

# Was the Civil Rights Movement a Success?

This package will help you understand the historical importance of the 20th century African American struggle for civil rights in the United States. After the Civil War ended in 1865, the future of the nation, and the future of African Americans, were still undecided. The fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution seemed to promise that African Americans would be full citizens and discrimination based “on race, color, or previous condition of servitude” would end.

However, in the 1890s, “Jim Crow” segregation and “Separate but Equal” laws were accepted as both the custom and the law of the land. It was not until the 1954 *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education* decision that the Supreme Court of the United States declared “separate but equal” public schools inherently unequal and a violation of the United States Constitution.

Historians do not always agree about when the Civil Rights Movement began and which events to include. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, started to challenge segregation laws in the courts at the beginning of the 20th century. As a result of complaints by African Americans during World War II, the United States armed forces and major league baseball were both desegregated after the war.

Many people date the modern Civil Rights movement from the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. It was during this campaign that the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as a national figure in the United States.

The best known events in the struggle for Civil Rights took place in the United States South. But Civil Rights workers also fought for equal rights for African Americans in the North and New York City.

Much changed in the United States as a result of the Civil Rights movement; much did not change. At the beginning of this unit your class will discuss whether the Civil Rights movement was a success. At the end of the unit you will write an essay. In the essay you will explain whether, in your opinion, the Civil Rights movement should be considered successful. You should base your essay answer on discussion in class. In your essay you must refer to at least eight (8) documents from this package.

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## Activity Sheet 1. What was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Dream?

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Speaks at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC August 1963.**



A. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed (beliefs) --- "We hold these these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal."

B. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, . . . will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

C. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, . . . will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

D. And if America is to be a great nation this must come true. So let freedom ring . . . From every mountainside, let freedom ring. When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

### Questions

1. According to Dr. King, what is the true meaning of the American creed?
2. What does Dr. King hope for his own children?
3. In your opinion, can "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers" without prejudice in the United States today?

## Activity Sheet 2: Songs of the Civil Rights Movement

### **WE SHALL OVERCOME**

We shall overcome / We shall overcome / We shall overcome some day

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

We'll walk hand in hand / We'll walk hand in hand / We'll walk hand in hand some day

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

We shall all be free / We shall all be free / We shall all be free some day

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

We are not afraid / We are not afraid / We are not afraid some day

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

We are not alone / We are not alone / We are not alone some day

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

The whole wide world around / The whole wide world around / The whole wide world around some day.

Chorus: Oh deep in my heart / I do believe / We shall overcome some day

We shall overcome / We shall overcome / We shall overcome some day

### **OH FREEDOM**

Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me

And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave

And go home to my Lord and be free

No more mourning, no more mourning, no more mourning over me

And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave

And go home to my Lord and be free

No more crying, no more crying, no more crying over me

And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave

And go home to my Lord and be free

There'll be singin', there'll be singin', there'll be singin' over me

And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave

And go home to my Lord and be free

Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me

And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave

And go home to my Lord and be free

### **KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE**

Paul and Silias, Bound in jail, Got to money, For to pay the bail.

Keep your eyes on the prize, Hold on, hold on.

Chorus: Hold on, hold on, Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

The only thing we did right , Was the day we began to fight.

Keep your eyes on the prize, Hold on, hold on. Chorus.

The only thing that we did wrong, Stayed in the wilderness a day too long.

Keep your eyes on the prize, Hold on, hold on. Chorus.

The only chain that we can stand, Is the chain of hand in hand.

Keep your eyes on the prize, Hold on, hold on. Chorus.

### Activity Sheet 3. Was the Civil Rights Movement a Success?

#### Instructions:

1. Working in a team or a pair, examine the documents. Working together, write a brief sentence explaining the significance of the information in the document.
2. Working individually, write a paragraph answering the question: Was the Civil Rights movement successful? In your paragraph, use information from the documents, what you know about United States history and what you know about the Civil Rights movement.

#### DOCUMENT A. SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954), BY MR. CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN.

“Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. . . . In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, . . . is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. . . . We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

#### DOCUMENT B. CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964.

“To enforce the constitutional right to vote, . . . to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, . . . to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. . . .”

#### DOCUMENT C. CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Year	Life Expectancy for Black Men	Average income for Black Families	African Americans Living in Poverty
1969/1970	60.0 years		38%
1980/1981	64.1 years	\$26,000	36%
1990/1991	64.6 years	\$28,000	24%
1998	67.6 years	\$34,000	

### Activity Sheet 4. Was the Civil Rights Movement a Success?

**Instructions:**

1. Working in a team or a pair, examine the documents. Working together, write a brief sentence explaining the significance of the information in the document.
2. Working individually, write a paragraph answering the question: Was the Civil Rights movement successful? In your paragraph, use information from the documents, what you know about United States history and what you know about the Civil Rights movement.

**DOCUMENT A. "JIM CROW JUSTICE ALIVE AND WELL IN AMERICA TODAY?", ACLU, 2001**

"Racial profiling" occurs when the police target someone for investigation on the basis of that person's race, national origin, or ethnicity. Examples of profiling are the use of race to determine which drivers to stop for minor traffic violations and the use of race to determine which motorists or pedestrians to search for contraband. Racial profiling is prevalent in America. Despite the civil rights victories of 30 years ago, official racial prejudice is still reflected throughout the criminal justice system. . . . Today skin color makes you a suspect in America. It makes you more likely to be stopped, more likely to be searched, and more likely to be arrested and imprisoned."

