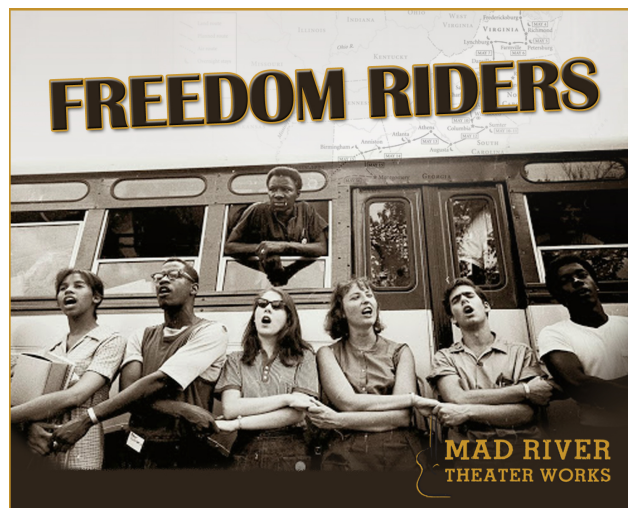




Mad River Theater Works presents
Freedom Riders
Study Guide

For Teacher Classroom Use
Performance: March 2, 2018 at 10am and 12:15pm,



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This program in conjunction with this study guide supports the following Common Core Standards:

RL.3-5.2, RL.3-5.3, RL.3-5.5, RL.3-5.6, RL.3-5.7, RL.3-5.9

RI.3-5.2

RH.6-8.7, RH.6-8.9

W.3-5.3, W.3-5.7

SL.3-5.2, SL.305.4



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A 501(c)3 non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to enriching the lives of all through the arts.
Located in historic, downtown Crystal Lake, Illinois.
26. N. Williams Street | Box Office 815-356-9212
Buy tickets online at rauecenter.org

About the Company

Mad River Theater Works is an acclaimed touring ensemble that creates vibrant and evocative plays with music for families and young audiences based on American history and folklore. Founded in 1978, Mad River presents original productions that explore traditional stories and themes in a unique, innovative style. With over twenty-five years of touring experience, the company has earned an international reputation for authentic presentations that bring little known characters and aspects of American culture to the stage. The artists of Mad River seek out subjects that reflect the rich diversity of our common heritage and make shows that combine the rhythms and folkways of everyday life with tales about extraordinary individuals. The resulting body of work is a vivid tapestry that weaves together live music, storytelling, and drama, exploring the grit and humanity of characters from the past.

Mad River has toured extensively throughout the United States and Canada, performing at theaters and museums such as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the California Center for the Arts, and the Raymond Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. Mad River has also presented multiple performances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as appearing in major cities including Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and at international events such as the Vancouver Children's Festival.

The Mad River company members are a multi-talented group of writers, performers, and theater educators with experiences that span the worlds of theater and music, from regional theaters to the London Fringe, from folk festivals to Nashville. Producing Director and Composer Bob Lucas is an accomplished songwriter and performer who has achieved major success for his recordings as well as theater work. Two of his songs are included on the Grammy-winning album by Alison Krauss, *New Favorite*. Working as an ensemble, Mad River has created a unique theatrical style that appeals to audiences of all ages.

The Show

Freedom Riders is the newest play from Mad River Theater Works. It explores valiant and courageous personalities behind one of the most critical chapters in the history of the civil rights movement. The play demonstrates the importance of working together to affect change and specifically how non-violent protest was used to combat the cruelties of segregation. Set in 1961, fifteen years after the United States Supreme Court had outlawed segregation; bus lines and cities throughout the south still enforced a rigid system of separating black and white citizens. Freedom Riders, both black and white and mostly young, decided to travel together on buses that crossed state lines purposefully disregarding the hateful segregation practices that were still commonplace in so many parts of the United States. The unforgettable heroes and the facts behind the events portrayed in Freedom Riders are essential to a full understanding of the civil rights era and American history.



Setting the Stage for the Freedom Riders

In the wake of the abolition of slavery in the United States, many southern states, which had previously been part of the confederacy, started to make laws to keep black citizens at a disadvantage. Many of those laws limited black citizen's right to vote in elections, and others, known commonly as Jim Crow Laws, mandated a policy called segregation. In education, segregation ensured that schools would either be black or white. That bathrooms and water fountains and playgrounds would be black or white. And on public busses, seats at the front would be reserved for white patrons while black customers were forced to sit in the back.

Debatably, the first freedom ride may have been the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation included 16 men- 8 white and 8 black, from the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.). The men planned to ride public transportation in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. There were multiple arrests in almost every state they visited.

On December 1st, 1955, Civil Rights icon, Rosa Parks, famously refused to give up her seat to a white person on a segregated city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She was jailed. Parks was not the first person to fight back against these segregations, but her actions began the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a cornerstone of American Civil Rights history.

