

## Lesson Two: *A Freedom Rider's Journey*

### Objective

Students will learn about the 1961 Freedom Rides, the riders, the challenges faced along the way, the impact of the rides on the civil rights movement, and the nation's awareness of segregation in the south.

**Materials:** *Plan Your Protest* – handout

### Activity One: *Equal Justice: Plan Your Protest*

1. Break students into groups and hand out one sheet per group.
2. Read over the introduction, the situation, and instructions with the students.
3. Have the students present their plan to the class.

### Extension Activities

**Elementary:** Imagine you are a reporter covering the Freedom Rides. How and what would you report about their journey? - *Have students use Who? What? Where? When? Why? to write their "articles."*

**High School:** The ordeal for the Freedom Riders did not end when they were arrested in Jackson. Have the students research the Freedom Riders' experiences at Parchman Penitentiary.

## ***Plan Your Protest Intro (Levels 1 & 2)***

*To help the students realize that the Freedom Riders did not just board a bus and undertake a dangerous journey without careful planning and preparation, please read the following to them. This will help them in the exercise to plan their protest.*

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) founded by a group of students from the University of Chicago in 1942, was organizing force behind the 1961 Freedom Rides. This was not the first freedom ride that CORE had sponsored. In 1947 the *Journey of Reconciliation* made its way through the upper south, but avoided a trip through the Deep South.

Individuals who made the decision to embark on the 1961 Freedom Rides were required to complete an application process before they could even prepare for the ride. They were instructed on how to dress, and behave. They were to undergo several days of non-violence training. This training was based on Gandhi's method in order to change the hearts and minds of individuals without the use of violence. Training and role-playing took place on how to protect one's self physically and emotionally when encountering certain situations.

The CORE organizers knew they would meet resistance, but they were unsure of how it would present itself. They wanted all their riders to be aware of the situation that they were fighting against and the resistance they might encounter. They tried to prepare the riders for anything they might come across.

When you are planning your protest take into consideration the situations that your riders/protesters could encounter. How will you prepare for any resistance, violence, law enforcement, harassment, etc.? Remember there only needs to be one little thing and you could be arrested. In Mississippi you could be considered a vagrant if you did not have \$.50 on your person. If you strike out in defense you could be beaten or hauled off to jail. Think about how you would get your message across without resorting to the violence that you are trying to end.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Plan Your Protest (Level 1)***

Plan your steps in fighting the injustice of the segregation in bus and train stations and airports. You are part of the non-violent movement and your group must decide the best way to change the situation. *If you need more room, you may continue your answer on the back of your page.*

You have learned that segregation continued in the south, even after the U.S. Supreme Court said that it is illegal to segregate public transportation under the Interstate Commerce Act.

What are your goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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What steps will you take to reach your goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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What will you do if you meet resistance? \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Plan Your Protest (Level 2)***

Plan your steps in fighting the injustice of the segregation in bus and train stations and airports. You are part of the non-violent movement and your group must decide the best way to change the situation. *If you need more room, you may continue your answer on the back of your page.*

You have learned that segregation in the south continued even after the U.S. Supreme Court said that racial segregation in public transportation was illegal. Segregation violates the Interstate Commerce Act, which forbids discrimination in interstate passenger transportation. The Court said that because bus transportation was related to interstate commerce, the United States federal government could forbid racial discrimination in the industry.

What are your goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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What steps will you take to reach your goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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What will you do if you meet resistance? \_\_\_\_\_

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