

# The Civil Rights Movement

## 1954-1968

# Goals of our Unit

Students will understand the following:

Beyond the famous leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, ordinary men and women struggled for their beliefs.

All the participants—famous and not so famous—deserve to have their stories told.

Events of the CRM and the impact they have on history then and now.

# What is the Civil Rights Movement?

- The civil rights movement was a struggle by African Americans in the mid-1950s to late 1960s to achieve **Civil Rights** equal to those of whites.
- Civil Rights include equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education, as well as the right to vote, the right of equal use of public facilities, and the right to be free of racial discrimination.
- What is discrimination?

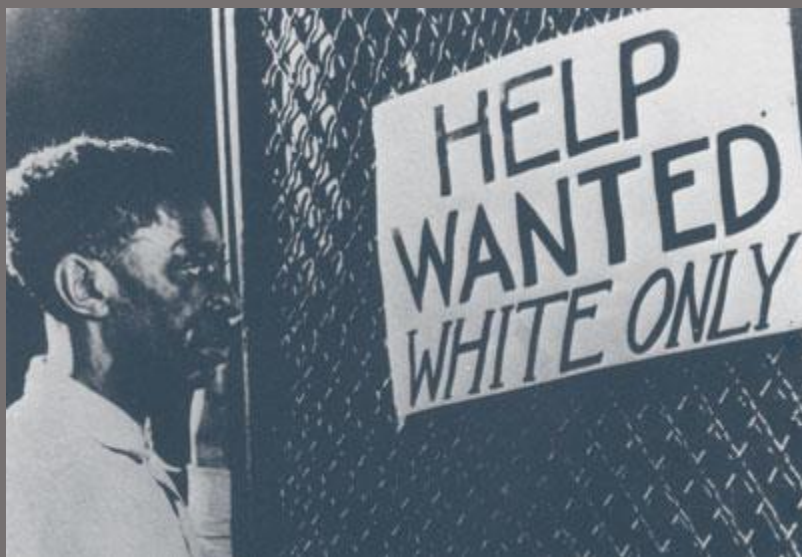
# Table Talk

- Has there ever been a time in your life in which you were discriminated against? What happened? How did it make you feel?

\*Remember, discrimination can be defined as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, gender, or sexual orientation.

# Post Civil War Racial Discrimination

- Following the Civil War, many white Americans were frustrated that they had lost the fight to keep their slaves.
- As a result, southern whites took control of African Americans in new ways, mainly by passing a variety of laws that discriminated against African Americans.
  - These laws were called Jim Crow Laws.
  - These laws segregated (separated) whites and blacks in education, housing, the use of public facilities (bathrooms, swimming pools, restaurants). These laws also denied blacks the right to vote, move freely, and even marry whites.



It is important to note that Jim Crow laws affected African Americans, but also any other races that weren't white.

# Plessy v. Ferguson

- Plessy v. Ferguson would challenge Jim Crow laws for discriminatory practices.
- Quick Summary: A man named Homer Plessy, a mixed race man from Louisiana, bought a first class train ticket in New Orleans. He was asked to move to a different car because of his skin color. He refused and argued that his Constitutional rights were violated when he was asked to move. The Supreme Court decided his rights were not violated because the facilities were separate but equal.