**DOCUMENT B. The New York Times, THE DIALLO LEGACY, February 27, 2000**

"The death of Amadou Diallo last year became a defining event for the New York Police Department. The shooting of the unarmed West African immigrant by four white officers spurred protests, prompted various examinations of the department's admittedly aggressive tactics, and attracted so much attention that police officials blamed the news media for what they said was a sudden timidity among the rank-and-file. On Friday, a jury in Albany capped a riveting and often tense trial by finding the four officers not guilty of murder and several lesser charges. . . . The Diallo family, dismayed by the verdict, is expected to file a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against the city. The state attorney general's office is critically examining the department's "stop-and-frisk" policy."

**DOCUMENT C. COMPARING CONDITIONS FOR AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN AMERICANS?**

<b>Life Expectancy, 1998</b>	<b>Average Income for Families, 1998</b>	<b>People Living in Poverty, 1998</b>
<b>White Men, 74.5 years</b>	<b>White Families, \$52,000</b>	<b>10% of White people</b>
<b>Black Men, 67.6 years</b>	<b>Black Families, \$34,000</b>	<b>24 % of Black people</b>

## Activity Sheet 5. The Rights of African Americans in Post-Civil War America

1. The Fourteenth Amendment, 1868: No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."
2. Supreme Court decision, Civil Rights Cases, 1883: The court holds that the 14th Amendment applies only to state action. Individual invasion of individual rights is not the subject of the Amendment. The wrongful act of an individual, unsupported by any such state authority, is simply a private wrong.
3. Justice Harlan Dissents, 1883: "In every material sense, railroad corporations, keepers of inns, and managers of public amusement are agents or instrumentalities of the state, because they are charged with public duties ... a denial to the citizen, because of his race, of that equality of civil rights secured to him by law, is a denial by the state."
4. Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896: "The underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument consists in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it ... The argument also assumes that social prejudice may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the Negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition ... If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."
5. Justice Harlan dissents, 1896: "It seems that we have yet, in some of the states, a dominant race, a superior class of citizens, which assumes to regulate the enjoyment of civil rights, common to all citizens, upon the basis of race ... We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people ... but it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of the law which, practically, put the brand of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens."
6. Chief Justice Warren, Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education, 1954: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational activities? We believe that it does ... To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to be undone."
7. President Eisenhower, 1957: "The federal law and orders of a United States District Court, implementing that law, cannot be flouted with impunity by any individual or any mob of extremists ... I will use the full power of the United States, including whatever force may be necessary to prevent any obstruction of the law ... Such obstruction of justice constitutes a denial of the equal protection of the laws secured by the Constitution of the United States."
8. Civil Rights Act of 1964: "An act to enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunities, and for other purposes."

### Activity Sheet 6. A TIMELINE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

African Americans Struggle for Equality	Other Events in the United States
1910. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is organized to struggle for civil rights in the United States.	1910. William H. Taft is President. The Boy Scouts of America are founded. Women campaign for the right to vote.
1948. Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP launches a legal attack on school segregation.	1948. Harry S. Truman is elected President. Segregation ends in the American armed forces.
1955. Start of the Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott	1955. Dwight Eisenhower is President. The Brooklyn Dodgers win the World Series.
1960. Black students begin to "sit-in" at segregated lunch counters.	1960. John F. Kennedy defeats Richard M. Nixon and is elected President.
1961. Interracial teams of Freedom Riders challenge segregated buses and terminals	1961. The U.S. supports an invasion of Cuba that fails. The Yankees win the World Series.
1962. James Meridith integrates the University of Mississippi.	1962. School prayers declared unconstitutional. U.S. blockades Cuba to block Soviet nuclear missiles.
1963. Campaign to integrate Birmingham, Alabama. March on Washington for Civil Rights	1963. President Kennedy is murdered in Texas. Lyndon Johnson is new President.
1964. Freedom Summer. Student campaign to register black voters in the south. Martin Luther King, Jr. wins Nobel Peace Prize.	1964. U.S. troops and war ships are in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. Lyndon Johnson is elected President.
1968. Martin Luther King, Jr. is murdered while organizing sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee.	1968. Richard M. Nixon is elected President. Many Americans protest against the War in Vietnam.

### Activity Sheet 7. CHANGES IN THE LAW IN THE UNITED STATES

- 1896- In Plessy v. Ferguson decision the Supreme Court declares that segregation is legal. "Separate but Equal" becomes the law of the United States.
- 1954- In Brown v. the Topeka, Kansas Board of Education, the Supreme Court declares that segregated schools can never be equal.
- 1957- President Eisenhower sends federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas to protect black students integrating Central high School.
- 1957- The first Civil Rights law is passed since just after the Civil War. It sets up a commission to investigate violations of civil rights.
- 1961- Federal Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity will encourage companies that do business with the federal government to hire black employees.
- 1964- The 24th amendment to the Constitution outlaws poll taxes in federal elections. Taxes on voting was a way that southern states tried to prevent poor blacks from voting.
- 1964- Civil Rights Act prohibits (prevents) segregation in public accommodations and employment.
- 1965- Voting Rights Act: the federal government will protect the right of blacks and other minorities to register and vote.

