

Teacher's Guide



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Produced By



LIVING VOICES



ARTSFUND



A Journey through America's Civil Rights Movement

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE RIGHT TO DREAM

The Right to Dream is Raymond's story, a young African American man growing up in Mississippi on the brink of the American Civil Rights movement. Early on, Raymond feels the daily impact of racism and then is introduced to leaders like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., showing him that something different may be possible for blacks in America. Raymond, dedicated to joining these leaders, receives a scholarship to attend Tougaloo College. Raymond begins his involvement in the movement when he leads a sit-in at a local lunch counter. He then becomes a part of SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and is a participant in the voter registration drive, the March on Washington, Freedom Summer and the March from Selma to Montgomery.

Raymond's experiences reflect much of the world of the American south of that time: both the personal and collective struggle for a voice; the everyday adversity created by the K.K.K and White Supremacists; the conflicts within the movement as well as those outside it; the achievements as well as the tragedies. Raymond offers a personal inside view of a tumultuous and challenging period of American history.

Living Voices strives to recreate historical periods with as much authentic detail as possible. We believe that by allowing audiences to experience history as participants they will better understand the choices individuals made at during that time. *The Right to Dream* presented us with a particular challenge: the use of racial epithets as was common in Mississippi during this time. Though the word "nigger" is kept to minimum (we do not wish to desensitize audiences to this word) this word is present within the program. Please contact us if you need any clarification or information about the content of *The Right to Dream*.

Thank you,
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Thank you for inviting Living Voices to present The Right to Dream. The Right to Dream is about one of America's most important times in history, the civil rights movement. This program allows viewers to witness what it was like to a part of the movement that ensured every American his or her right to equal treatment under the law. This is a program about the importance of America's promise of liberty and full protection of our human and civil rights.

Important dates in the development of Civil and Human Rights

1215 The Magna Carta

1776 American Declaration of Independence

1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

1791 Bill of Rights to the American Constitution

1899 & 1907 Hague Conferences

1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1949 Geneva Convention

What are "Rights"?

Human rights are those that individuals have by virtue of their existence as human beings. They are universal, but may be limited or restrained for the sake of the common good or to secure the rights of others.

Individual rights are listed in the first 10 amendments to the US Constitution: the rights to life, liberty, privacy, the security of the individual, freedom of speech and press, freedom of worship, the right to own property, freedom from slavery, and freedom from torture and inhuman punishment.

Social rights call for a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family.

Collective rights are the rights to political, economic, social and cultural self-determination; the right to peace, the right to live in a healthful and balanced environment; and the right to share in the Earth's resources.

Civil rights are those personal and property rights recognized by governments and guaranteed by constitution and laws. They include both rights against governments and against individuals and groups. The end of slavery marked a new era in the development of civil rights in the United States. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were designed to protect the newly freed blacks and other victims of discrimination. The phrase "equal protection of the laws" became crucial in the 20th century struggle against discrimination, and it stands today as the major constitutional means for combating sex and race discrimination in America.

Who is SNCC?

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Founding Statement

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our belief, and the manner of our action.

Nonviolence, as it grows from the Judeo-Christian tradition, seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear. Love transcends hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Faith reconciles doubt. Peace dominates war. Mutual regards cancel enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes immoral social systems.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities. Although each local group in this movement must diligently work out the clear meaning of this statement of purpose, each act or phase of our corporate effort must reflect a genuine spirit of love and good-will.

Timeline of The American Civil Rights Movement

5/17/54 Brown V. Board of Education is decided.

8/28/55 Emmett Till is lynched in Mississippi.

12/1/55 Rosa Parks is arrested in Montgomery Alabama for refusing to move to the "colored" section of a city bus.

12/5/55 The Montgomery Bus Strike Begins. Martin Luther King leads the boycott.

11/21/56 Montgomery buses are integrated.

1/10/57 SCLC is formed. Martin Luther King is made president of the organization.

Sept. 1957 Nine African-American students seek to enter Central High School in Little Rock Arkansas. Local whites demonstrate against integration. Mobs harass, and attack students as they attempt to enter the school.

2/1/60 The first lunch counter sit-ins begin in North Carolina.

4/15/50 SNCC is formed in Raleigh North Carolina.

5/4/60 The "Freedom Riders" leave Washington DC.

September 1962 James Meredith attempts to enter the University of Mississippi.

