

ACTIVITY ONE: PREPARING FOR THE FILM AND TEXT READINGS

Answers to the “Topics” portion of the activity

Ask Parents, Guardians or Adults

Segregation: (*Free At Last*, page 4) Segregation is the legalized system in the United States that made it a crime for Blacks and Whites to be in the same public space together. Blacks were treated unequally and, thus, declared unequal by law.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott: (*FAL*, pages 10-13) Blacks boycotted the city buses for 381 days, choosing to walk and keep their integrity rather than take a back seat to Whites.

Martin Luther King Jr.: (*FAL*, pages 94-97) Martin Luther King Jr. received his doctorate at age 26 and was minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., when he came to prominence as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He was assassinated April 4, 1968, at Memphis, Tenn.

Holt Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama: (*FAL*, page 13) The gathering place where Martin Luther King Jr. first spoke against segregated buses and, thus, began the Montgomery Bus Boycott. His speech was demonstrative of what an inspirational leader he would be: “There comes a time that people get tired. We are here this evening to say to those who have mistreated us so long that we are tired — tired of being segregated and humiliated; tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression... We have no alternative but to protest. And we are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong!”

Little Rock’s Central High School: (*FAL*, pages 14-15) The historically famous high school in Arkansas where nine black students integrated an all-white school. It became a national symbol for school integration.

The Little Rock Nine: (*FAL*, pages 14-15) The name for the nine black teenagers who integrated Central High School in Little Rock. They went to school with armed guards for a year.

Lunch Counter Sit-ins in 1960: (*FAL*, page 16) The sit-ins that four Blacks started at a Woolworth’s lunch counter that would only serve white customers. By the end of the year more than 70,000 people had participated in sit-ins around the country.

Non-violence: (*FAL*, pages 26-27) The philosophy inspired by Gandhi and used by the Movement. Non-violence is calm and peaceful; it is non-injury to all things. It is boycotting, striking, marching, non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

The Freedom Riders: (*FAL*, pages 17-19) On May 4, 1961, a group of Blacks and Whites set out on a highly publicized bus trip to test a Supreme Court order outlawing segregation in bus terminals. They were met with terrible violence and endured it without retaliation, living out the philosophy of non-violence.

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama: (*FAL*, page 20, pages 56-57) A meeting and organizing place for the Movement in Birmingham. It was bombed by the Klan on Sept. 15, 1963, killing four little girls: Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley.

Voter Registration for Blacks in 1964: (*FAL*, pages 24-25) There were elaborate restrictions and violent methods to keep Blacks from voting. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 sought to eliminate such discriminatory practices.

The Selma-to-Montgomery March: (*FAL*, page 29, page 72) A march that brought people from all over the nation. State troopers initially beat back marchers. The Rev. James Reeb, a volunteer, was savagely beaten on March 9, 1965, and died two days later. The march was finally completed March 25, 1965.

“Jim Crow” Laws: (*FAL*, page 6) The laws that ordered Blacks to use separate restrooms, water fountains, restaurants, waiting rooms, swimming pools, libraries, hospitals and bus seats.

Gandhi: (*FAL*, page 8) The peacemaker from India who inspired the philosophy of non-violence that Martin Luther King Jr. and the Movement adopted.

Ku Klux Klan: (*FAL*, pages 5-6) The Ku Klux Klan was formed by a group of Confederate army veterans to use terrorism and violence to enforce the reign of white supremacy.

NAACP: (*FAL*, page 6) In 1909 when it was formed, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People launched a legal campaign against racial injustice and began documenting racist violence. By 1940, NAACP membership reached 50,000.

Freedom Summer, 1964: (*FAL*, page 27) The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) launched a campaign called “Freedom Summer” in 1964 to bring national attention to voting-rights abuses. About 1,000 college students — most of them white — came to Mississippi to register voters. No one anticipated the violent response from white Southerners, which brought national attention to the Movement.

“Black Power”: (*FAL*, pages 30-31) More militant activists became increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of change and the politics of the more conservative leaders. The students in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) asked Whites to leave the organization and took up the phrase “Black Power” to describe their new focus on building black-led political organizations in the South.

King’s “I Have a Dream” Speech: (*FAL*, page 97) Remembered as a highlight of the Civil Rights Movement, King spoke Aug. 28, 1963, to a crowd of 250,000 in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

1964 Civil Rights Act: (*FAL*, page 22) This law outlawed segregation in public accommodations and, thus, validated the cause of the Freedom Riders and student sit-ins. It assured the end of the kind of segregation that had defined cities like Birmingham. But it did not address the problem of voting rights.