Five years later, in Greensboro, North Carolina, the first major student protest began when four black men from a local college staged a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter. Over time, the sit-in was reported in newspapers all across the southern states, leading students and activists from all over the country to start their own protests, resulting in the closure of many segregated lunch counters.

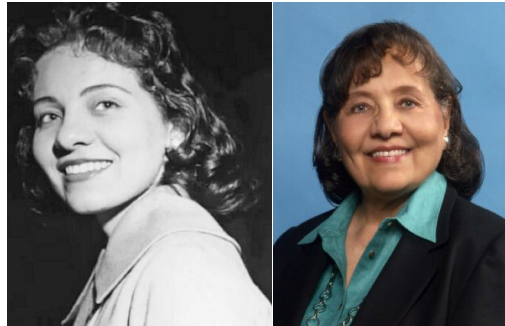
The next year, freedom rides began in response to the refusal of southern states to enforce two Supreme Court rulings (*Morgan v. Virginia* and *Boynton v. Virginia*) which demanded the desegregation of interstate bus travel. Ultimately, freedom rides became one of the largest student protests in American history. It all started with one bus and one group of protesters.

Who Were the Freedom Riders

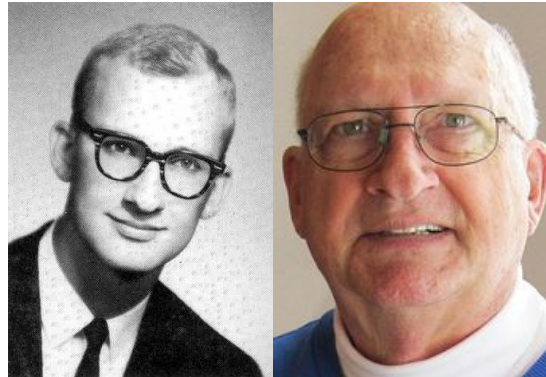
With much of the United States still dealing with rampant racism and inequality, the first freedom ride of the civil rights era took place on May 4th, 1961. Inspired by the actions of the Journey of Reconciliation, 13 riders set off to draw attention to the unfair policies of segregation on public and interstate transportation. The riders included 11 from C.O.R.E. and 2 from the rather new organization, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.). Everywhere that first bus went it encountered trouble. Sometimes there were minor attacks on the busses. Other times, riders were beaten and/or jailed. Things got even worse when the riders reached Montgomery, Alabama, where police commissioner, Bull Connor, organized violence against the riders in conjunction with the Ku Klux Klan. Many riders were beaten very badly, and some were turned away from local hospitals because of what they were trying to accomplish. After the first ride, members of the Nashville Student Movement, as well as activists from across the country, organized their own rides into southern states. In total, there were over 60 rides. These protests, originally led by the youth of America- both black and white- spread across the country and lead the Federal Interstate Commerce Commission to issue an order of desegregation on public transportation. This was an important step along the road to banning segregation in so many areas and bringing America closer to a policy of equal rights for all.

Prominent Figures

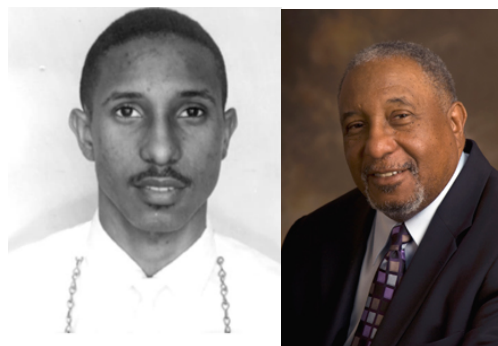
The characters in this play are fictional. However, the playwright drew heavily on the stories of three real-life freedom riders: James Zwerg, Diane Nash, and Bernard Lafayette.



Diane Nash was a co-founder and chief strategist of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). She helped organize many successful protests in the American civil rights movement including notably the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins. During the rides, Nash took it both as a responsibility of SNCC and as a personal obligation to recruit as many young people as possible to ride into segregated states.



Jim Zwerg was the only white rider on the second bus of freedom riders. He was raised in Wisconsin, and in college he became a member of SNCC in Tennessee. He was badly beaten in an ambush in Montgomery Alabama. He recalled later "There was nothing particularly heroic in what I did. If you want to talk about heroism, consider the black man who probably saved my life. This man in coveralls, just off of work, happened to walk by as my beating was going on and said 'Stop beating that kid. If you want to beat someone, beat me.' And they did. He was still unconscious when I left the hospital. I don't know if he lived or died."



Bernard Lafayette was a student at the American Baptist Theological Seminary and a member of the Nashville student movement. He quickly got involved in the freedom rides after news reached him about attacks on the first wave of busses. On his first ride, Lafayette was beat in Montgomery, Alabama, and arrested in Jackson, Mississippi where he later went on to start the Jackson Nonviolent Movement.