5/2/63 Sheriff "Bull" Connor brutally attacks protesters in Birmingham, Alabama.

6/12/63 Medgar Evers is killed in Jackson, Mississippi.

8/28/63 Martin Luther King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington.

9/15/63 Four girls are killed when their church is bombed in Birmingham, Alabama.

June 1964 "Mississippi Summer" begins.

6/21/64 Three civil rights workers are killed in Mississippi.

7/2/64 The Civil Rights act is passed.

8/22/64 The Mississippi Freedom Democratic party goes to the Democratic convention and demands representation.

Jan. - Feb. 1965 Voter Registration begins in Selma, Alabama. Sheriff Jim Clark makes hundreds of arrests.

2/21/65 Malcolm X is killed in Harlem.

3/7/65 "Bloody Sunday". Alabama State Troopers attack marchers as they try to march from Selma to Montgomery.

8/6/65 The Voting Rights Act is signed into law.

6/6/66 James Meredith begins a "March Against Fear". Thousands of supporters complete the march after he shot.

4/4/67 Martin Luther King condemns the war in Vietnam.

12/4/67 King announces plan to march thousands of poor people to Washington DC.

4/4/68 Martin Luther King is assassinated.

DID YOU KNOW?

- During World War II, approximately 1 million black men and women served their country.
- 4 major tactics distinguished the movement for civil rights: boycotts, sit-ins, freedom rides, mass marches.
- Even though Thousands of African-Americans have been killed by lynch mobs throughout the history of the United States, no white person has ever been executed for the killing of a black person.
- Martin Luther King's belief in non-violence was inspired by the work of Gahndi in India.
- During the Freedom Rides over 400 riders were arrested and three were killed.
- The Black Panthers set up clinics, breakfast programs, and early education programs that were the model for today's "Headstart" program.
- Segregation laws began in the 1870's and were called "Jim Crow Laws" after an offensive character seen in minstrel shows.
- Until The 1940's the American Red Cross kept "black" and "white" blood in separate banks.

The story of The Right to Dream.

Raymond Hollis is a young man born in a small town in Mississippi. His father fought in World War II and was awarded for his valor on the battlefield. While in the service Raymond's father meets his mother, a nurse. But when Raymond's father returned to Mississippi he was treated as a second class citizen and shown no respect for his service to his country.

Since Raymond's father is only able to find work occasionally. His mother, unable to work as a nurse, finds work as a maid in white people's houses. Raymond excels in school even though the facilities allowed black students are poor. Raymond is forced to walk the long distance to school or ride an old broken down bus that the black families bought since the state wouldn't provide money a new bus for black students. Still, he is able to become class president and succeed in his studies.

Raymond meets his first best friend, Jack, a white boy who lives next door to the house where Raymond's mother works. Jack teaches Raymond how to ride a bike and Raymond teaches Jack how to fish. One day Raymond's mother takes the children to the movies. Raymond sees Jack with his family in the theater and runs into greet his friend. The theater owner quickly throws Raymond out. Raymond's mother is forced to explain to Raymond that he can only sit in the balcony because he is black. Raymond's mother is forced to find other work, and Raymond is not allowed to play with Jack again.

Raymond and his cousin Tony hear about the Bus Boycott in Montgomery. After seeing Martin Luther King at a rally Raymond decides he wants to be a political leader. Raymond and Tony

are able to get into the best black colleges in the country; Tony goes to Morehouse and Raymond (on a full scholarship) goes to Tougaloo.

Raymond and his classmates go to their first sit-in. They are brutally attacked by the police and other patrons. One of Raymond's friends is blinded in the fighting. Raymond is not sure he can continue to lead himself and others into this kind of danger. After speaking to his father, Raymond dedicates himself to SNCC and the civil rights movement.

While visiting home, Raymond is reminded by his mother that he is involved in dangerous activities. He is warned that certain white folks know who he is and what he's doing. After a threat from a Sheriff that is directed at Raymond's mother, Raymond decides to distance himself from his family.

Raymond helps lead the voter registration drive in Mississippi. The effort experiences a temporary setback when parents of the teenage volunteers keep them away from the workers for fear of their safety.

Raymond is re-energized by the March on Washington. SNCC is told to refrain from unapproved protesting by the planners of the march. However, after Dr. King's speech the entire SNCC delegation sings "We Shall Overcome" even though they were denied permission to sing the song.

