

# ZAMASAMA PRESENTS

A Guide for Teachers and Parents



Written by Pamela M. Tuck

Illustrated by Eric Velasquez

## THEMES

Biography

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)

Civil Rights Movement

Racial Bias & Inequality

# LEARNING OUTCOME

Children will:

- Understand the historical realities of racial segregation in education.
- Examine how internal and systemic biases impact individuals.
- Reflect on their own assumptions and attitudes toward difference.
- Be inspired by the quiet determination of those who seek justice peacefully.
- Discuss how talent and fairness should be recognized regardless of race or background.

## LESSON PLAN

This lesson explores how courage and intellect can confront inequality. Students analyze Mason’s experiences and consider where biases exist today—in themselves and society. Activities include reflective writing, classroom discussions on fairness, and creative projects imagining a world free of prejudice.

### Discussion Questions

#### Before Reading:

- What do you know about the Civil Rights Movement?
- What is ‘fairness’? Can you name a time when something felt unfair?
- Why might someone be judged for something beyond their control?

#### During Reading:

- How does Mason handle being left out or dismissed?
- What role does his father play in supporting him?
- Why is the typing contest such a big deal in the story?

#### After Reading:

- What barriers did Mason face—and how did he overcome them?
- What does this story say about how society treats people who are ‘different’?
- Reflect on your own biases: Are there times when you’ve made a judgment about someone based on their skin color, name, accent, clothes, or beliefs?
- How can we become more aware of our own biases—and begin to change them?

#### Activities:

- **Typing Tribute:** Hold a typing contest to honor Mason’s victory and explore typing as a skill.
- **Breaking Bias Journal:** Students reflect on where they see bias in the world and brainstorm ways to respond to it.
- **Civil Rights Timeline:** Build a timeline of major civil rights events to give historical context to Mason’s experience.
- **Speak Up Posters:** Create visual messages about standing up for others and fighting injustice peacefully.

## RELEVANT ZAMASAMA STORIES

- [White Socks Only](#) – A girl unknowingly confronts segregation in the Deep South
- [Catching the Moon](#) – A girl challenges gender and racial norms in baseball
- [Why is Nita Upside Down?](#) – Identity and self-worth despite difference
- [A Different Beat](#) – A child finds their rhythm in a world that sees them differently
- [Zanele Situ](#) – A disabled South African athlete defies limits with dignity

## RELEVANT SDGS

Applicable SDGs:

- SDG 4 – Quality Education
- SDG 5 – Gender Equality
- SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

### SDG Explanation

- SDG 4: Mason's access to education is shaped by race-based exclusion.
- SDG 5: Challenges stereotypes about who deserves success.
- SDG 10: Highlights racial injustice in schooling and workplace access.
- SDG 16: Advocates for fairness and equal opportunity through peaceful means.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Children will recognize that sadness, longing, and isolation are natural feelings when life changes suddenly. They'll explore how art, memory, and gentle guidance can support healing and help build new friendships. The story reinforces Zamasama's central message: despite different journeys and homes, we all share one common humanity.

## ABOUT ZAMASAMA

Zamasama is a nonprofit platform that brings together stories from around the world to help children discover that beneath our differences—of culture, language, or belief—we share the same hopes, joys, and dreams.

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens, and the responsibility of building a more peaceful, tolerant, and empathetic world lies with them.

That's why it's vital to instill these values early—through stories that help them rise above the biases they inherit, and see diversity as a strength that unites us all.