### Activity Sheet 8. Why We Broke The Law

Students should read and discuss these personal testimonies from participants in the civil rights movement. The testimonies are from Black and White people who risked their lives for the idea of racial equality.

#### A) Rosa Parks Sits Down, Montgomery, Alabama, 1955

The Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott began in December, 1955 and lasted for more than a year. It ended when the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that segregation on the buses took away rights promised in the Constitution of the United States. The city of Montgomery finally agreed to allow equal rights in sitting on the buses and to hire black drivers. During this boycott, a young minister named Martin Luther King, Jr. first became well known.

**Rosa Parks** (Black woman): "Having to take a certain section (on the bus) because of your race was humiliating, but having to stand up because a particular driver wanted to keep a white person from having to stand was, to my mind, most inhumane.

Over the years, I had had my own problems with the bus drivers. In fact, some did tell me not to ride their buses if I felt that I was too important to go to the back door to get on. One had evicted me from the bus in 1943.

On December 1, 1955, I had finished my day's work as a tailor's assistant and I was on my way home. There was one vacant seat on the Cleveland Avenue bus, which I took, alongside a man and two women. On the third (stop), the front seats were occupied and this one man, a white man, was standing. The driver asked us to stand up and let him have those seats, and when none of us moved at his first words, he said, "You all make it light on yourselves and let him have those seats."

When the driver saw me still sitting, he asked if I was going to stand up and I said, "No, I'm not." And he said, "Well, if you don't stand up, I'm going to call the police and have you arrested."

I said, "You may do that".

He did get off the bus, and I still stayed where I was. Two policemen came on the bus. One policeman asked me if the bus driver had asked me to stand and I said yes.

He said, "Why don't you stand up?"

And I asked him, "Why do you push us around?"

He said, "I do not know, but the law is the law and you're under arrest."

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom* (Bantam, New York, 1990) p. 19-20.

#### B) Students Sit-In For Integration, 1960

In February, 1960, students began to "sit-in" at racially segregated lunch counters and restaurants all across the south. Black students and white students who opposed segregation joined together in these protests. In Nashville, Tennessee, and other cities students received training in nonviolent civil disobedience to prepare them for the "sit-ins". Many of the sit-ins were organized by CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality.

**Leo Lillard** (Black man): "When I was a boy, Nashville was clearly a divided town. I was always curious to know why it was segregated. One day, we were at a (store) and it had these beautiful marble fountains. One said 'Colored' and one said 'White'. And being the kind of kid I was, I went over to both fountains, tasted the water, and told my mother, 'Tastes the same to me, Mom.'"

The boycott of Nashville primarily focused on the downtown stores. We figured if they would feel the pinch of not having shoppers buy in the stores, then they would put pressure on the mayor to change the rules. Students were the vanguard (leaders), but it was clear that the town had declared war on racism.

**Margaret Leonard** (White woman): "The policeman led me and the two Negroes at the white counter out of the store, past a lot of staring people, and put us in a car to go to the police station. Several policemen then talked to me. One asked me if I was a southern girl. I said yes. I was raised in Macon, Georgia, and Atlanta. He asked why, as a southern girl, I was doing this, and I said something about wanting to demonstrate how I felt about discrimination. Everybody I talked to seemed surprised that I was an authentic southern girl. The police finally told me to go back to my minister and think very seriously before I ever did this again."

Steven Cohen, ed., *Eyes on the Prize Sourcebook*, p. 22-24.

### C) Freedom Riders, 1961

In 1961, CORE and other civil rights groups began to organize racially integrated groups to challenge racial segregation on buses in the south. Buses and Freedom Riders were attacked by mobs. Outside of Anniston, Alabama, one bus was set on fire.

**John Lewis** (Black man): "This group of thirteen Freedom Riders, seven blacks and six whites, had a dinner at a Chinese restaurant in Washington, D.C. It was my first time having Chinese food. To me this meal was like the Last Supper, because you didn't know what to expect going to the Freedom Ride."

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom* (Bantam, New York, 1990) p. 76-77.

### D) Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964

In 1964, large numbers of black and white students were recruited by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to go to Mississippi to challenge segregation by registering black people to vote. Three young civil rights workers, one black and two white, were murdered in the summer of 1964. They were James Chaney from Mississippi and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner from the north.

**Unita Blackwell** (Black woman): "We had heard that there were supposed to be these Freedom Riders coming to Mississippi. Nobody thought they would show up, you know. And then they showed up. It was two guys, two black fellows. Two Freedom Riders came to Sunday school that morning. (They said) God help those who help themselves, you can help yourself by trying to register to vote. That's the first time in my life that I ever come in contact with anybody that tells me that I had the right to register to vote."

For black people in Mississippi, Freedom Summer was the beginning of a whole new era. People began to feel that they wasn't just hopeless anymore, that they had come together. Black and white had come from the North and from the West and even from some cities in the South.