Raymond and the workers are shocked when four little girls are killed in a church bombing in Alabama. Raymond dedicates himself to Bob Moses' plan of a "freedom election". 80,000 Blacks vote for the first time in a mock election designed to show that black people could vote. SNCC then plans "Freedom Summer". Faced with great danger, Raymond and the other workers spend the summer helping blacks in Mississippi register to vote. Three workers disappear and are later found dead.

After graduating from Tougaloo Raymond joins Tony in Alabama to help with the voter drive in that state. Police in Selma kill a man named Jimmy Lee Jackson when he tries to protect his mother from being beaten by the police. Raymond and Tony join protesters in a plan to march from Selma to Montgomery in protest of the violence.

State troopers meet the marchers at a bridge outside of Selma and refuse to let them march any farther. When the marchers do not turn back, the troopers attack with clubs and tear gas. Tony is hit and seriously wounded. Raymond is nearly killed by an angry sheriff.

Days later, protesters are given permission to hold the march. Raymond's father surprises him by joining the march. Together they walk from Selma to Montgomery and hear Martin Luther King speak on the steps of the capitol.

When Raymond's father returns home he is met by the Klan and killed. Not long after the march President Johnson, ending voter discrimination signs the voting rights act. Now able to be a candidate for the town council, Raymond dedicates his life to fighting discrimination and making America a great country.

INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES:

1. Role-on-the-wall: a character from the piece is represented as an outline of a person, on which the group writes or draws information about that character: on the inside of the figure is written what that character feels or thinks about herself, on the outside, how she appears or how others perceive her. This activity can be used as a jumping point for further discussion.

2. Create still images or tableaux of Raymond's experiences. Image work may be literal or symbolic, may depict actual events from the piece or imaginary ones, and may also focus on different points of view. Students may then select characters from the images to interview (characters may be played by students or teacher).

3. Group forms two lines to create a path for Raymond (played by teacher-in-role) as he leaves for college or to join SNCC. As he passes through, individuals offer a piece of advice. Alternately, or in addition, individuals can provide voices in the head, speaking as his family, friends, acquaintances or personal thoughts.

4. Create tableaux or draw a specific scene in the script.

5. Write captions for specific images from the video.

6. Partners or small groups discuss personal experiences of racism or civil rights issues:

a. Situations are selected and played as forum theatre improvisations, in which other members of the group can take on the role of the main character and experiment with different ways the scene could have been handled or occurred.

b. For each story, partners separately create (using other members of the group) a tableau that represents their image of the situation. The images are then shown to the group and compared.

7. In pairs, group members take turns interviewing each other as characters from the piece.

8. A Day in the Life: small groups prepare scenes to show all of the events of a significant day, building a chronological sequence toward the important moment.

9. Discuss the core questions of Citizenship Curriculum of the Freedom Schools:

1)What does the majority culture have that we want? **2)**What does the majority culture have that we don't want? **3)**What do we have that we want to keep?

10. Students draw or make a collage showing how the piece made them feel.

11. Read and discuss selections from other first person perspectives, such as excerpts from *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (autobiography) or *My Soul is Rested* (oral history interviews).

SUGGESTED READING

VOICES OF FREEDOM: An oral history of the civil rights movement from the 1950's through the 1980's. Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, Bantam Books

EYES ON THE PRIZE: America's civil rights years 1954-1965. Juan Williams. Penguin Books

SILVER RIGHTS: Alice Walker.

A DEATH IN THE DELTA: The Emmett Till Story. Stephen J. Whitfield. The New York free press, 1988.

FREEDOM SUMMER: Sally Belfrage. New York Viking Press, 1965.

PROTEST AT SELMA: Martin Luther King Jr. and the voting rights act. Yale University Press 1978.

WHY WE CAN'T WAIT: Martin Luther King Jr.. New York Harper and Row 1963.

OUTSIDE THE MAGIC CIRCLE: The autobiography of Virginia Faoster Durr. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985.

STRIDE TOWARD FREEDOM: Martin Luther King Jr.. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1958.

THE LONG SHADOW OF LITTLE ROCK: Daisy Bates, a memoir. David McKay, 1962.

LET THE TRUMPET SOUND: The life of Martin Luther King Jr.. New York: David McKay, 1962.

BLACK HISTORY FOR BEGINNERS: Denise Dennis. Writers and Readers Publishing Inc.

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