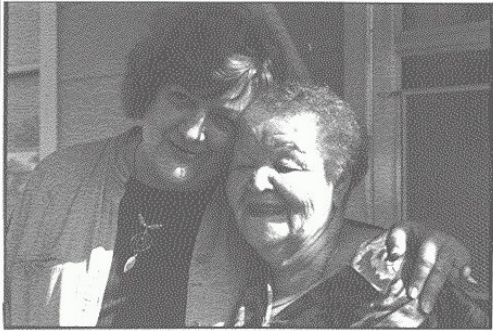




The Rosa Parks And Martin Luther King Jr. CONNECTION




PEN OR PENCIL: Freedom Of Choice

Freedom Costs . . . Crime Doesn't Pay

Curriculum Guide



A woman with long, dark, braided hair is looking slightly to the side. She is wearing a bright red, short-sleeved V-neck shirt. Her right hand is on her hip, and she is wearing a silver-toned watch with a blue face. The background is a plain, light color.

**“If I’m willing to
give it up, they’ll
take it . . .”**

TITLE: Pen or Pencil: Freedom Of Choice

AUTHOR: Addie L. Richburg, National Director
Training and Administration

TARGETED AUDIENCES: Grades 5–8
Faith, education, and community-based participants

OVERVIEW: The Pen or Pencil: Freedom Of Choice Movement will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott which served as a springboard for the modern day civil rights movement. Where implemented, it will call attention to the well and lesser known acts of courage and extreme sacrifice to obtain freedom and the full benefit of the U.S. Constitution.

At the front and center of the movement were well-known leaders, Mrs. Rosa L. Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While they paved a pathway to freedom traveled by many, there were less known heroes like Mae Bertha Carter, her husband, and her children, who like Dr. King and Mrs. Parks, suffered undue hardships for the right to choose.

The series will promote service learning by providing an opportunity for students to to conduct a modern-day B.U.S. boycott against disproportionate minority confinement, one of today's most pressing issues in criminal justice. It will also emphasize how the lack of education can lead to incarceration but how endurance in the face of extreme hardship can yield immeasurable success. One and two hour presentations, customized per setting, will include:

- Narration
- Visual media (excerpts from The Intolerable Burden)
- Oral history
- Audience exchange
- Interactive exercises

Among the questions to be raised in each session are:

- Why would crime and its potential consequences {pen(itentiary)} be a choice when so many gave their lives for freedom?
- For what cause would you be willing to give your life?
- Are students vulnerable to a pipeline between the school and the prison system?
- Will you choose to participate in the boycott?
- In offering freedom of choice to families of color, officials attempted to retain federal support and gambled most families would elect to continue to send their children to segregated schools. How does Mae Bertha Carter's decision compare to yours today to abstain from poor behavior?

Series Objectives

What can we learn from our past, and how can we best give of our time in this present age?

This project and subsequent learning activities will:

- Bring history to life from the pages to applicability
- Help to provide greater insight and respect for those who chose to lead and participated in the struggle for equality in America
- Build awareness of youth and adults about the seriousness of the issue of over-representation of African American and other minority youth in the juvenile justice system
- Provide an activity to help demonstrate the power of choices and the correlation between education and incarceration
- Enlist youth in devising culturally responsive and a historically sensitive service learning project to using their creativity to assume responsibility for how their own choices can impact their life outcomes
- Identify and build potential leaders, teamwork, discipline, more tolerance, and endurance;
- Promote responsible citizenship through practices of non-violence, public safety, and improved behavior
- Help to train youth about improved encounters with the law to avoid arrest.
- Provide ways for youth-serving community agencies and faith-based organizations to partner with schools to address DMC and suspension/expulsion issues.

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Life is full of choices. Each of the scenarios below represent a choice which results in rewarding or adverse consequences.