# Does this look equal?



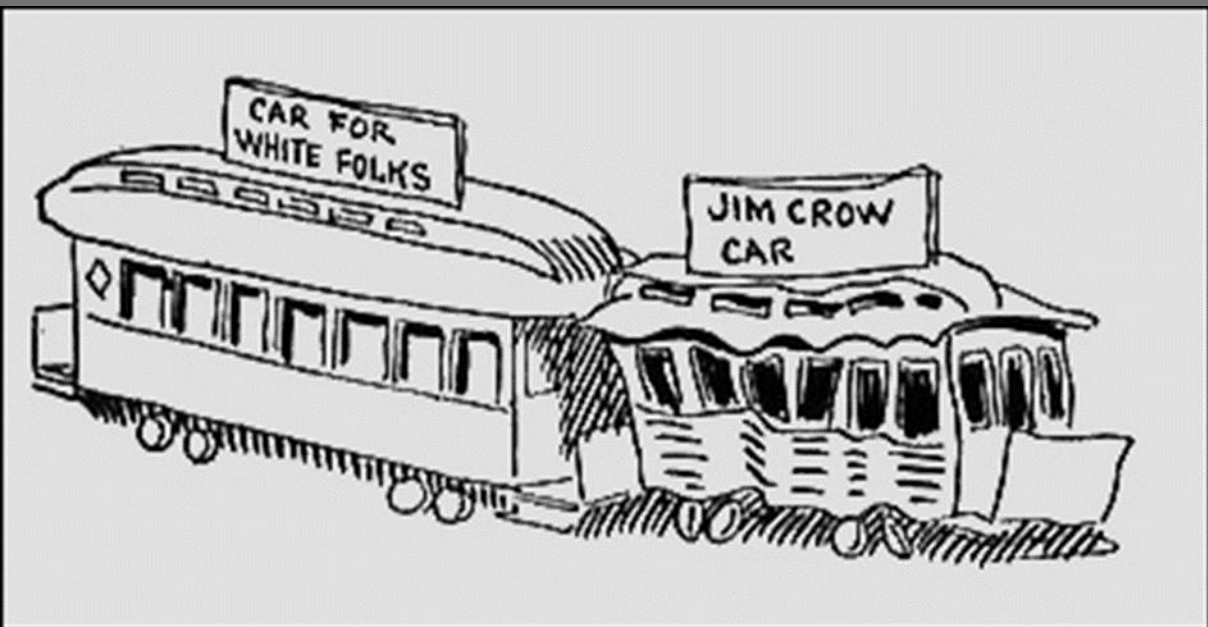
School for white children in 1930.



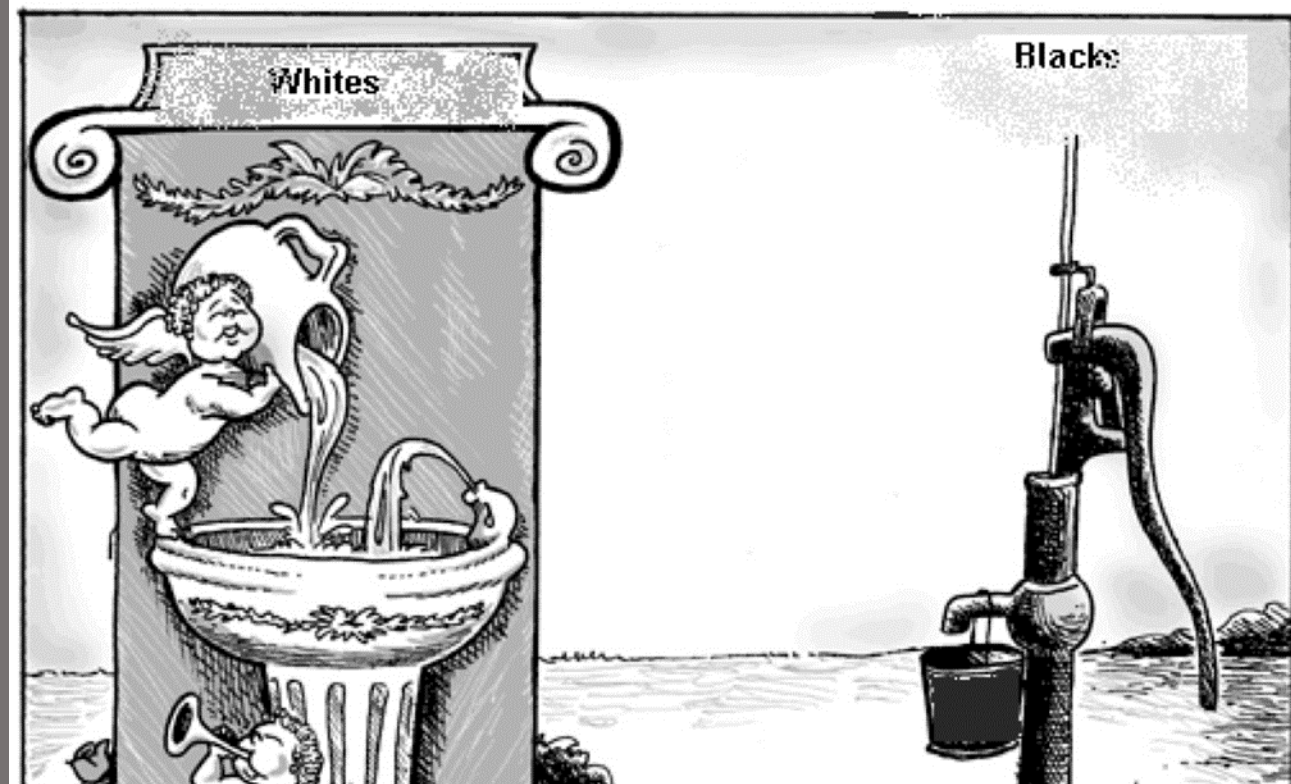
School for black children in 1930.

