Celebrating Black History Month with ‘The First Rosa’

February is Black History Month, and with the release of the film “The First Rosa,” the time is right to use this film as a way to launch discussions about black history in your church, school and community. Need a few ideas on how “The First Rosa” can guide your conversations?

1. Use it as an introduction to the life of Rosa J. Young. Discuss her quote: “Do something worthy for mankind. Serve others. Do all you can do to uplift humanity. There is nothing more reputable to a race or nation than Christian service.” Discuss how this applied to Young and how it still applies to us today.

2. Read Young’s book, *Light in the Dark Belt*, to better understand her and her ministry. Even older children could read the book, or portions of the book, while younger children could read *Hero of Faith – Rosa Young*, which is meant for young readers.

3. Young used Bible verses at the start of each chapter in *Light in the Dark Belt*. Use these verses to discuss Young and her work, her faith and how God works in the lives of others.

4. Discuss the three main words that are repeatedly mentioned in the film: *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*. What do these words mean? How did they apply to Young’s life? Why did the film concentrate on those words? What do they mean for us?

5. Use the movie as an introduction to the contributions African-Americans have made to our country and world. You also can use the *Book of Black Heroes from A to Z* by Wade Hudson and Valerie Wilson Wesley as a resource for this information.

6. Read books about life in the South during Young’s time (1890–1971). You also can study what life was like for African-Americans in the South after the Civil War. How did the war impact them? What effect did it have on sharecroppers and their families?

7. Research and listen to “black spirituals,” discussing how spirituals are different from hymns and psalms because they were a way of sharing the hard conditions inherent in being a slave. Talk about the significant dual meaning found in the lyrics and their purpose for fugitive slaves.

8. Storytelling is a huge part of the African-American culture, and *Light in the Dark Belt* is Young’s story. Gather together to tell the stories of your grandparents, parents or guardians.

9. Use the film to learn about institutions like Concordia College Alabama in Selma, Ala.; the Concordia University System; Concordia Historical Institute; and the one school that is left from what Young and the pastors started. Consider supporting them financially through a service project.

10. Learn about cotton and its impact on the South. Discuss the boll weevil and how it devastated the cotton industry during Young’s time.