > Biographies > United States #54 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s #88 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## **Customer Reviews**

Underdeveloped poetic conceits short-circuit this profile of civil rights activist Rosa Parks. Marcie, an African-American child, is waiting for the bus to school when a strange bus pulls up; for some reason, she boards it. There is no driver, but the bus itself talks. It informs Marcie that she is riding on "the Rosa Parks bus," the very vehicle that Parks had been riding in 1955 when, refusing to give

up her seat to a white man, she helped trigger the Montgomery Bus Boycott. (In a bizarre irony, Marcie is made to give up her seat, which is ostensibly intended for Parks.) The bus then recounts Parks's childhood, education and tireless work as a civil rights activist; Marcie's fellow passengers serve as chorus, intermittently chiming in, "Amen! Amen!... We know, we were there." The account is full of hard-hitting information but suffers from confusing prose ("The Montgomery Bus Boycott was the beginning of a national movement in which people of every race organized protests against segregation in their own towns"). Finally, Parks boards the bus, and it emerges that Marcie's fellow riders include Parks's husband and Martin Luther King Jr.; in a throwaway ending, Marcie debarks at her school ("I can't wait to tell my class about this!"). Ringgold's paintings help animate this uneven tale, but a depiction of the bus with facial features, hair and hat compromises her powerful folk-art style. Other picture books chronicle Parks's life more lucidly; this is a disappointingly bumpy ride. Ages 5-9. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Kindergarten-Grade 4-A talking bus is literally the vehicle for this picture-book biography. Marcie, on her way to school, finds herself on a driverless bus occupied by a group of unfamiliar passengers who don't seem to notice she's there. A disembodied voice tells her that this used to be the Cleveland Avenue bus but is now the Rosa Parks bus, and then launches into an account of the woman's life. Ringgold recounts the dramatic events triggered by Parks's refusal to give up her seat: the Montgomery bus boycott; the leadership, persecution, and death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; the Supreme Court decision to ban bus segregation; and public recognition of the woman who started it all. The story ends when Parks herself enters the bus for a birthday celebration with the passengers who are now revealed as personages from her history. While the artifice of the talking bus and a few minor lapses in logic sometimes detract from a solid telling, the story does much to humanize a larger-than-life figure. Ringgold's colorful, textured acrylic-on-canvas paper paintings done in a *naïf* style are a perfect complement to the stark realism of the events and the simple dignity of the subject. Color and line are used to suggest ideas, such as the turbulent purple, black, blue, and chalky white and the jagged forms depicting the Ku Klux Klan and bombings. Text and art harmonize, with print changing from black to white and appearing on each page in an interesting variety of layouts. An accessible telling and beautiful illustrations result in a worthy contribution to this developing genre. Marie Orlando, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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.

Another hit for my granddaughter she really enjoyed reading this book.

Great book!

My 7 year old read this book as one of his 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 and engaging. Highly recommend it.

This is a great text to use on an elementary level, it teaches the literary skill flashback. The pictures are inviting and set the mood of events, that reflect Rosa Parks challenge. The text has sophisticated wording, hence, I suggest using it as a read aloud. Faith Ringgold, is a great author. I love her work, it's inviting, child friendly and very objective. A must have for a classroom and home library!

We wanted our 7 year-old grandson to understand racism and the book talked about it in such a child friendly manner.

Excellent historical biography; lovely illustrations! A wonderful introduction to two very important women - Rosa Parks and Faith Ringgold.

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