

Lesson plan from Mark Trushkowsky.

Keep on Stepping, adapted by Julius Lester

- 1) Have students read the story out loud
- 2) Ask someone to re-read the first paragraph. On the board write, Those Kinds of People. Ask students what kind of people the first paragraph is talking about. You might steer them to their own experiences to help them. If it comes up, ask why there are people like that. Record their responses on board or newsprint.
- 1) Read over their description and ask who in the folktale is like that. How is he like that?
- 2) Lead a discussion through the basics of the story. You might have a few students offer a three-sentence summary of what happened.
- 3) Write the words the master calls out to Dave as Dave is leaving the plantation. Ask the class if they think Dave believes the master. Ask them to explain what gives them that idea. This might be tricky, but it is worthwhile, because it is important for them to understand that though Dave is saying, “Yes”, he is not letting the master’s words affect him.
- 4) The following are group work, discussion questions to allow students to delve into certain aspects of the story.
 - a) **Where does the master’s power come from?**
 - b) **Where does Dave’s power come from?**
 - c) **What if Dave believes the things that the Master says?**
 - d) **What lessons does this story teach you?**
- 5) Bring the class back together and ask students to share their thoughts. Record their ideas on newsprint or on the board.

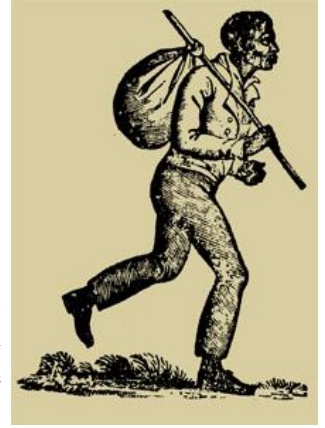
Possible Writing Topics

- a) Describe everything you remember about the day you left home. Who was there? Who was missing? What did they tell you? How did you feel?
- b) Describe an experience you had with “one of those people”. <<as flushed out in the first activity>> Why do you think that person treated you that way? What did you do? How do you feel about it today? What did you learn from that experience?
- c) Have you ever saved someone in trouble? What did you do? What did they do? What did you learn from that experience?

Keep on Walking

You know, some people are too much. You know the kind of people I mean. The kind of people who don't want you to succeed. For some reason they think that if you're successful, they won't be good anymore.

Back during slavery times, there was a black man named Dave. He was a slave on a farm in Tennessee. One day, he was out working in the field and he saw his master's two children out on a boat. They were *shouting*. The children were going to fall into the water and die.



Dave could have swam out to the boat and turned it over. He could have killed them, but Dave wasn't like that. He ran to the big house and told his master and mistress. The mistress shouted, "Someone please save my children!"

So Dave ran to the river, jumped in and saved the two children. The master was really happy. He said, "Well, slave, if you work hard for one more year, I'll give you your *freedom*."

That's the problem with some people. The master wouldn't give Dave his freedom when he saved the children. No. Dave had to save the children, plus work in the fields. If he did all that, he'd get his freedom. Dave thought he *deserved* to be free right then and there. But he worked hard that year. The farm was very successful, so the master called Dave into his house.

"Well Dave, I am *a man of my word*. Starting today, you are free man. I hate to give up a good slave like you, but I did promise."

He gave Dave some old clothes and a few other things. The children were crying and mistress was crying and master was crying a little himself. But Dave tied the clothes together and put them at the end of a stick, and started down the road. He was walking very slowly.

The master shouted to him, "Dave, the children love you." "Yes, sir," Dave said. "Dave, I love you." "Yes, sir." "Mistress likes you, too." "Yes, sir." "But remember, Dave, you are free, but you are still not as free as white people."

The master stood on the porch, shouting, "Dave! The children love you. I love you. And mistress likes you, too. But remember, Dave, you will never be as free as white people are!"

Dave shouted back, "Yes, sir!" but he kept walking until he got to Canada. There was no slavery in Canada. Even though his master had set Dave's body free, the master tried to make him feel like he was still a slave by saying, "You are not as free as white people are."

You are not free when someone else is telling you who you are. We have people today who walk around like slaves because they let other people tell them who they are. But you should be like Dave. Just keep walking when you know you are right. It doesn't matter what people shout after you. Just keep on walking.

Vocabulary

1. *shout* – verb – When you speak loudly because you're very angry or afraid.
2. *freedom* – noun – The noun for "free." "Freedom is important for everyone to have."
3. *deserve* – verb – What you should get. "I deserve a break because I work hard."
4. *a man of my word* – noun – Someone who does what they say.

Questions

1. Why did Dave save the master's children?



2. Why did the master say Dave could be free if he worked hard for the rest of the year?

3. Why did the master say, “You are not as free as white people are”?

4. What kind of person was Dave? What kind of person was the master?

5. Do you ever feel like Dave? When?