Civil Rights

During the Civil Rights Movement, the African American community decided that it was better to express their views with structured protests rather than random violence. They organized rallies, speeches, sit-ins, and a number of other events to deliver their message.

Below are some of the actual signs carried by protesters during the famous 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington, DC (led by Martin Luther King, Jr.).

**WE DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS NOW!**

**WE MARCH FOR INTEGRATED SCHOOLS NOW!**

**WE DEMAND DECENT HOUSING NOW!**

**WE DEMAND AN END TO BIAS NOW!**

...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 Opportunity, and for other purposes...

One of the highlights of the Civil Rights Movement was the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (seen here). It abolished the "Jim Crow" laws of the time (Jim Crow Laws were those that enforced segregation), and made it illegal to discriminate in schools, housing, or employment.

General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.
The Civil Rights Movement included a wide variety of protests, rallies, speeches, and organized events. The leaders of the African American community wanted to avoid resorting to violence.

At the top of the left hand page are a number of protest signs from the Civil Rights March on Washington, DC in 1963. Notice how these signs each express a goal that the African American community was trying to achieve.

In the space to the right, design your own protest sign for the Civil Rights Movement.

On the bottom of the left-hand page is a copy of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which basically abolished all forms of segregation (segregation occurs when two groups of people are prevented from coming in contact with one another). In the early 1900s, African Americans had to attend different schools, use different bathrooms, and even drink from different water fountains.

The idea of segregation seems crazy in today’s world. In the space below, write why you think that the legal segregation of the early 1900s was wrong. What kind of message did it send?

Blacks and whites couldn’t be together and to me that is unfair. I used to think a laws or rules were wrong and that everything was unfair.