Both schools are located in Halifax County, VA.





## PLESSY VS. FERGUSON



# Discrimination and War

- Many African Americans and people of color were bound by Jim Crow laws, but were still required to fight for and die for their country.
- In WWI and WWII, many African Americans and POC were drafted into the war effort. Many volunteered to fight for a country that did not see them as equal.
- In WWII alone, over 2.5 million African-American men registered for the draft, and black women also volunteered as nurses and workers in large numbers.
- What do you think of this?



Units in the military were segregated.  
Hospital tents/medical stations segregated.  
Factories were segregated.  
Despite the bravery of those that  
volunteered to fight and serve, they were  
still segregated from other races.

# Post War Changes

- After the second world war, American politicians worked toward a process of desegregation.
  - To desegregate means to bring the races together.
- It was in 1954, that Jim Crow would finally be successfully challenged
- Each day, Linda Brown and her sister had to walk through a dangerous railroad switchyard to get to the bus stop for the ride to their all-black elementary school. There was a school closer to the Brown's house, but it was only for white students.



# Brown v. Topeka Board of Education

- The Brown family believed that the segregated school system violated the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment and took their case to court. Federal district court decided that segregation in public education was harmful to black children, BUT because all-black schools and all-white schools had similar buildings, transportation, curricula, and teachers, the segregation was legal.



This court case ENDED separate but equal laws. Integration had begun.

- What is integration?
  - It is the bringing together of the races.
- Do you think this was a peaceful process?
- What do you think happened as a result of Brown v. Board of Education?



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# Little Rock 9 and Desegregation

- The Little Rock Nine were a group of nine black students who enrolled at formerly all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in September 1957.
- Their attendance at the school was a test of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling that declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional.
- On September 4, 1957, the first day of classes at Central High, Governor Orval Faubus called in the Arkansas National Guard to block the black students' entry into the high school. Later that month, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in federal troops to escort the Little Rock Nine into the school.







What stands out to you about this image?  
What is the legacy of this image?

# Montgomery Bus Boycott and Mass Protest

- The Montgomery Bus Boycott showed the power that African Americans had in the south.
- This event followed the arrest of Rosa Parks, a woman who refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man.
  - Rosa Parks was chosen to do this! She was a member of the NAACP, and she was chosen to refuse her seat. She was a brave woman who was willing to sacrifice her freedom for the cause.
- The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a civil-rights protest during which African Americans refused to ride city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating. The boycott took place from December 5, 1955, to December 20, 1956, a total of 381 days. It is regarded as the first large-scale U.S. demonstration against segregation.

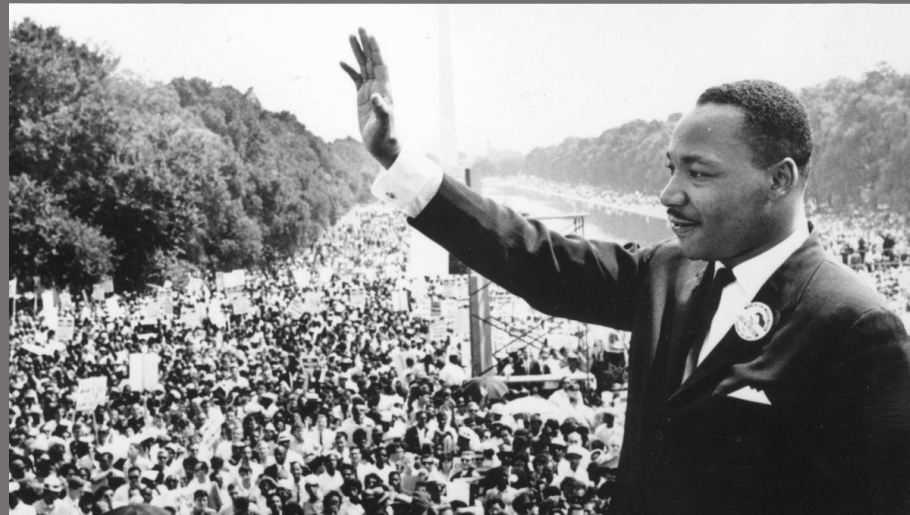
- The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately ordered Montgomery to integrate its bus system, and one of the leaders of the boycott, a young pastor named Martin Luther King Jr., emerged as a prominent leader of the American civil rights movement.





