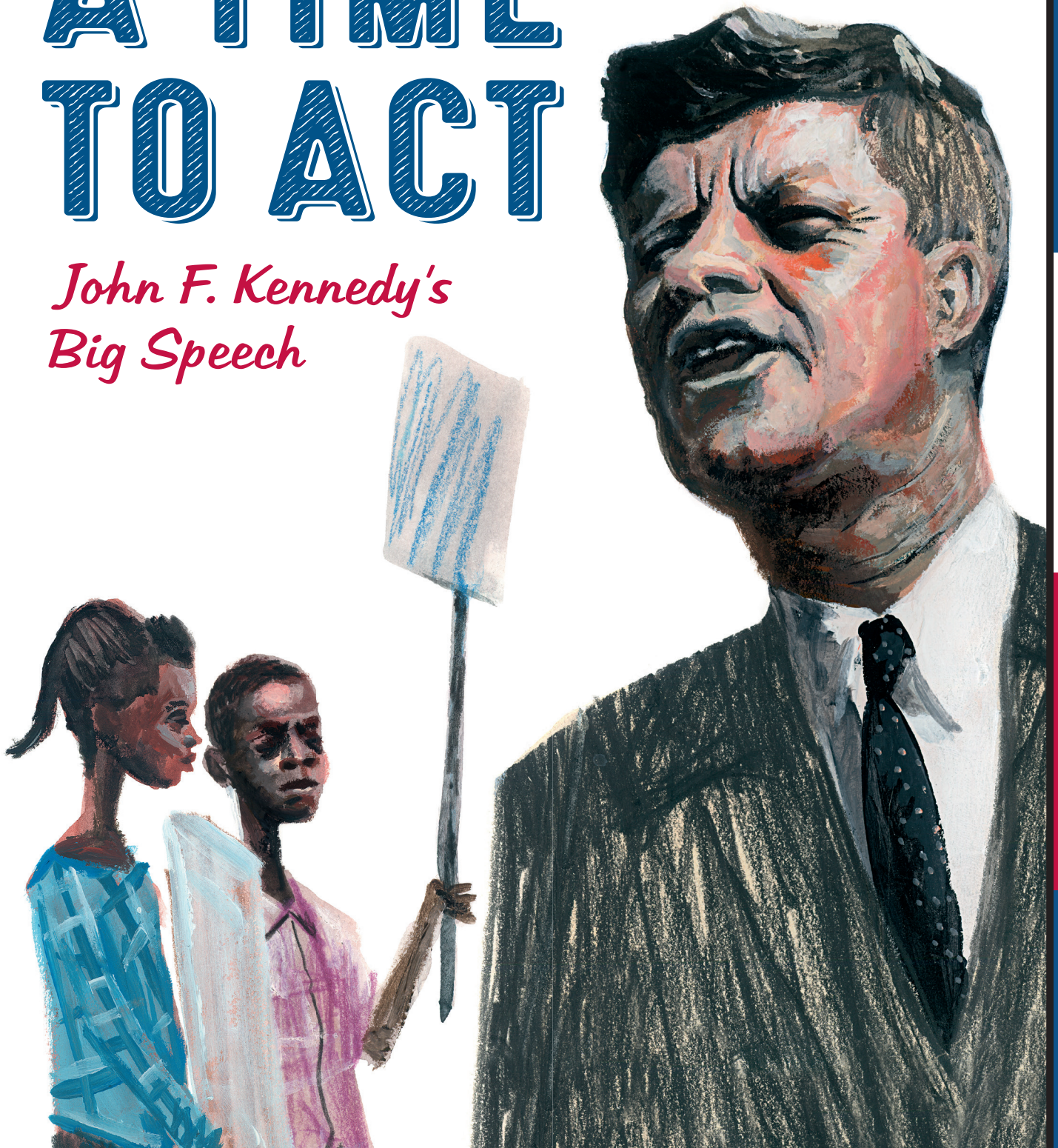


DISCUSSION GUIDE

Shana Corey • R. Gregory Christie

A TIME TO ACT

*John F. Kennedy's
Big Speech*



A TIME TO ACT *John F. Kennedy's Big Speech*

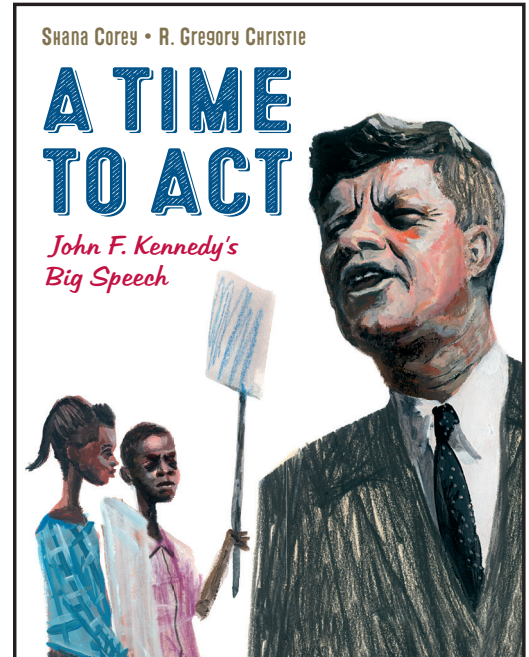
Discussion Guide

Prepared by Marla Conn MS., Ed.