Timeline

April 9, 1947	The Journey of Reconciliation: 16 men from C.O.R.E. set out to test the desegregation of interstate travel by taking a bus to Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky.
December 1, 1955	Montgomery Bus Boycott Begins: Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on the bus to a white rider and is jailed, beginning the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
February 1, 1960	First Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit-In: Four students from Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University staged the first major student-led sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina.
April 15-16, 1960	S.N.C.C. Founded: The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee is founded in Raleigh, North Carolina.
May 4, 1961	First Freedom Riders Depart: Two busses, one Trailways and one Greyhound, left Washington D.C. headed for Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and finally Louisiana where they planned to hold a rally. Most of the riders were from C.O.R.E. and some were from S.N.C.C.
May 14, 1961	First Bus of Freedom Riders Attacked: When the first bus reached Anniston, Alabama they were met by a mob of Klansmen. The mob stopped the bus' progress outside of town and set it ablaze. Many riders were hurt and hospitalized.
May 21, 1961	Meeting at Montgomery First Baptist Church: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders meet in Montgomery to discuss the freedom rides. Several riders made an appearance disguised in choir robes.
May 26, 1961	F.R.C.C. Formed: The Freedom Riders Coordinating Committee formed to organize more rides.
May 29, 1961	Robert Kennedy petitions the Interstate Commerce Commission: Attorney General, Robert Kennedy petitions the Interstate Commerce Commission to comply with its desegregation policy. Final Freedom Ride Departs
September 13, 1961	

Important Terms & Names

<i>Boyton v. Virginia</i>	Protest
<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	Segregation
Civil Rights	Sit-in
Congress of Racial Equality	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
Desegregation	Supreme Court
Integration	Racism
Ku Klux Klan	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
<i>Morgan v. Virginia</i>	Rosa Parks
<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	

Freedom Riders

By Terence George Craddock

We are born to fight cause freedom
We ride forth constantly in cause freedom
We must speak fight for all who cannot

Or will not fight
Cause freedom
For themselves

But cause freedom
Is not fighting deception oil wars
Cause freedom is human rights

Human rights regardless
Of age race religion gender
For all citizens of this planet

Poem can be found on poemhunter.com

Cottin Pickin' Freedom Riders

By Evelyn Dilworth-Williams

When Sister Rosa sat on that bus, she didn't sit alone,
She had the visible image of the Master on the high throne.
There were passengers on that bus that no eye could see,
She was riding with people who had never been free.

Their time had come to sit and ride anywhere,
The day was now with no time to spare.
Cottin pickin' time had lasted for hundreds of years,
So taking a seat anywhere was without fear

Ridin' didn't quench the thirst of the workers of the fields
They needed more of what a water fountain could give
With their brow, so hot none wanted to think,
They sighted God's fountains and used by them to drink.

Cottin by now was well learned,
That group wanted real schooling for degrees to earn.
Taking a desk at the schools of their choice
Caused plenty ruckus from the established classes' voice.

They also had to find a way to get to the polls,
Directions to get there were not always told.
Pickin' a time to get to the polling place to vote
Was with ease when unity was the design to promote.

Poem can be found on aaregistry.org

The field hands by now had settled some claims,
There was much to do so they attracted some fame.
Saw water hoses used on the children of the cottin
bedded south,
Started spreading the idea of boycotts by word of
mouth.

People from everywhere caught a glimpse of their plan,
And the ridin' cottin pickers got support from all over
the land.

They marched with placards until their feet were in
pain,
Ne'er to stop for they knew that moment wouldn't
come again.

Marching, walking, and singing got them put in jail,
Willingly they went, not knowing who would post their
bail.

Even when the newly found leaders gave of life,
They wouldn't relent just because of violent strife.

The job had to be done and the job was done,
Turning back was left for the total sum of none.
All that took place was not just for you or me,
But for the ones who were born and die not free.