PEN(itentiary)

A young lady chooses to remain in a relationship with a drug dealer in order to benefit from money to buy the latest fashions and ride in luxury automobiles

A young college student is enrolled at an HBCU and finds himself short on funds. He hears some quick cash can be made by selling firearms. He chooses to buy, then sell to get the extra money he desires

Armed with handguns, a group of high school males choose to steal an SUV and take their chances of outrunning a pursuit by local law enforcement

PENCIL

Mrs. Rosa L. Parks chose to remain seated on a Montgomery city bus rather than to relinquish her seat. Because of her, we can now sit wherever we choose on the bus or in the classroom.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. chose to accept the position of leadership offered to him to head the Montgomery Improvement Association after the arrest of Mrs. Parks. Because he volunteered and accepted a call to service, we now have our jobs.

In the autumn of 1965, Mae Bertha and Matthew Carter enrolled the youngest eight of their 13 children in the public schools of Drew, Mississippi. Because they chose, they benefitted.

CHOICE =

The power, right, or liberty to choose . . .

Freedom Costs . . . Crime Doesn't Pay

"The world does not want and will never have the heroes and heroines of the past. What this age needs is an enlightened youth not to undertake the tasks like theirs, but to imbibe the spirit of the great men and answer the present call to duty with equal nobleness of soul."

Dr. Carter G. Woodson



Freedom is not free.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others

Mrs. Rosa L. Parks

Many people died in order to make it possible for all of us to live in harmony and to have choices. During the civil rights movement, Dr. King and Mrs. Parks were advocates of non-violence in order to secure social change. Their actions were based upon the desire to see equality and unity for all mankind, and they each envisioned a society void of hate. On December 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks' defiance on a Montgomery city bus ultimately made it possible for children of all races to take a seat together on public school buses. Together, Dr. King and Mrs. Parks paved a pathway to freedom which ten years later inspired the quiet strength of a Mississippi mom and dad determined to make the better choice for a education of their eight eligible children, regardless of the cost.

Youth of today will never experience the challenges of 50 years past. The civil rights movement is a memory told in textbooks or through oral history, and for many, regarded as irrelevant to our day to day life. Today, however, youth and adults face new challenges to freedom, incarceration.

Crime is an impediment which compromises the quality of life from rural to urban America and yields consequences which shortchange the liberties to which we are all entitled. The lure of a quick fix and instant gratification is in competition with the freedom. During 2006, the 50th anniversary year of the rise of the civil rights movement, we challenge youth to choose the pencil rather than the pen(itentiary).

Oral History

ORAL HISTORIANS

Mae Bertha Carter . . .

Mae Bertha Carter and her husband, Matthew, were the first Black parents to send their children to desegregate the all-white public schools of Sunflower County, Mississippi in 1965. Courage, determination, **deep faith in God**, and a vision of what justice acts like daily were the driving forces in Mae Bertha's life. Her sense of humor and her simple, clear way of giving life to truth were profound; she was one of the few people who could make people laugh and weep at the same time.

The Carter Children . . .

All eight of the younger Carter children attended and graduated from desegregated schools in Drew, Mississippi. All of them graduated from college-seven of them from "Ole Miss", the University of Mississippi.

Ms. Constance Curry. . .

Constance Curry is a writer, activist, and a fellow at the Institute for Women's Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. She has a Juris Doctor degree from Woodrow Wilson College. She is the author of several works, including her award winning book, *Silver Rights*, which won the Lillian Smith Book Award for nonfiction in 1996. She was the first white woman appointed to the executive committee of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). From 1964 until 1975, as Southern Field Representative for the American Friends Service Committee, she worked with black families in school desegregation and with community groups in voter registration and economic development. Curry is the producer of a documentary film entitled "*The Intolerable Burden*," (winner of the John O'Connor film award, January 2004, from the American Historical Association) based on her book, *Silver Rights*, but showing today's resegregation in public schools and the fast tract to prison for youth of color.

An important way to learn about the past, oral history is accomplished by finding individuals who are willing to share their stories that are or which can be recorded for posterity.

During the **PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE** Presentation Series, participants will witness oral history as presented on film in the documentary, *Intolerable Burden*.