Summary: John F. Kennedy was president during one of the most tumultuous times in American history and left many lasting legacies. *A Time to Act* opens our eyes to the difficult decisions JFK had to make regarding the progress of civil rights and how he responded to the conflicting opinions of equality in our country. "History is a conversation and we are part of it if we make our voices heard." When is the time to act?

Essential Questions- Connecting with our prior knowledge and experiences

1. Why should we study leaders of the past?
2. How can studying the past help us understand the present world and the future?
3. How can past events shape present and future events?
4. Why should we understand how people, places, and ideas have changed over time?
5. How have the actions, ideas, and values of people changed over time?
6. Is the world today a better place than the world of the past? Will our future world be better than today's world?
7. What is "social justice"?
8. Why and how do people struggle for social justice?
9. How does social justice relate to The Civil Rights Movement?
10. When you think about The Civil Rights Movement, who comes to mind? What are some important events in the movement that you know about?



978-0-7358-4275-5

Examine the cover illustration and title of the book. What was happening in the world?

Talk about what "A Time to Act" means in 1960 when John F. Kennedy was elected president. What was happening in the United States?

Read "A Time to Act" to find out about JFK; his lasting legacies and his role in the Civil Rights

Movement.

Who was John F. Kennedy?

Find passages in the story that show evidence of his character traits—*Articulate, underachiever, author, politician, soldier, hero, humorous, unhealthy, charismatic, humane, coward, honest, respected, young*

Explain how Kennedy handled social injustice during the early years of his political career.

Find examples from the story that show evidence that black people were “separate but equal”.

Is “separate but equal” freedom?

Why do you think JFK won the presidential election despite his beliefs that all Americans should be treated fairly and equal?.

What problems in the US did Kennedy face during his presidency and how did he respond? Explain whether you think his actions are just and fair. How did the American people respond to his decisions?

What were the interests and needs of diverse groups and individuals in regards to making progress on civil rights and how did President Kennedy respond to these often conflicting needs?

In your opinion, what are the forces that most influence positive social change?

What events ultimately led John F. Kennedy “to act”?
Why was it “*A Time to Act*”?

Debate-

Was JFK a civil rights leader or bystander?

Read the Author’s Note-

Why did Shana Corey and R. Gregory Christie write *A Time to Act*? Write an explanatory essay on why this book is so important.

What are the major themes and ideas in the book?

How has John F. Kennedy left his mark on our society?

Make “self to text” and “text to world” connec-



tions-

What did you find most interesting about the book?

What surprised or confused you?

Write down questions that you still have about The Civil Rights Movement and John F. Kennedy. Share

What were the goals of the civil rights movement during Kennedy's presidency? Discuss the key players from the story and why they were significant. What is your opinion of them?

How were their goals, challenges, and strategies tied to the specific time and place in they lived?

What changes would you like to make in your life and in the lives of people in your community? Why these changes? How will you go about trying to make these changes?

How do your goals, reasons, and strategies for achieving personal and social change compare and contrast to the goals and strategies of the people who joined the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

Find a current events article showing how social injustice is still alive in today's world

Write about someone who demonstrates courage.

Read this letter from Jackie Robinson and discuss why he wrote to President Kennedy:

<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/jackie-robinson/images/letter-1961-01.jpg>

Guided Reading Level -T

Grade level Equivalent- 5

Interest level- grades 2-6

The following instructional alignments are relevant to this Teacher Guide based on the Common Core State Standards

Reading Informational Text-

RI.5-8.1,2,3,4,6,7,10

Reading History- **RH.6-8.1,2,3,4,9,10**



Language Skills- L.5-8.3,4,5,6
Speaking & Listening Skills- SL.5-8.1,1c,1d,3,5,6
Writing Skills-W.5-8.1,2,3,4,7,8,9,10

About the Author:

Shana Corey has written several picture books, among them *Here Come the Girl Scouts!*, a New York Times Editors' Choice, *You Forgot Your Skirt*, *Amelia Bloomer*, which the New York Times called "a picture book girls are likely to love," and *The Secret Subway*, which Kirkus called "Absolutely wonderful in every way."

Learn more at shanacorey.com.

About the Illustrator:

R. Gregory Christie is a recipient of the Caldecott Honor, three-time recipient of the Coretta Scott King Honor Award for Illustration and a two-time recipient of the New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year Award. He's also a recipient of the NAACP's Image Award, The Boston Globe's Horn Book Award, and the American Library Associations' Theodore Seuss Geisel Award in Illustration. He lives in Georgia.