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom* (Bantam, New York, 1990) p. 179-193.

**Peter Orris** (White man): I grew up in New York City. I had been raised in a family where being Jewish was important in terms of identifying with the underdog, with people who were suffering repression and discrimination.

Three civil rights workers -- Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner -- had disappeared. Our reaction was horror. Following the disappearance of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, there was a decision that those of us that were going to go to the southwest area of Mississippi shouldn't go right away, because the situation was too tense and the possibility of mass violence and many more deaths was present. So they decided that we should go to Holmes County in the Delta and do voter registration there.

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom* (Bantam, New York, 1990) p. 186-191.

## Activity Sheet 9. A Conversation with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

### A) Where do the ideas of non-violent civil disobedience come from?

"From the beginning a basic philosophy guided the (civil rights) movement. This guiding principle has since been referred to variously as non-violent resistance, non-cooperation, and passive resistance. But in the first days of protest none of these expressions was mentioned; the phrase most often heard was "Christian love." ...It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love.

As the days unfolded, however, the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi (a leader in the struggle for independence in India) began to exert its influence. I had come to see early that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent (powerful) weapons available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom."

From Martin Luther King, Jr., Stride Toward Freedom, reprinted in A Last Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., ed. James M. Washington (Harper San Francisco, 1991) p. 447

- 1- According to Dr. King, what ideas provided the "philosophy" of the civil rights movement?
- 2- According to Dr. King, where do these ideas originate?

### B) Isn't it wrong to break the law?

"We must never forget that everything that Hitler did in Germany was "legal." It was illegal to aid and comfort a Jew, in the days of Hitler's Germany. But I believe that if I had the same attitude then as I have now I would publicly aid my Jewish brothers in Germany....Our nation in a sense came into being through a massive act of civil disobedience for the Boston Tea Party was nothing but a massive civil disobedience. Those who stood up against the slave laws, the abolitionists, by and large practiced civil disobedience. So I think these students are in good company, ... they are in line with men and women through the ages who have stood up for something that is morally right."

King address to the Fellowship of the Concerned, Nov. 16, 1961. A Last Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. ed. James M. Washington (Harper, San Francisco) 1991 p. 50

- 1- Why does Dr. King discuss what happened in Nazi Germany in the days of Adolph Hitler?
- 2- Why does Dr. King believe that civil disobedience has had an important place in the history of the United States?

### C) When is civil disobedience necessary?

"There is nothing wrong with a traffic law which says you have to stop for a red light. But when a fire is raging, the fire truck goes right through that red light, and normal traffic had better get out of the way. Or, when a man is bleeding to death, the ambulance goes through those red lights at top speed.....Massive civil disobedience is a strategy for social change which is at least as forceful as an ambulance with its siren on full."

Mark Luther King, Jr., The Triumph of Conscience, reprinted in A Last Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. ed. James M. Washington (Harper, San Francisco) 1991 p. 647

- 1- Why does Dr. King compare civil disobedience with a fire truck or an ambulance?
- 2- What does Dr. King mean when he says that "civil disobedience is a strategy for social change"?

### D) Doesn't protest create hard feelings? Shouldn't people just talk about their differences?

"Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiations. Indeed this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to dramatize the issue that can no longer be ignored....I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, non-violent tension which is necessary for growth....The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation."

Letter from a Birmingham Jail by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. April 16, 1963, reprinted in Eyes on the Prize, by Juan Williams (Penguin, NY 1988) p. 187.

- 1- Why does Dr. King believe that "tension" is an important force for change?
- 2- According to Dr. King, when will negotiation become possible?

### **E) Why do you choose non-violent resistance over violence?**

To accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system...Non-cooperation with evil is as much an obligation as is cooperation with good.

Violence often brings about momentary results...But...It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Stride Toward Freedom.(Harper: 1958) pp. 212-217. Reprinted in Feder Viewpoints: USA. p. 337.

- 1- How does Dr. King feel about accepting "evil" even if you were not a party to creating it?
- 2- Why does Dr. King believe that violence is not an effective solution?

### **F) How do your ideas work?**

The alternative to violence is nonviolent resistance. This method was made famous in our generation by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who used it to free India from the domination of the British empire. ...Points can be made concerning nonviolence as a method in bringing about better racial conditions.

First, this is not a method for cowards; it does resist. The nonviolent resister is just as strongly opposed to the evil against which he protests as is the person who uses violence.

A second point is that nonviolent resistance does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding.

A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who are caught in those forces.

A fourth point that must be brought out concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love."

Christian Century (Feb. 6, 1957) p. 165-167, reprinted in A Last Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. ed. James M. Washington (Harper San Francisco, 1991) p. 7-8.

- 1- According to Dr. King, what are the main principles of nonviolent civil disobedience?
- 2- Why does Dr. King say that "this is not a method for cowards"?

## Activity Sheet 10. Songs and the Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama

In Selma a march was called for Sunday, March 7, 1965, to protest police brutality as well as denial of voting rights. Sheyann Webb, an eight-year-old, was the first child to attend the freedom rallies in her church. She led the singing of the movement songs - "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round," "O Freedom," "This Little Light of Mine." On what would become known worldwide as "Bloody Sunday," her mother brushed her hair, hugged her, and let her go out to join the proposed march from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery. The marchers, 600 strong, moved through downtown, turned south, and headed for Pettus Bridge arching over the Alabama River. At the bridge troopers ordered the marchers to disperse. When they pressed on, they were attacked. Years later, while in college, Sheyann recalled what happened next.

