

ABOUT

the Author

CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD is the author of many books for children, including *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson, which was a Caldecott Honor book, and *Becoming Billie Holiday*, illustrated by Floyd Cooper, which was a 2009 Coretta Scott King Author Honor book. Carole makes her home in North Carolina.

the Illustrator

TIM LADWIG has previously illustrated other African American settings of biblical texts, *The Lord's Prayer* and *Psalm Twenty-Three*, as well as many other books for children, including *When Daddy Prays* by Nikki Grimes and *Good King Wenceslas* (all from Eerdmans). Tim lives in Kansas.



PRAISE FOR

The Beatitudes *From Slavery to Civil Rights*

“Regardless of race or religion, this is a book to share with today’s children who live in a discordant world too often lacking in kindness and civility.”

— *School Library Journal*

“Running along the bottom of the pages, the words serve as a refrain to punctuate Ladwig’s elegant watercolors and lend a dreamlike quality to the stirring depictions.”

— *Booklist*

THE BEATITUDES FROM SLAVERY TO CIVIL RIGHTS

Written by Carole Boston Weatherford
Illustrated by Tim Ladwig

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8½" x 11¼" ❖ 34 pages ❖ Ages 8–12

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with young readers,
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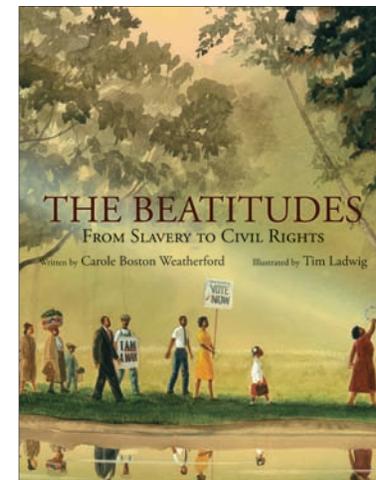
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This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer,
a literacy specialist and children’s author.



THE BEATITUDES FROM SLAVERY TO CIVIL RIGHTS

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Carole Boston Weatherford
Illustrated by Tim Ladwig



*I was with your ancestors and
I will be with your offspring,
standing on the side of justice.*

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ African American history
- ❖ American slavery
- ❖ Civil Rights Movement
- ❖ Social justice
- ❖ Hope

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Discussion Guide

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

1. Have you ever heard of the Beatitudes before? What words seem to be tucked inside this large word?

2. The subtitle tells us that this book involves the time period from “slavery to Civil Rights.” Do you think that was a long or short time? Why? How could this book be like a timeline?

3. Brainstorm a list of words that you think might appear in this story now that you know the topic and scope of the book.

4. What are the people carrying in the pictures on the cover? Why do you think the illustrator decided to include these items? What can they reveal about the story?



VOCABULARY

Try to define the following words from the story by the context of the sentences in which they are used. In other words, can you tell what they mean by the way they are used?

- bondage, barred, citizens, lynching, protester, heckled, demanded, oath, ancestors, offspring, downtrodden, humanity.

Or, create a graph that shows how much you understand each of these words: never heard it before, have seen it at least twice, could possibly use it in a sentence, could give you my own definition.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. Where do the Beatitudes originally come from? How does the author apply the Beatitudes to the African American experience?

2. Where did the struggle begin for African Americans? How were they “poor in spirit” during this time? What did God hear from them?

3. Who founded churches for African Americans? How did this help people to survive?

4. What guided Harriet Tubman? How are you guided on your own path to do what is right?

5. How is a lamp a symbol for knowledge in the book? Who lit it? Who lights the lamp of understanding for you?

6. Why did Marian Anderson have to sing at the Lincoln Memorial rather than a concert hall? Why do you think she sang at this particular memorial?

7. How is a boycott a peaceful way to show that something is unacceptable? Is it easy to be a peacemaker or not? Why? How can you be a peacemaker in your neighborhood and school?

8. What happened to some of the Civil Rights protesters? How were they persecuted? Would you be willing to face jail or physical abuse to stand up for what you believe in?

9. Could you be as brave as Ruby Bridges? Why were people so angry with her?

10. What promise is made on the final page of the book? How does this give you hope?



ACTIVITIES

1. At the end of the book the author includes short biographies of several African American leaders. Which one of these people would you like to know more about? How could you find out? Create a biography poster about one of these important people from history.

2. Create a piece of art that illustrates one of the Beatitudes using the history of your own family or community and write a short explanation inspired by the poetic wording of this book.

3. As African Americans struggled for their freedom and equality, many were guided by religious faith. This book suggests God’s presence in the ringing of bells, the light of a lamp, and the shoes of those marching in protests. This presence inspired leaders who struggled to make a difference in the world. Do you have a faith of your own that you draw on in your efforts to do what is right? Write a short poem describing your source of inspiration and hope in the choices you make each day.