“The Little Rock 9” Readers Theatre Script
Developed by Ms. Barry’s class with Educational Drama Specialist Mary Beth Bowen
Janney Elementary School * Washington, D.C.

GIRLS  Don’t let her in!  {Gesture}
BOYS    Get out of here!   {Gesture}
GIRLS   Go back to where you came from!

1 Fifty years ago,
2 An angry mob of whites
3 in Little Rock, Arkansas
4 screamed at a 15-year-old black
girl.
5 They were trying to keep her
6 out of the all-white Central High
School.
7 The name of the black teenage
girl was
ALL ELIZABETH ECKFORD
8 She, along with eight other
black students
9 became known as…
ALL THE LITTLE ROCK NINE.
10 They ended up as heroes
11 in a struggle against
12 segregation.
13 It was a time in America
14 when the entire South was
ALLSEGREGATED
15 Hold up!  {Gesture}
16 What does segregated mean?
17 I don’t know. {Gesture}
18 Remember in social studies
class?
19 Seeing those photographs with
signs that said
ALL WHITES ONLY {Gesture}
20 Blacks and whites could not
use the same bathrooms.
ALL NO WAY! {Gesture}

20 Drink from the same water
fountains.
ALL YOU’RE KIDDING!  {Gesture}
21 Or stay at the same hotels.
ALL THAT’S TERRIBLE!  {Gesture}
1 Oh yeah. I remember what
that was called – segregation.
ALL SEGREGATION {Gesture}
THE SEPARATION OF
BLACKS AND WHITES  {Gesture}
SO UNCOOL.  {Gesture}
2 Separate restaurants.
3 Separate swimming pools
4 Separate seating on buses,
trains and in movie theatres.
5 And worst of all, for black
children,
ALL SEPARATE SCHOOLS.
6 Were the schools for blacks
as good as the white ones?
ALL NO! {Gesture}
7 The black schools were
terrible.
8 Many of the black schools
had…
9 No indoor plumbing.
10 No desks.
11 Old textbooks
12 Dilapidated and overcrowded
buildings.
13 And no school buses.
14 Many blacks students had to
walk miles to get to school.
15 But then, in May of 1954

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16 The US Supreme Court rules that segregated public schools violate the rights of black students.

20 The case is called Brown versus the Board of Education.

21 And the Court orders that all public schools must be integrated! {Gesture}

1 That means blacks and whites will go to the same public schools.

2 But many whites in the south resist integration.

3 So the southern schools stay segregated.

4 But then, a civil rights group called the N-double-A-C-P starts to fight to enforce the integration law.

5 The N-double-A-C-P recruits black students in Little Rock, Arkansas, to integrate the all-white Central High School.

11 The N-double-A-C-P chooses black students - and parents - who it thinks will be strong enough to handle the pressure of integrating an all-white school.

15 September 4th, 1957.

16 It’s the first day of school for the Little Rock Nine.

18 The plan - was for all nine black students to arrive at the school together.

20 But there is a miscommunication…

21 and 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, arrives…at school…. by herself.

2 She is surrounded by an angry mob of several hundred whites.

4 They jeer at her and chant:

ALL TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT, WE DON’T WANT TO INTEGRATE. {Gesture}

5 Elizabeth looks for a kind face in the angry mob.

6 She sees an old lady who looks kind,

7 But the old lady spits at her.

8 Elizabeth tries to enter the school.

9 But the governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, has called out the Arkansas National Guard.

12 The soldiers, armed with guns, don’t let Elizabeth enter.

14 And when the other members of the Little Rock Nine arrive, the soldiers turn them away.

16 But three weeks later, the Little Rock Nine are finally allowed inside the school.

19 That’s because President Dwight D. Eisenhower… sends US Army soldiers… to escort the black students… into the school.

ALL THEY DID IT! {Gesture}

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But even though the Little Rock 9 had succeeded in integrating the school… the real torture was just beginning. Many white students began to torment the black students, hoping to drive them out of the school. And even though each black student had a US army soldier for protection, provided by President Eisenhower, the Army soldiers were reluctant bodyguards. The white students tortured the black students every day. Pushing them, Shoving them, Kicking them, Knocking them down, Spitting on them, The white kids would also step On the back of the black kids’ heels.

ALL THAT HURTS! {Gesture}

But despite all the physical and emotional torment,

the Little Rock Nine never told their parents about what was happening at school.

ALL WHY NOT? {Gesture}

Because if their parents had known the truth, they would have pulled them out of school.

Today, fifty years later, Every single one of the Little Rock Nine are still alive.

They are all successful.

When asked the question ALL WHY DID YOU PUT UP WITH ALL THAT SUFFERING? {Gesture}

They all point to something that Martin Luther King Junior told them… During that difficult year.

he said… ALL YOU’RE NOT DOING THIS FOR YOURSELVES.

{Gesture}

ALL YOU’RE DOING THIS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

{Gesture}