"All I knew is I heard all this screaming and the people were turning and I saw this first part of the line running and stumbling back toward us. At that point, I was just off the bridge and on the side of the highway. And they came running and some of them were crying out and somebody yelled, "Oh, God, they're killing us!" I think I just froze then. There were people everywhere, jamming against me, pushing against me. Then, all of a sudden, it stopped and everyone got down on their knees, and I did too, and somebody was saying for us to pray. But there was so much excitement it never got started, because everybody was talking and they were scared and we didn't know what was happening or was going to happen. I remember looking toward the troopers and they were backing up, but some of them were standing over some of our people who had been knocked down or had fallen. It seemed like just a few a few seconds went by and I heard a shout. "Gas! Gas!!" and everybody started screaming again. And I looked and I saw the troopers charging us again and some of them were swinging their arms and throwing canisters of tear gas. And beyond them I saw the horsemen starting their charge toward us. I was terrified. What happened then is something I'll never forget as long as I live. Never. In fact, I still dream about it sometimes.

I saw those horsemen coming toward me and they had those awful masks on; they rode right through the cloud of tear gas.

Some of them had clubs, others had ropes or whips, which they swung about them like they were driving cattle.

I'll tell you, I forgot about praying, and I just turned and ran. And just as I was turning the tear gas got me; it burned my nose first and then got my eyes. I was blinded by the tears. So, I began running and not seeing where I was going. I remember being scared that I might fall over the railing and into the water. I don't know if I was screaming, but everyone else was. People were running and falling and ducking and you could hear the horses' hooves on the pavement and you'd hear people scream and hear the whips swishing and you'd hear them striking people. They'd cry out; some moaned. Women as well as men were getting hit. I never got hit, but one of the horses went right by me and I heard the swish sound as the whip went over my head and cracked some man across the back. It seemed to take forever to get across the bridge. It seemed I was running uphill for an awfully long time. They kept rolling canisters of tear gas on the ground, so it would rise up quickly. It was making me sick. I heard more horses and I turned back and saw two of them and the riders were leaning over to one side. It was like a nightmare seeing it through the tears. I just knew then that I was going to die, that those horses were going to trample me. So I kind of knelt down and held my hands and arms up over my head, and I must have been screaming - I don't really remember.

All of a sudden somebody was grabbing me under the arms and lifting me up and running. The horses went by and I kept waiting to get trampled on or hit, but they went on by and I guess they were hitting at somebody else. And I looked up and saw it was Hosea Williams who had me and he was running but we didn't seem to be moving, and I kept kicking my legs in the air, trying to speed up, and I shouted at him, "Put me down! You can't run fast enough with me!"

But he held on until we were off the bridge and down on Broad Street and he let me go. I didn't stop running until I got home. All along the way there were people running in small groups; I saw people jumping over cars and being chased by the horsemen who kept hitting them. When I got to the apartments there were horsemen in the yards, galloping up and down, and one of them reared his horse up in the air as I went by, and he had his mask off and was shouting something at me.

When I got into the house my momma and daddy were there and they had this shocked look on their faces and I ran in and tried to tell them what had happened. I was maybe a little hysterical because I kept repeating over and over, "I can't stop shaking, Momma, I can't stop shaking," and finally she grabbed me and sat down with me on her

lap. But my daddy was like I'd never seen him before. He had a shotgun and he yelled, "By God, if they want it this way, I'll give it to them!" And he started out the door. Momma jumped up and got in front of him shouting at him. And he said, "I'm ready to die; I mean it! I'm ready to die!" I was crying there on the couch, I was so scared. But finally he put the gun aside and sat down. I remember just laying there on the couch, crying and feeling so disgusted. They had beaten us like we were slaves.

In the evening the people gathered in church. Everyone was quiet, stunned. Nobody was praying, nobody was singing. Was the will to go on lost? Sheyann wondered if there would ever be another march. "It was like we were at our own funeral," she said.

But then later in the night, maybe nine-thirty or ten, I don't know for sure, all of a sudden somebody there started humming. I think they were moaning and it just went into the humming of a freedom song. It was real low, but some of us children began humming along, slow and soft. At first I didn't even know what it was, what song, I mean. It was like a funeral sound, a dirge. Then I recognized it - "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round". I'd never heard it or hummed it that way before. But it just started to catch on, and the people began singing the words. We sang, "Ain't gonna let George Wallace [the Governor of Alabama] turn me 'round." And, "Ain't gonna let Jim Clark turn me 'round." "Ain't gonna let no state trooper turn me 'round."

Ain't gonna let no horses... ain't gonna let no tear gas - ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round. Nobody!

And everybody's singing now, and some of them are clapping their hands, and they're still crying, but it's a different kind of crying. It's the kind of crying that's got spirit, not the weeping they had been doing.

And me and Rachel are crying and singing and it just gets louder and louder. I know the state troopers outside the church heard it. Everybody heard it. Because more people were coming in then, leaving their apartments and coming to the church - because something was happening.