# Nonviolent Protesting

- Martin Luther King Jr. was the one leading the fight for nonviolent protesting.
- Nonviolent protest can be defined as:
  - the practice of achieving goals such as social change through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political noncooperation.
  - Basically, protesting in ways that don't hurt people.
- Examples of such protests during the Civil Rights Movement include sit-ins, picketing, avoiding the use of facilities/businesses, and marching.



# Table Talk

- Do you think that nonviolent protest was met with a nonviolent response?
- What examples of non violent protests are taking place today, in 2018?







# Violent Protesting

- Though many people participated in nonviolent protesting, there was still violent protesting in response to the racial discrimination and violence many African Americans were still experiencing.
- Between 1955 and 1963 four leaders of the movement were shot and killed by white Americans, and authorities did not seek to press charges against any of the murderers, who were never charged with any crimes.
- Despite their focus on nonviolence, Mississippi blacks understood too well the implications of not being armed to defend their lives and property.
- Is violence an appropriate response to violence?

# Famous figures of the CRM

## MLK Jr.

- A young pastor of Montgomery, AL. The most notable figure of the CRM and nonviolent protest. Was murdered in 1968 in Memphis, TN by James Earl Ray.

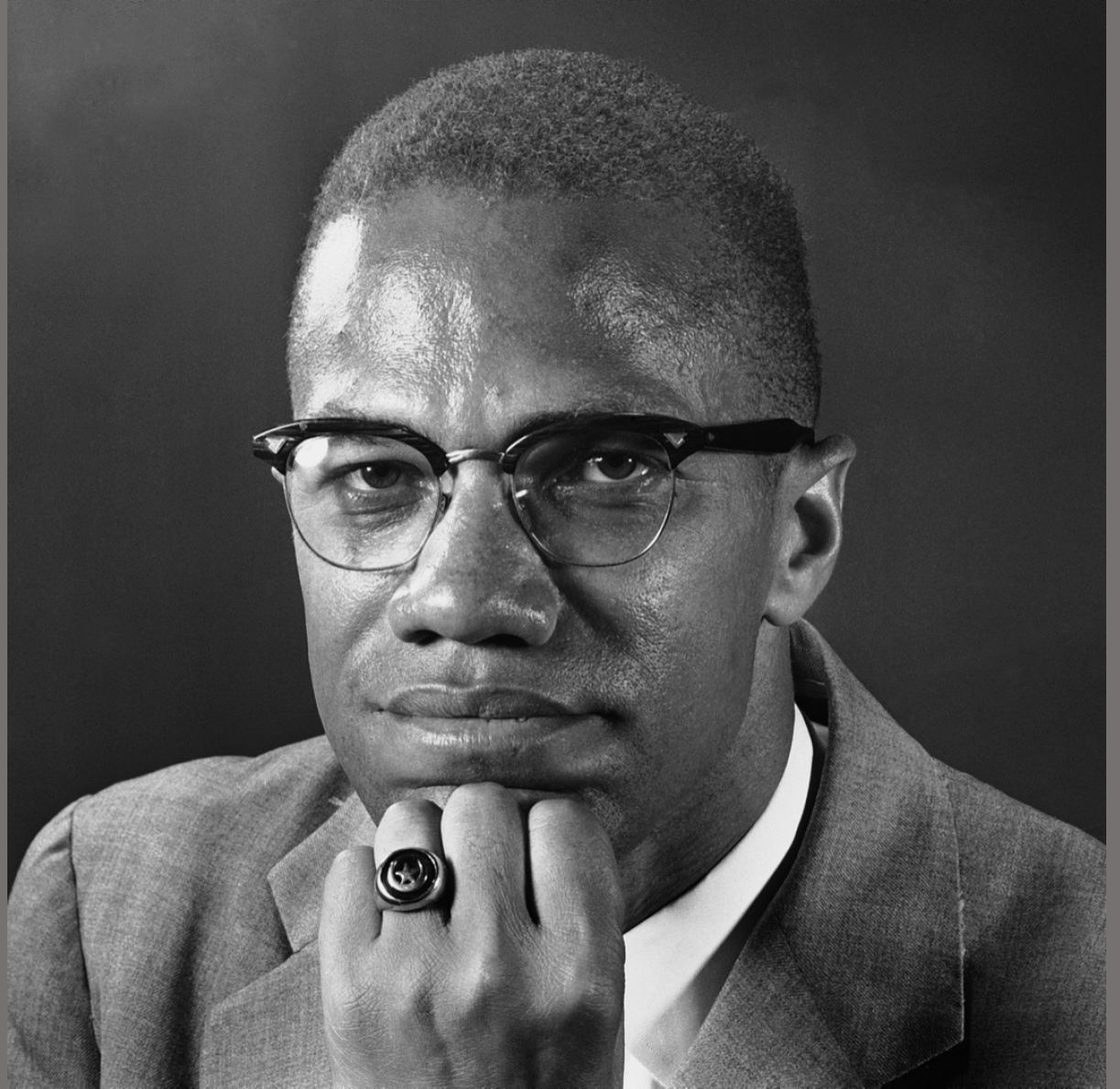




## Rosa Parks

- Only 42 at the time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, many argued Parks didn't move seats because she was tired. Parks was tired, but not from a long day at work; instead she was tired of giving in, and made a choice not to move. She was arrested, but her arrest sparked the Bus Boycott that lasted 381 days in Montgomery, AL.

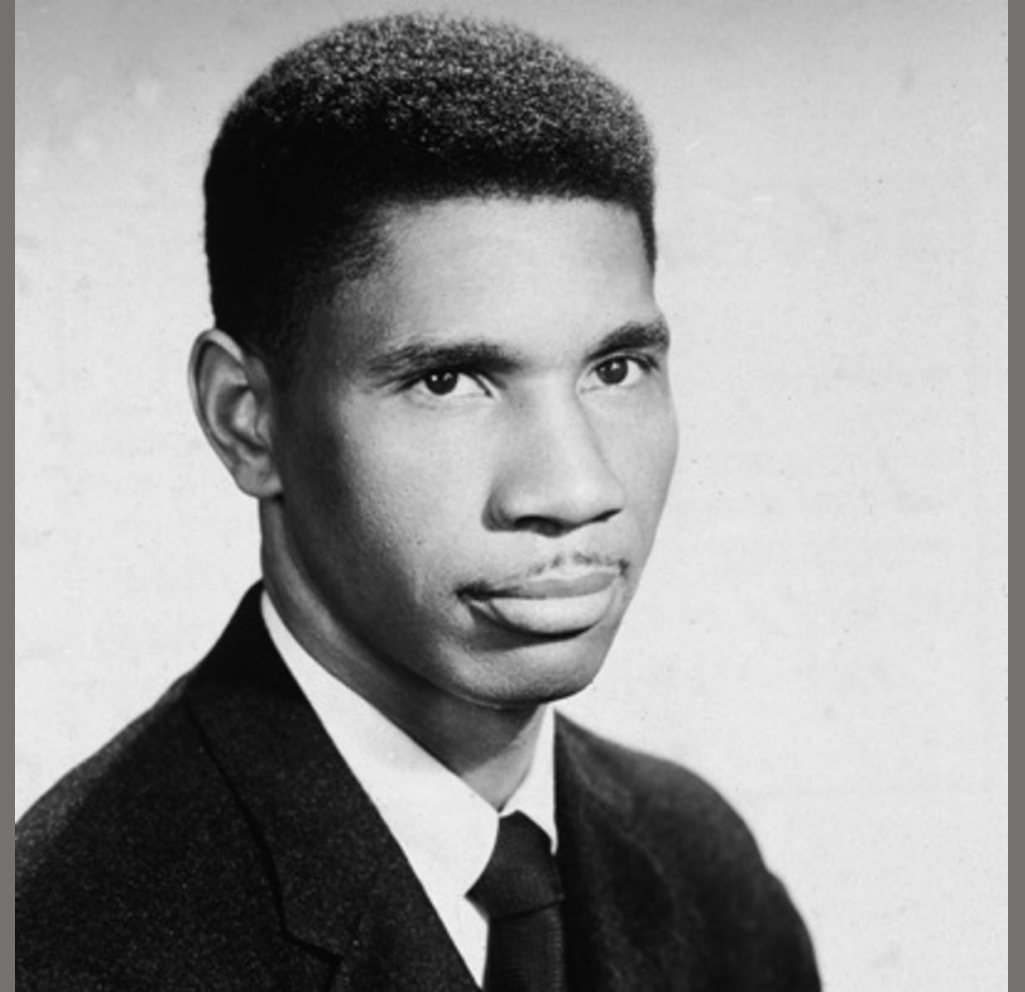
- Malcom X - found MLK to be out of touch with the plight of Blacks living in the inner city. An activist and outspoken public voice of the Black Muslim faith, he challenged the mainstream civil rights movement and nonviolent protest. He urged followers to defend themselves against white aggression “by any means necessary.” Born Malcolm Little, he changed his last name to X to signify his rejection of his “slave” name.



