



DISCOVER FINDING NORTH

ABOUT FINDING NORTH



Finding North is a one-man play drawn from historical research that brings to the stage a daring adventure of African American Underground Railroad hero John P. Parker. Parker's tale is intercut with interview material from people who tell their stories of searching for haven in modern day America. Commissioned to celebrate the opening of the Underground Railroad National Freedom Center, Finding North is performed by Daniel Carlton, with guitar accompaniment by the play's author, David Gonzalez.

Voices Behind Finding North

Daniel Carlton is a multiple award-winning Harlem based Actor, Storyteller, Playwright, Poet, Director, and Teaching Artist who has appeared on New York, national, and

international stages. His work has also been presented in schools, jails, homeless shelters, libraries, and every imaginable place to perform. He writes poetic plays that look at history, particularly African American history in interactive, fun, and detailed ways. Daniel is the lead performer in *Finding North*.

David Gonzalez is an award-winning writer, storyteller, and musician. Mr. Gonzalez is the recipient of the International Performing Arts for Youth "Lifetime Achievement Award for Sustained Excellence". David received his doctorate in Music Therapy from New York University. He has written plays, musicals, poetry, and even opera libretto. He is the author and musician behind *Finding North*.

HOW FINDING NORTH CAME TO BE

Finding North began with an invitation from **The Underground Railroad National Freedom Center** and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park to write a play to commemorate the opening of the museum and the story of conductor, **John P. Parker**.

Check out [this video](#) of David Gonzalez talking about his journey in developing the performance.

Cover Photo: David Schell

FINDING NORTH CHARACTERS

John P. Parker – Guides the mcdowell family to freedom

Sylvia – A Guatemalan woman tells of crossing the mexican american border

Yusuf – A Pakistani teen shares what happened to him after the 9/11 attacks

Erika – A Hungarian Jewish woman tells a holocaust story

Grandpa – Recounts what he saw when a mob attacked his family

Daniel – Shares what happened to him on the streets of New York City

HISTORY BEHIND FINDING NORTH

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, in Cincinnati, Ohio, is a world-class museum that stands as a monument to freedom. Through telling the story of the Underground Railroad it brings to life the importance, and relevance, of struggles for freedom around the world. FINDING NORTH was written to celebrate its opening.

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

John P. Parker

John Parker was an American abolitionist, inventor, and industrialist. Parker helped hundreds of slaves to freedom in the Underground Railroad resistance movement based in Ripley, Ohio. He saved and rescued fugitive slaves for nearly fifteen years. He was reputedly responsible for the rescue of nearly 1,000 enslaved people between 1845 and 1865. (Blackpast.com)



THEMES AND EVENTS REFERENCED IN THE PERFORMANCE

1. **Underground Railroad:** The Underground Railroad was a network of people, African American as well as white, offering shelter and aid to escaped enslaved people from the South. It developed as a convergence of several different clandestine efforts. The exact dates of its existence are not known, but it operated from the late 18th century to the Civil War, at which point its efforts continued to undermine the Confederacy in a less secretive fashion.
2. **Freedom:** liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another.
3. **Injustice:** lack of fairness or justice.
4. **9/11 Attacks:** "9/11" is shorthand for four coordinated terrorist attacks carried out by al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist group, that occurred on the morning of September 11, 2001. Nineteen terrorists from al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial airplanes, deliberately crashing two of the planes into the upper floors of the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center complex and a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The Twin Towers ultimately collapsed because of the damage sustained from the impacts and the resulting fires. The attacks killed 2,977 people from 90 nations.
5. **Holocaust:** destruction or slaughter on a mass scale, especially caused by fire or nuclear war. The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews by the Nazi German regime and its allies and collaborators. The Holocaust was an evolving process that took place throughout Europe between 1933 and 1945.
6. **Human Migration:** The movement of a person or people from one country, locality, place of residence, etc., to settle in another
7. **Mexican American Border:** the international land and river boundary, stretching almost 2,000 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, separating the U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas from the Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. This border, defined by agreements in the 19th century, primarily follows the Rio Grande River in its eastern portion and is a major focus of discussions surrounding immigration, trade, and national security.

Website: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Oxford Dictionary, 911 Memorial Museum, History.com, Merriam Webster dictionary

POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

After attending the School Day Live program with your students, use these suggested classroom activities to help them explore and engage with the themes presented in the performance.