We was singing and telling the world that we hadn't been whipped, that we had won.

Just all of a sudden something happened that night and we knew in that church that - Lord Almighty - we had really won, after all. We had won!"

And they had. For the whole country - the whole world! - saw what had happened that day in Selma. The television cameras had captured the terrible beating the peaceful marchers had taken on the bridge. And the next day people from all over America began arriving to help the cause of civil rights.

## Questions

1. Why did the people of Selma want to march from Selma to Montgomery?
2. According to Sheyann, what happened on Pettus Bridge?
3. How was Sheyann able to get off of the bridge safely?
4. What was Sheyann's family's first reaction to what had happened?
5. How did people's feelings change at church that night?
6. How did songs help the people of Selma in their struggle?
7. If you were an adult living in New York in 1965, would you have gone to Selma? Why?
8. If you went to Selma, would you have been willing to follow the principles of nonviolent civil disobedience? Why?

## **Activity Sheet 11. The Civil Rights Movement in New York City**

### **Civil Disobedience in the 1963-1964 Campaign for Integrated Schools**

Most of the campaign for civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s took place in the southern part of the United States. But nonviolent civil disobedience was also used to struggle for integrated schools in northern cities. These excerpts are from articles published in *The New York Times*. They describe the use of civil disobedience in the campaign to integrate New York City schools.

#### **A. 25 Arrested Here in School Protest**

*(The New York Times, December 17, 1963, p. 1)*

Twenty-five persons, including three ministers, were arrested yesterday for attempting a sit-in at the headquarters of the Board of Education in Brooklyn. The demonstrators were protesting what they called "the complete failure" of the Board of Education to present a meaningful plan for the elimination of racial imbalance (segregation) in the city schools. The arrests were made as more than 100 Negro and white pickets marched, chanted and sang in front of the building at 110 Livingston Street.

#### **B. Many Steps Taken For Integration**

*(The New York Times, February 4, 1964, p. 20)*

The Board of Education has made increasing moves since the United States Supreme Court outlawed legal school segregation in the south in 1954 and Negro parents have conducted at least 10 local demonstrations. The school controversies are a reflection of changing populations, job needs and housing quests. The city's Negroes (1,116,000 in 1960) represent one-seventh of the population. Puerto Ricans (613,000 in 1960) make up one of every 12 New Yorkers. De facto housing segregation has led to de facto segregation under school zoning systems.

Glendale-Ridgewood in Queens, was the first white community into which the Board of Education shipped masses of Negro youngsters. On Sept. 14, 1959, six buses took 302 Negro children from Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn to five Glendale-Ridgewood schools -- and 971 of 2,329 white children were absent in a one day protest.

#### **C. Boycott Cripples City Schools, Absences 360,000 Above Normal**

##### **Negroes and Puerto Ricans Unite**

*(The New York Times, February 4, 1964, p. 1)*

A peaceful one-day boycott emptied hundreds of classrooms in Negro and Puerto Rican sections of the city yesterday and kept many pupils at home elsewhere in the city. School authorities said that 464,361 pupils, or 44.8 per cent of the total enrollment of 1,037,757, had not attended classes.

#### **D. Freedom School Staffs Varied But Classes Followed a Pattern**

*(The New York Times, February 4, 1964, p. 21)*

A spokesman for the Citywide Committee for Integration of Schools said that more than 400 Freedom Schools had functioned for pupils staying away from classes in observance of the public school boycott. The spokesman estimated that between 90,000 and 100,000 youngsters attended Freedom Schools for the day. Volunteer teachers included some with professional experience, social workers, clergymen, parents and students from colleges and high schools in the city. Many of the one-day faculties, as well as the pupil groups, were racially mixed. One racially integrated Freedom School, at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, followed a classroom routine that was fairly typical of the programs observed in various parts of the city. Fifty-five youngsters, about seventy percent of them Negro, went to the religious group's headquarters. The meaning of freedom was discussed. Reasons for the boycott were explained. The session ended with the singing of freedom songs, including "We Shall Overcome".

## Civil Disobedience in the 1963-1964 Campaign for Integrated Schools

### 1- Reverend Milton Arthur Galamison, *The New York Times*, December 17, 1963, p. 43

Associates (friends) of the Rev. Milton Arthur Galamison were not surprised yesterday when he was arrested for the third time as a result of his leadership among New York City Negroes in their campaign for civil rights. Over the last 10 years Mr. Galamison has become increasingly active in trying to gain better schools, better jobs and better treatment generally for his fellow Negroes in the city. Last summer he was one of six ministers who negotiated with Governor Rockefeller to end reported discrimination on public projects.

### Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., *The New York Times*, February 3, 1964, p. 18

From his pulpit at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Jr., who is also a Democratic member of Congress, said "I am back of Reverend Galamison and the school boycott 100 per cent." Mr. Powell said that it was his "hope and prayer" that there would be no violence today and that the boycott should "become a national boycott."

### Reverend Dr. M. Moran Weston, *The New York Times*, February 3, 1964, p. 18

At St. Philip's Protestant Church, the Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston said that "keeping children out of school is not an effective answer to poor and segregated public schools." He said the school crisis was the "result of many factors within and outside the control of the Board of Education."