As a work of oral history, this film succeeds by artfully weaving interviews together to tell the story. The structure of the film - the four discrete sections - can be used in the classroom or public forms as the basis for discussions from school crisis to another social ill - incarceration.

The Intolerable Burden

On August 12, 1965, sharecroppers Mae Bertha and Matthew Carter enrolled the youngest eight of their thirteen children in the public schools of Drew, Mississippi. Their decision to send the children to the formerly all white schools was in response to a “freedom of choice” plan. The plan was designed by the Drew school board and others throughout the south to place the district in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, essential since without compliance, the district would no longer be eligible for financial support from the federal government.

Screening opportunities for *The Intolerable Burden* have been made possible for the National Alliance of Faith and Justice by Ms. Constance Curry, Producer.



In the words of Hamlet, “. . . to be or not to be: that is the question . . .” In this case, whether to be incarcerated or to choose education are options faced by thousands of youth today, and an option which is particularly cloudy in the lives of many African American males. **PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE** explores two options through *Intolerable Burden* and the lives of the Carter family.

Intolerable Burden is divided into four sections. **PART ONE** outlines **segregation** in Drew, a small rural town in the Mississippi Delta. This piece sets the context for the story by establishing the nature of racial separation and oppression in the community. In **PART TWO**, Mae Bertha Carter, her children, and other local citizens, both black and white, tell the story of the Carter family’s experience **integrating** the public schools in 1965 under the state’s Freedom of Choice plan. The Carter children were the only blacks to attend the public schools that year, and they describe the harassment they suffered as a result. **PART THREE** of the film portrays the near immediate **resegregation** of the schools as black students were predominantly left in the public schools while students of other races enrolled in private academies. The exodus **AND** politics of the area prompted the decline in public school resources and the condition of facilities. In **PART FOUR**, the most innovative section, interviewees make the connection between the decline in public education, increased drop out rate among black youth, and rise in **incarceration** rates in the community.



Curriculum Standards

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT

Of five published curriculum standards from the National Standards for Civics and Government, **PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE** will address the following content standards using a combination of Narration, Visual media (oral history excerpts from *The Intolerable Burden*), Participant open exchange, and an Interactive learning exercise:



I. What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?

- A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
- B. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?

II. What are the Foundations of the American Political System?

- A. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
- B. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American Democracy?

- A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
- B. What does the national government do?
- C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?
- D. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?



IV. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?

- A. What is citizenship?
- B. What are the rights of citizens?
- C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
- D. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
- E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

Curriculum Standards

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

Of ten thematic strands of Curriculum Standards for Social Studies published by the National Council for the Social Studies, **PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE** will address the following **eight strands** using a combination of Narration, oral history(excerpts from The Intolerable Burden), Oral history, Participant open exchange, and an Interactive learning exercise:



- I. **Culture**
Discussions and exercises regarding the study of culture and culture diversity in Mississippi
- II. **Time, Continuity, and Change**
Oral history clips from The Intolerable Burden that provide for the study of the ways persons of color viewed themselves in and over time in Drew.
- III. **People, Places, and Environments**
Inclusion of experiences that review spatial views and geographic perspectives
- IV. **Individual Development and Identity**
Oral history reflections and participant dialogue to discuss why people behave as they do; what influences how people learn, perceive, and grow; Emphasis will be placed on how identity was shaped by Drew's culture, by and by institutional influences
- V. **Individual, Groups, and Institutions**
Discussions, media clips, and critical thinking exercises about interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions
- VI. **Power, Authority, and Governance**
Opportunities to view, discuss, and understand the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society
- VII. **Science, Technology, and Society**
Revelation or questions about experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.
- VIII. **Civic Ideals and Practices**
Discussion and viewing of experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship by the Carter family.

Service Learning

After the presentation has occurred, critical to PEN OR PENCIL is the acts of volunteer service which will reflect each student's personal commitment to reduce crime in and disproportionate minority contact in their school and community.