MATCH THE STORIES TO THE FEELING THAT THE CHARACTERS' JOURNEYS ENCOMPASSED

Stories

1. John P. Parker
2. Sylvia (Guatemalan American)
3. Yusef (Pakistani American)
4. Erika (Jewish American)
5. Grandpa (African American)
6. Daniel (African American)

Finding North Feelings

- ____ Vigilance
- ____ Self empowerment
- ____ Kindness
- ____ Goodness
- ____ Safety
- ____ Freedom



Map courtesy of Harriet Tubman Historical Society

DISCUSS FINDING NORTH USING THIS TIMELINE

What does **freedom** mean to you?

Discuss the **social justice issues** that were highlighted in the performance

Identify communal assets you have to **address contemporary social justice issues**

10 min

10 min

10 min

15 min

15 min

Which story resonated with you the most?
Share why.

Identify and discuss how the **assets of the character** and/or community addressed the challenges/issues.



ACTIVITY - EXAMINING METAPHORS

A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things. As a literary device, metaphor creates implicit comparisons without the express use of “like” or “as.” Metaphor is a means of asserting that two things are identical in comparison rather than just similar. This is useful in literature for using specific images or concepts to state abstract truths.

Example of Metaphors:

- The taste of Dino's bread was the warmth of home.
- The shouting was a raging fire of hatred.

“Finding North” is a metaphor for the characters’ search for Freedom. What is a metaphor for something you might want to accomplish? How can you incorporate that metaphor in a story you might like to tell?”

ACTIVITY - WRITE A MONOLOGUE

A dramatic monologue is a speech in which a character reveals their feelings, inner thoughts, or motivations. Unlike a soliloquy, which is a private speech in which a character addresses themselves, a dramatic monologue is addressed to another character or to the audience.

Watch [this video](#) to hear from David Gonzalez on the 5 Elements of a Monologue:

To Write Your Own Finding North Monologue follow these instructions:

1. Identify your Finding North metaphor
2. Listen to [David's Five Elements](#)
3. Complete the [graphic organizer](#) identifying your five elements
4. Write a short monologue
5. Share

ACTIVITY - CREATE AN ADVOCACY VIDEO

1. Pick an issue that you feel passionate about fixing.
2. Research the issue: Identify the underlying causes; its history and its present existence in your community or the world.
3. Create a (3-4 min.) “What you Should Know About...” Video to advocate for social transformation on Flipgrid or your mobile device.

Considerations:

Try using these leading statements and prompts to help create a script:

- I am... (say something about who you are)
- I care about... (describe the issue)
- Add information on what you care about...
- Tell a story of what people are doing, and what you can do to make change.

Use the five senses to engage your audience. The goal is to build awareness through more than statistical facts. Advocate by having them connect through the senses. Appeal to the humanity of your audience to champion the “North” you are seeking, and to encourage involvement.



ACTIVITY: WRITE A FREEDOM SONG

Songs have been written to advocate for freedom throughout history, including biblical times, the enslavement period, the civil rights movement, the Chicano Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Instructions:

1. Collectively, choose a melody to a familiar song or create an original rhythmic beat.
2. Review “Finding North” feelings you discussed or discovered during your THINK activities, including metaphors, issues, assets and impacts.
3. Create a freedom song with new chorus and verses.

ACTIVITY: CREATE A CLASS PROVERB BOOK

In the play, Yusuf’s grandmother said, “Throw yourself into goodness with abandon. Keep love in your heart.” We all grow up hearing proverbs from our elders. What were the proverbs you grew up hearing and what did they mean?

Instructions:

1. Identify family proverbs, or sayings, that speak to your family and community values.
2. Collect these proverbs to create a Book of Proverbs.
3. Share this Book of Proverbs with friends and family.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Video Resources:

[Rise For Freedom Video](#)
[John P. Parker Video #1](#)
[John P. Parker Video #2](#)
[Harriet Tubman Video](#)
[Slave Narrative Video](#)

Reading Resources

[His Promised Land: The Autobiography Of John P. Parker](#), John P. Parker

[Ninth Ward](#), Jewell Parker Rhodes

[A Long Walk To Water](#), Linda Sue Park

[Brown Girl Dreaming](#), Jacqueline Woodson

[Maus: A Survivor’s Tale](#), Art Spiegelman

[Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary](#), Walter Dean Myers

Website Links

SOCIAL JUSTICE
www.Tolerance.org

[Teaching Social Justice in Theory and Practice](#)

LANGUAGE ARTS

[Teaching Through Metaphor and Analogy](#)

[Monologue Unit](#)

Professional Development for Teachers

[8 Metaphors for a Teacher](#)