### 2- Dr. John C. Bennett, Union Theological Seminary, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1964, p. 21

"I think the white people are so far removed from the real dynamics of the problem that Negroes have to apply more and more pressure. Without pressure, the white people always postpone. They never do enough."

### Dr. John H. Fischer, president, Teachers College, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1964, p. 21

"The very idea of the boycott was a mistake from the beginning to what I hope will now be the end....(It is) an effort to force a situation that by its very nature is not subject to the use of force."

### Rabbi Max Schenk, Brooklyn, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1964, p. 21

"(My) sympathies are with the people of the section and their impatience with the slowness of integration. They've been waiting now 100 years."

### 3- Dr. Ralph Bunche, United Nations, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1964, p. 21

"I'm glad this demonstration was effective, but I don't have any illusion about how deeply it goes in resolving the fundamental (main) problem -- the problem of racial ghettos."

### Bayard Rustin, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1964, p. 20

Mr. Rustin took on the directorship of the boycott without pay. (Bayard Rustin) said that "while the civil rights movement must continue its protest in the streets, we must realize that we don't possess the economic power to bring about this social change alone." This leads him to think that perhaps it is time for the Negro civil rights proponents (supporters) to seek an alliance with other liberal sources of power, the labor unions, particularly.

### 4- New York Times Editorial, February 3, 1964, p. 26

The boycott is pointless. It uses the methods of unreason to force integration in ways that endanger educational progress, rather than advance it. Great improvements are needed in the city's school system. Especially needed is a dramatic attempt to reach and educate the children of the slums so that they can take their place in American society as equals in skill and training.

### New York Times Editorial, February 4, 1964, p. 32

The great majority of New Yorkers, and certainly all members of the Board of Education, agree that integration is a priority goal and would, in fact, be the way of life in all the city's schools except for the barriers set up by the housing pattern and the composition of the population. A racial balancing of all the city's schools remains as impossible after the boycott as before.

## Activity Sheet 12. Who was Malcolm X?

1. Malcolm Little was born in Omaha, Nebraska on May 19, 1925. He was assassinated in Harlem on February 21, 1965. During those forty years, Malcolm X became one of the most controversial leaders in the African American community in the United States. He has been called a racist and a revolutionary. Since his death, his life and his struggles have become symbols for "Black pride" and the struggle for racial justice. Many people read his "Autobiography" and collections of his speeches to get insights into his ideas and to shape their own ideas about United States society and how it can be changed. Read the quotes from his speeches and the passages from his "Autobiography" and try to answer the following questions:

**1- Who was Malcolm X?**

**2- What did Malcolm X believe and teach?**

**3- Do Malcolm X's ideas have meaning today? Why or why not?**

2. What did Malcolm X believe and teach? Some of Malcolm X's ideas are considered very controversial. What do you think? Why? These quotations are reprinted from "Malcolm X, In Our Own Image", ed. Joe Wood (St. Martin's Press, NY 1992).

- "By any means necessary."
- "You don't stick a knife in a man's back nine inches and then pull it out six inches and say you're making progress."
- "No matter how much respect, no matter how much recognition, whites show towards me, as far as I'm concerned, as long as it is not shown to every one of our people in this country, it doesn't exist for me."
- "One of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself."
- "There's new thinking coming in. There's new strategy coming in. It'll be Molotov cocktails this month, hand grenades next month, and something else next month. It'll be ballots, or it'll be bullets. It'll be liberty, or it will be death."
- "There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity. There can be no worker's solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves."

3. Who was Malcolm X? This can be a difficult question to answer. Most people do not remain the "same" for their entire life. The answer is even more complex because people interpret the events in Malcolm X's life differently depending on their views of American society. Read these passages from "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" (Grove Press, NY, 1966), and then offer your answer to the question.

### **A. Malcolm X writes about his childhood in Michigan as Malcolm Little, pp. 35-36.**

"Somehow, I happened to be alone in the classroom with Mr. Ostrowski, my English teacher (in 8th grade)...I had gotten some of my best marks under him, and he had always made me feel that he liked me...He told me, "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it thought."....I told him, "Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer."...He kind of half smiled and said, "Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me, now. We all like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer--that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you can be. You're good with your hands, making things...Why don't you plan on carpentry."

**B. Malcolm writes about being a teenager in Boston and New York where he was known as Detroit Red, pp.108-110, 149-152.**

"I was a true hustler--uneducated, unskilled at anything honorable, and I considered myself nervy and cunning enough to live by my wits, exploiting any prey that presented itself. I would risk just about anything."

"I carried a hardly noticeable little flat, blue-steel .25 automatic. But for working, I carried a .32, a .38 or a .45....Between jobs, staying high on narcotics kept me from getting nervous."

"The cops found the apartment loaded with evidence--fur coats, some jewelry, other small stuff--plus the tools of our trade...and my small arsenal of guns."

"I can't remember any of my prison numbers. That seems surprising, even after the dozen years since I have been out of prison. Because your number in prison became part of you. You never heard your name, only your number....Any person who claims to have deep feelings for other human beings should think a long, long time before he votes to have other men kept behind bars--caged...Behind bars, a man never reforms. He will never forget. He never will get completely over the memory of the bars."