What is Service learning? Service-learning offers a unique opportunity for America's young people -- from kindergarten to university students -- to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Service-learning engages students in the educational process, using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

BUILDING **U**NBALANCED **S**ELF-DESTRUCTION

Entering the criminal justice system often begins an endless journey to self-destruction. Today's generation of middle school students had not been born during the lifetime of Dr. Martin Luther King. Replicating the citizens of Montgomery however, through the PEN OR PENCIL Movement and the individual and collective spirit of volunteerism, students should be encouraged and possibly granted extra points to combine their energies into teamwork and refuse to build the unbalanced self-destruction of DMC.

By organizing a B.U.S. boycott, students must agree to choose **the PENCIL** by refusing to give up their seat and entitlement to education. During the boycott, they must refrain from any behavior which would require them to board vehicles to jail/the **PEN(itentiary)**. They must agree to non-violence as well as to resist drugs, bullying, truancy, un-excused absences, and work together, as did the people of Montgomery, to achieve measurable outcomes in lowering the number of students from your school who are suspended or fail.

The PEN OR PENCIL movement, can be effectively implemented as a tool to help students learn about history while exercising the discipline, tenacity, and strength which led to the success of the Montgomery bus boycott.



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PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE is the major educational outreach component of the **2006 Justice Sunday National Continuum**, a 381-day Call to Service extended by the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ).



It is the mission of NAFJ to promote the value of inclusion of faith in addressing the prevention, consequences and resolutions of crime with emphasis upon its impact on African Americans and other people of color in society.

Mayoral Proclamations Issued

Recognizing PEN OR PENCIL as a component of the 2006 Justice Sunday Continuum

Alexandria, Virginia	Madison, Wisconsin
Buffalo, New York	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Canton, Ohio	Mobile, Alabama
Charleston, South Carolina	Modesto, California
Chicago, Illinois	Purcell, Oklahoma
Danbury, Connecticut	Petersburg, Virginia
Denver, Colorado	Richmond, Virginia
Escondido, California	Riverside, California
Flint, Michigan	San Antonio, Texas
Ft. Wayne, Indiana	Salt Lake City, Utah
Houston, Texas	Tarrant County, Texas
Leesburg, Florida	Pine Bluff, Arkansas
Knoxville, Tennessee	Baltimore, Maryland
Lexington, Kentucky	Memphis, Tennessee
Phoenix, Arizona	North Chicago, Illinois
Youngstown, Ohio	Tucson, Arizona
Waukegan, Illinois	Bridgeport, Connecticut
Dayton, Ohio	Dallas, Texas

In a speech given by Dr. King on February 11, 1958, at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, he stated, “. . . *Never forget that the Montgomery story is not a story, it’s not a drama with only one actor. But it’s a drama with 50,000 actors, each playing his part amazingly well. And I hope you will never forget the humble people of that community. You hear a great deal, I imagine about a fellow by the name of Martin Luther King. You’ll occasionally read his name, and you see his picture here and there. But . . . (he) would not even be mentioned in history if there had not be a Rosa Parks and 50,000 humble people who had the courage to stand up and who said in their hearts that we’ve had enough. . .*”

TO SERVE THIS PRESENT AGE . . .

NAFJ (www.nafj-nabcj.org) founded and has sponsored Justice Sunday since 2001 as a national movement to honor the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the civil rights movement, we now add Mrs. Rosa I. Parks as an icon for service. The national volunteer recruitment goal is 20,000 persons committing a minimum of 50 hours each in specialized service related to justice during calendar year 2006. To increase an understanding of disproportionate minority confinement, educators and partners of this program will be among those who will receive a copy of “To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith”

FREEDOM COSTS . . .

CRIME DOESN'T PAY. . .

The aim of the campaign will be to inspire increased volunteer service, and the choice of freedom over incarceration by following historic examples of leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King and Mrs. Rosa Parks or the simple but effective leadership of those less known like the Carter family. During this series, copies of Allstate’s “*The Law and You*” will be distributed to all youth to foster improved relationships with law enforcement.



“ . . . Freedom . . . ”



**TO HOST A PRESENTATION,
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