Malcolm X: (*FAL*, pages 30-31) The Nation of Islam advocated black separatism and grew to 100,000 by 1970. Malcolm X, its most famous spokesman, criticized the strategy of non-violence. He said, "it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks." Before he death, though, he renounced violence and urged Blacks not to hate Whites. He was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965.

Internet/Library Search

Emmett Till: (*FAL*, pages 38-39) Emmett Till was 14 years old when he was shot in the head and dumped in the Tallahatchie River because he spoke to a white woman.

Roy Bryant: (*FAL*, pages 38-39) One of the accused murderers of 14-year-old Emmett Till, Bryant was found not guilty by an all-white jury.

J. W. Milam: (*FAL*, pages 38-39) Also one of the accused murderers of 14-year-old Emmett Till, Milam, too, was found not guilty by an all-white jury.

Michael Schwerner: (*FAL*, pages 64-65) One of three civil rights workers abducted and slain by Klansmen on June 21, 1964, in Philadelphia, Miss.

James Chaney: (*FAL*, pages 64-65) One of three civil rights workers abducted and slain by Klansmen on June 21, 1964, in Philadelphia, Miss.

Andrew Goodman: (*FAL*, pages 64-65) One of three civil rights workers abducted and slain by Klansmen on June 21, 1964, in Philadelphia, Miss.

Jimmie Lee Jackson: (*FAL*, pages 70-71) Civil rights worker killed by a state trooper in Marion, Ala.

Addie Mae Collins: (*FAL*, pages 56-57) One of four black girls murdered in a Klan bombing Sept. 15, 1963, at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. She was 14 years old.

Denise McNair: (*FAL*, pages 56-57) One of four black girls murdered in a Klan bombing Sept. 15, 1963, at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. She was 11 years old.

Cynthia Wesley: (*FAL*, pages 56-57) One of four black girls murdered in a Klan bombing Sept. 15, 1963, at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. She was 14 years old.

Carole Robertson: (*FAL*, pages 56-57) One of four black girls murdered in a Klan bombing Sept. 15, 1963, at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. She was 14 years old.

Cecil Price: (*FAL*, pages 66-67) Price was the deputy sheriff in Neshoba County, Miss., who arrested and then murdered three civil rights workers (James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner). Price was found guilty only of federal civil rights violations and not of murder.

Lawrence Rainey: (*FAL*, pages 66-67) Responsible, along with Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price, for the murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. He was acquitted.

W.E.B. DuBois: (*FAL*, page 6) DuBois, a Harvard-educated sociologist, was one of the strongest critics of American racism. He helped establish the NAACP in 1909.

Viola Gregg Liuzzo: (*FAL*, pages 74-75) Liuzzo was a Detroit, Mich., mother of four who came to the South to transport marchers from Montgomery to Selma in her car. Klansmen shot and killed her.

Elizabeth Eckford: (*FAL*, page 15) Eckford was one of the "Little Rock Nine" who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. She became famous for her photograph of calmly walking to school while white students screamed and spat at her.

CORE – Congress of Racial Equality: (*FAL*, page 8) CORE saw Gandhi lead the Indian masses in peaceful demonstrations for independence and decided to put the philosophy of non-violence to work in America.

Frederick Douglass: (*FAL*, page 5) Douglass fought off a cruel slave master when he was a teenager. He taught himself to read and write and became a leading spokesman for the Abolitionist Movement. He once stated, "So far as the colored people of the country are concerned, the Constitution is but a stupendous sham ... fair without and foul within, keeping the promise to the eye and breaking it to the heart."

Sheriff Jim Clark: (*FAL*, pages 28-29) Sheriff Clark was responsible for the violence against demonstrators who in 1965 tried to march from Selma to Montgomery to bring attention to voting violations. Clark and his "posse" beat marchers; once again, the violence brought national attention to the Movement.

White Citizens Council: (*FAL*, pages 34-35) Organized in Belzoni, Miss., to fight the work that the Rev. George Lee was doing to register Blacks to vote in 1954. The White Citizens Council listed the names of Blacks registered to vote and circulated the list to white businessmen who then retaliated by firing them, denying them credit and raising their rent.

The Cotton Mouth Moccasin Gang: (*FAL*, page 86) The Cotton Mouth Moccasin Gang were members of the Mississippi KKK. They murdered Ben Chester White, a black man, believing it would lure Martin Luther King Jr. to Natchez, Miss., so that they could assassinate him and be heroes among the Klansmen.