Pre-Show Discussion

1. Read parts of the study guide to the students or have the students read on their own. Discuss any questions they may have about that aspect of the topic they will see. This will help clear up any confusion they may have before the show.
2. Have the students seen any shows that were based on historical perspectives, books or stories before? What about movies? How do they expect this show to be different from what they have seen in the past? How do they expect the show to be different from the book?
3. This study guide includes just a fraction of information on the Civil Rights Movement and Freedom Riders. Have the students research either topic as well as other major figures (some found in the study guide) from the time period and write a paper describing what each had to go through. How is his story similar or different to other Civil Rights Movement leaders?
4. Have the students draw or write predictions on what they think they will see based on what they read in the study guide, pictures, and history. After the show, look at the predictions and see who was correct.
5. Find out more about the Civil Rights Movement (or pick events from the timeline or the important terms and names). Research important people, places, etc. that surrounded those events. How did each event effect the Civil Rights Movement?
6. Have the students research storytelling in other countries or history. How is it different or similar to American folktales and fables? This can be a research paper, project or just a homework assignment. Have them present what they found to the class.
7. Since the main theme of the play is standing up for your beliefs and being brave, have a class discussion on the topic. Have the students think of a moral or a lesson that they would want to teach someone and write their own fable (writing a story using animals as characters). Have them go a step further and illustrate the story, similar to the explanation of the puppetry with deciding what they want the animals to look like. Have them present to the class explaining why they told the story in the way they did. (What animals did they use and why did they choose them?)
8. Have the students read another story about the Civil Rights or standing up for your beliefs or watch a movie featuring the topic. What are some common themes of the story? What is the main theme of the story? Are there other stories they can think of that have the same theme? Consider using other folk tales and fables to illustrate this point: Greek mythology, fables, American folk tales, etc. What are some other famous stories? Was the lesson the same in each story?
9. Have the students research other stories. How are the stories similar to the story of the Freedom Riders (themes, characters, setting, etc.)? How are they different? Even if they haven't read the stories, is there anything that they can tell from the description or even pictures that are similar to the story in the show? If you have come to past Mad River shows at the Raue before, how does this story compare to Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks or Wings of Courage?
10. Have the students think about how it would have been to grow up in the 1940s-1960s while this was going on. What else was going on around that time (national conflicts, social issues, popular culture)? How do their lives compare now with then?
11. What do the students know about the American civil rights movement? Can the students describe what a non-violent protest might look like?

Post-Show Discussion

(Some of these are good to discuss with your students while you wait for your bus to arrive at the theatre after the show!)

1. Have each student come up with one or two of their favorite parts of the show. What was their least favorite part?
2. Compare the show they just saw with other theatre shows or movies they've seen. How are they different? How are they similar?
3. Do the students think they could write a play based on their lives? Have the students write a story that could be turned into a play. Maybe include their favorite day, vacation they've taken, school or friend adventures. To expand on this activity, have the students write a scene of their play. Go to the library and look at the format of a play including stage directions, dialogue and scene description. Have the students perform their scene for the class. If they can't come up with something on their own lives, have them write something for another story.
4. Write a journal entry about the play. Include favorite or least favorite parts. Scenes or times in the show that students related to in some way. Have they ever felt like any of the characters did? Were there things they would do differently if they were in his/her shoes?
5. Have the students pretend you are a reporter for a newspaper and write a review of the play they have just seen.
6. Have the students read the synopsis and biography of the Freedom Riders. What are the common themes? What is the main theme of the play? After the show, have the students recall what they read about the story before they came to the show. Does their idea of the theme change after seeing the show? How is what they saw different/ similar to what they read? Did the play use specific words or descriptions to add to the story or create the mood of the story? Use specific examples.
7. Have the students pick out their favorite part of the story and describe it in detail from the perspective of the main character in the scene. Have them rewrite the story from another character's perspective (i.e. from one of the Freedom Riders to a Police Officer). Did that change the story at all? How? How is each story told—first person or third person perspective? Have the students rewrite it one more time from their own perspective as an audience member.
8. The freedom riders could be considered heroes. What makes them heroes – what did they do? How did their actions affect life in general? Think of other heroes you know of in other stories, plays, TV shows, etc. How are they similar? How are they different?
9. Have the students choose their favorite character in the play. How are they important to the story? What are they like?
10. An important aspect of the show is the music chosen. How is music used in setting the mood? What kind of music is played for the happy parts? The sad parts? Tell the students to listen for music that sets the mood the next time they see a movie or a television show. Do you think the songs are intentionally chosen or just because the director liked the songs?
11. Review the moral of the story and discuss what happened to the characters to show the moral (what bad thing happened that made them learn the lesson). How might you apply this lesson to your life?
12. Are there other ways the students can think of to tell the stories? Play, storyboards, etc. Have them try telling a story using that medium.
13. Read the Freedom Riders poems on page 6 of the study guide. How do the stories told in the poem and musical differ? How are they similar? What elements does the author of the poem use to tell the story (rhyme, rhythm, etc.)? What elements of theatre (costumes, characters, settings, dialogue, music) do the players use to tell the same story?
14. How did the play make the students feel? Talk about how the actors assume different roles (characters) and how a play is different from a movie. Ask the students what they think happened in the lives of the characters after the action of the play. Have them research the lives of the characters that the shows were based on and see if their predictions were right.
15. How would you describe the Freedom Riders as important figures in history? How do their actions support your description of them? Be specific.
16. Research and create a timeline of significant events in the lives of the Freedom Riders (utilize the existing timeline as a starting point). How many are present in the play? What is missing that you think should have been included? Why do you think it wasn't included?