**C. While in prison, Malcolm X became a minister in the Nation of Islam p. 197**

"Elijah Muhammad spoke of how, in this wilderness of North America, for centuries the "blue-eyed devil white man" had brainwashed the "so-called Negro." He told us how, as one result, the Black man in America was "mentally, morally and spiritually dead." Elijah Muhammad spoke of how the Black man was the Original Man, who had been kidnapped from his homeland and stripped of his language, his culture, his family structure, his family name, until the Black man in America did not even realize who he was. He told us, he showed us, how his teachings of the true knowledge of ourselves would lift up the Black man from the bottom of the white man's society and place the Black man back where he had begun, at the top of civilization."

**D. In 1964, Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam. He founded a new organization and he took a new name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, pp. 315 and 375-376.**

"It was a big order-- the organization that I was creating in my mind, one which would help to challenge the American Black man to gain his human rights, and to cure his mental, spiritual, economic and political sickness....It would embrace all faiths of Black men....I mean nothing against any sincere whites when I say that as members of black organizations, generally whites' very presence subtly renders the black organization less effective. Even the best white members will slow down the Negroes' discovery of what they need to do, and particularly of what they can do--for themselves."

This lesson is partially based on materials and ideas excerpted from the Malcolm X Study Guide. For more information write 21st Century Books, 607 E. Muddy Waters Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60653.

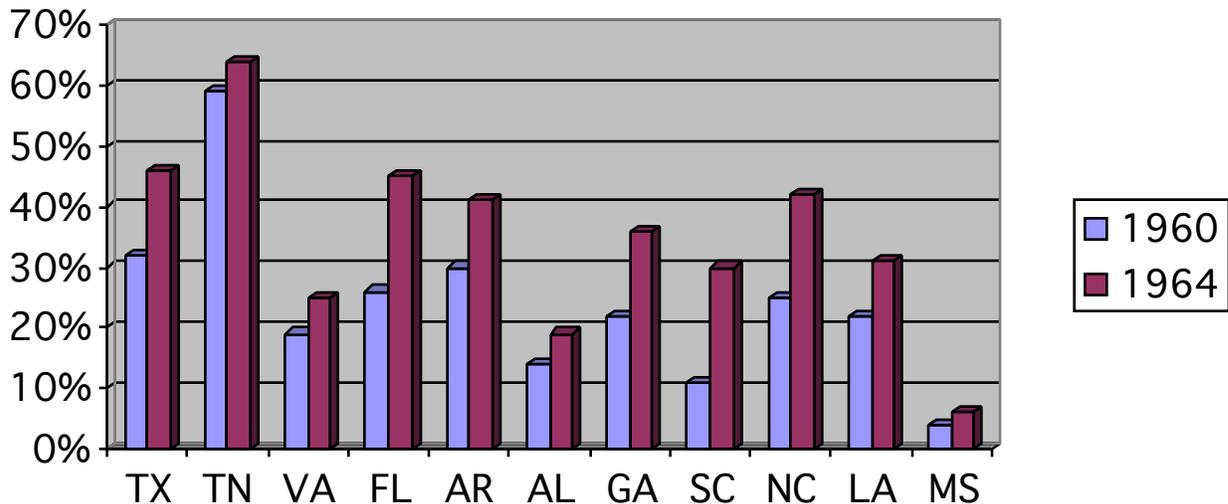
### Activity Sheet 13. Civil Rights: Looking at the Numbers

#### A. School Segregation in the U.S. South

State	African American Children in Interracial Schools, 1964
Texas	5.5%
Tennessee	2.7%
Virginia	1.6%
Florida	1.5%
Arkansas	Less than 1%
Alabama	Less than 1%
Louisiana	Less than 1%
Georgia	Less than 1%
South Carolina	Less than 1%
North Carolina	Less than 1%
Mississippi	None

1. What percentage of African American children attended interracial schools in Missouri?
2. What percentage of African American children attended interracial schools in Florida?
3. In which of these states did the smallest percentage of African American children attended interracial schools?
4. What percentage of eligible African Americans were registered to vote in Texas in 1960?
5. What of these states had the largest percentage of eligible African Americans registered to vote in 1964?
6. Which state or states had the greatest percentage increase from 1960 to 1964?
7. What conclusions do you draw from this chart?

#### B. Eligible African Americans Registered to Vote in Southern States, 1960 and 1964



#### C. Unemployment by Race, 1950-1970

Year	All People	Whites	African Americans
1950	5.3%	4.9%	9.0%

1960	5.5%	4.9%	10.2%
1970	4.9%	4.5%	8.2%

**D. African American Families in Poverty and Education of Head of Household**

Education	1978	1987
At least one years of college	12.6%	11.2%
High school graduate	18.7%	27.8%
High school dropout	34.2%	39.4%

**E. Income Distribution by Race, 1990**

Income	White Families	African American Families
Over \$50,000	32.5%	14.5%
\$35 - \$50,000	20.8%	15.0%
\$25 - \$35,000	16.5%	14.0%
\$15 - \$25,000	16.0%	19.5%
Under \$15,000	14.2%	37.0%