# Less known CRM figures

- Medgar Evers

An African-American civil rights activist whose murder drew national attention. Born in Mississippi, he served in World War II before going to work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Evers was subjected to threats as the most visible civil rights leader in the state, and he was shot to death in June 1963. His killer Byron De La Beckwith escaped conviction until new evidence was able to prove he murdered Evers and he was imprisoned for his crime.





- Ralph Abernathy
- Ralph D. Abernathy was a Baptist minister who, with Martin Luther King Jr., organized the historical Montgomery bus boycotts. He co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was a major civil rights figure, serving as close adviser to King and later assuming SCLC presidency.





## Emmett Till

Emmett Till was born in 1941 in Chicago and grew up in a middle-class black neighborhood. Till was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, in 1955 when the fourteen-year-old was accused of whistling at Carolyn Bryant, a white woman who was a cashier at a grocery store.

Four days later, Bryant's husband Roy and his half-brother J.W. Milam kidnapped Till, beat him and shot him in the head, and threw him in a river. The men were tried for murder, but an all-white, male jury acquitted them.

Emmett's body was almost unrecognizable after death. His mother chose to have an open casket at his funeral, so the world could see what had been done to her son.



WARNING: THE FOLLOWING IMAGES ARE DIFFICULT TO LOOK AT. I SHOW THEM TO YOU SO YOU MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND THE VIOLENCE SURROUNDING AFRICAN AMERICANS DURING THIS TIME PERIOD. I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF EMMETT TILL'S DEATH AND THE IMPACT IT HAD ON THE MOVEMENT.

IF YOU ARE SOMEONE WHO IS EASILY DISTURBED, PLEASE AVERT YOUR EYES OR TAKE A BREAK IN THE HALLWAY. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LOOK AT THE IMAGES.

# THE BOY WHO WHISTLED

How it started



# Discussion – Is the CRM over?

Take a moment to write down at least THREE sentences that respond to the question above.

Be prepared to share your responses with the class.

# Socratic Circle Reminders

- Topic: Is the Civil Rights Movement over?
- Talk to each other, not just to the discussion leader or teacher.
- Try to make claims that you can support with evidence – be prepared to back up your point of view.
- You do not need to raise your hand to speak, but please pay attention to your “airtime”—how much you have spoken in relation to other students.
- Don’t interrupt.
- Don’t “put down” the ideas of another student, be supportive of different perspectives.
- BE RESPECTFUL!!!

# Encyclopedia instructions

- We will be making a class encyclopedia that we will bind together and share with GMS's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. You will each complete a page of the Encyclopedia.
- Each page reflects a biography of a civil rights activist.
- You must be detailed in your information, and we must all support each other as we will be presenting this information to other students in another class.
- For research you must:
  - Use a piece of notebook paper
  - Look up information about your person's life, beginning to end.
  - Take 10-15 bullet points of notes.
  - Show Ms. Harrison or Mrs. Faught your notes in order to move on to the next part of the project.

- **Martin Luther King**

Born [place] [date]

Died [place] [date]

[Main text of encyclopedia entry begins here.]

Questions to consider

- Who was your assigned person?
- What was their early life like?
- How did they get involved in Civil Rights?
- What role did they take in the movement?
- What are their accomplishments?
- What have they done in the time since the 1960s?