



The March of the Mill Children
Philadelphia to New York, 1903



Artwork by Leah Parsons Cook

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The March of the Mill Children, Philadelphia, PA, to New York, 1903

In 1903, two hundred children marched 130 miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to President Theodore Roosevelt's summer house in Oyster Bay, New York. Their demand? They wanted to go to school. Even where it was against the law, children as young as 5-6 years old were working 11-15 hours per day in mills, factories, and mines. Many lost fingers, limbs, or even their lives in workplace accidents. Parents and labor activists accompanied the young marchers, including the feisty organizer "Mother" Mary Harris Jones. In cities and towns, they gave speeches and held rallies calling for their rights to receive education and be protected from exploitation, injury, and harm. Although President Roosevelt refused to meet with them, the March of the Mill Children propelled the issue of child labor to national attention. In 1915, Pennsylvania established a minimum working age of 14. In 1916, the first federal labor law was passed.

Look Closer! Check out these details:

- Why is that girl's arm in a sling? Many children were injured and maimed at work, including losing fingers and limbs.
- How many stars are on the flag? 48. In 1903, Alaska and Hawaii were not part of the United States.
- Who's that woman in the middle? Mary Harris Jones, known as Mother Jones, was a feisty 65-year-old, Irish-American labor organizer and a key organizer of the march.
- How young is that little girl? Children as young as 5 or 6 were working in the mills, mines, and factories, even where laws forbid the owners from using them.
- Why does that man have a drum? Historical photos of the marchers show that they played drums as they went through towns and cities.
- What does the sign say? "We Want To Go To School" and "More Schools, Less Injuries" are actual slogans from the campaign.

Discussion Questions:

- These children are marching for the right to go to school. Imagine if you had to work in a factory from 7 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock in the evening. Would you join the march for the right to go to school?
- What is the difference between doing chores at home and child labor?
- Where in the world do you think child labor is still taking place today? How about in your own country?
- How are young people still discriminated against in our society?
- How young is the youngest person in this picture? How about the oldest? What do we gain from working with people of different ages?

Find more information, discussion questions, articles, documentaries, and more at:

www.paceebene.org/coloring-pages

**Artwork by Leah Parsons Cook
A project of Pace e Bene/Campaign Nonviolence**

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