

# FAMILY GUIDE



BIRMINGHAM

THE CHILDREN SHALL BIRMINGHAM LEAD THEM 196



The use of police in Birmingham...  
It changed the way...  
Birmingham...  
The use of police in Birmingham...  
It changed the way...  
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# NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM

The National Civil Rights Museum works to open up a dialogue about the story of African Americans, who experienced and resisted discrimination, from slavery through the Civil Rights Movement. In order to reveal the full story, the museum contains sensitive materials that may be frightening or troubling to children and young adults. Explicit images of assassinations, lynching, police brutality, offensive language as well as discussions on racial violence, racism and other mature themes are present throughout

the museum's permanent exhibition. The museum encourages all visitors to talk to children about violence, racism, and discrimination before entering the museum. The museum does not discourage anyone from viewing and experiencing the narrative on African Americans' struggle for freedom and equal rights. In fact, we believe that all should know the story. However, we do want to help families and children prepare for the experience. Below is a list of sensitive materials in exhibit areas.

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## I, TOO, AM AMERICA: COMBATTING JIM CROW, 1896-1954

- Lynching
- Race Riots

## THE YEAR THEY WALKED: MONTGOMERY, BUS BOYCOTT 1955-1956

- Audio activates on bus of the driver yelling at passengers to get off bus.

## STANDING UP BY SITTING DOWN-STUDENT SIT-INS, 1960

- Media as Artifact Film that shows footage of violence toward protestors.

## THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD THEM, BIRMINGHAM, 1963

- Children are seen protesting and arrested for their involvement.
- Images of fire-hoses being used on young adults who protest.

## IS THIS AMERICA? MISSISSIPPI SUMMER PROJECT 1964

Film that discusses the murders of civil rights workers.

## HOW LONG? NOT LONG: SELMA VOTING RIGHTS CAMPAIGN, 1965

- Film that shows real footage from the Bloody Sunday and the violent police attacks on protestors.

## BLACK POWER

- Film that contains aftermath footage of Fred Hampton's assassination.

## WORLD IN TRANSITION

- Shows global protests and clashes between protestors and authority.

## I AM A MAN: MEMPHIS SANITATION STRIKE, 1968

- Images of police brutality toward peaceful protestors, including police officers using mace on participants.

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*Due to the sensitive nature of some materials found in the National Civil Rights Museum, the museum recommends the permanent exhibition for visitors who are ages 12 and older.*

# TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT CHALLENGING CONTENT IN MUSEUMS

The National Civil Rights Museum works to establish an open discussion on the ideas of racism, discrimination, freedom, and civil rights within our walls and beyond. Children are always a part of that discussion. Sometimes, the narrative can be difficult for young people to understand or process without further discussion. We know that educating children is one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences a parent can have. However, we live in a complex world where challenging issues can be difficult to teach and to learn.

Rather than exclude children from these conversations, we must ask them to explore their feelings and their knowledge on different subjects such as discrimination, diversity and equality. An open, healthy and constant conversation helps young people to cope with these tough issues and understand the world that they live in. Let children



know that they can talk to you about these tough issues wherever they happen. Here are some tips that will help you start a discussion that relates to your museum experience.

## ESTABLISH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Make time beforehand to talk about the different images and ideas that children may experience within the museum. Explore what your children already know on topics of violence, racism, discrimination, and diversity. Ask them questions about what they know or think. Make sure to answer their questions on these subjects openly and honestly.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO BEGIN DISCUSSION:

“The museum tells a story about discrimination and the fight for freedom. Have you learned about violence, discrimination/racism, equality and diversity in school? What have you learned?”

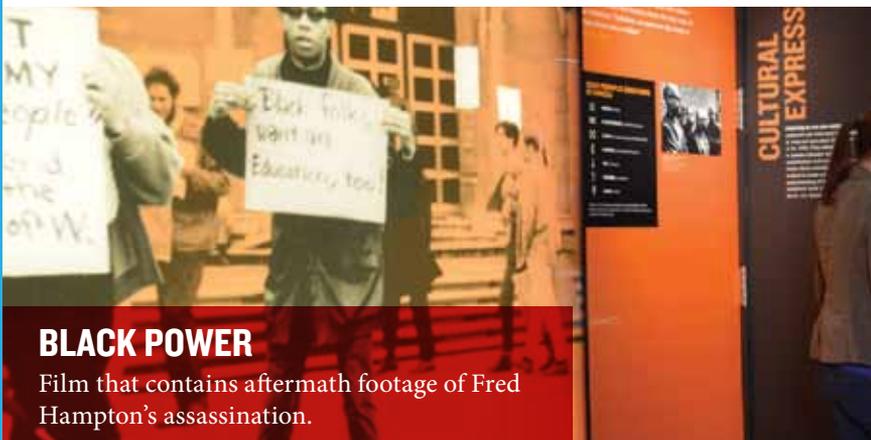
“Some of the images might be scary or violent. Are you okay with visiting the museum? Remember, that I am right here with you through the whole visit.”

“I don’t know the whole story of the right for freedom. What do you think or know about the subject?”

## ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO TALK OUT THEIR FEELINGS

Children can sometimes feel afraid to discuss their fears. Having children discuss what bothers them, however, will allow for an emotional release. Expressing your feelings about a violent image or audio clip helps them

# TALK



## BLACK POWER

Film that contains aftermath footage of Fred Hampton's assassination.

to understand that everyone has fears and anxieties. Help children to discuss everything they see and to process it in a healthy way.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

"I found that video to be scary. How did it make you feel?"

"I did not know about the violence men and women experienced on Bloody Sunday. Did you know about this? What did you think about this?"

## MONITOR YOUR OWN FEELINGS

Children are very perceptive. They note changes in your behavior, whether you are uncomfortable, angry, or happy. When having these discussions, it is okay to let children know your feelings on the matter. Show them your values and beliefs on the subject. It is okay to tell your children that you are unsure of an answer or if you need time to think about it. The more comfortable you are with having the conversation, the more comfortable they will be.

## ASK CHILDREN WHAT THEY KNOW ABOUT SLAVERY, EMANCIPATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The historical story on enslavement, emancipation, and civil rights has been pushed to the mainstream. As students, children should be learning this story in their schools. Ask children what they know about slavery. Explain to them what they will see in the museum in general. Later, ask them to question what new ideas they learned by visiting the museum.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO BEGIN DISCUSSION:

"Have you learned about the Civil Rights Movement in school? What have you learned? Did you learn about any important figures or events?"

"Have you discussed the story of enslavement (bondage) and emancipation (freedom) with your teachers and classmates? What do you know about the story?"



## WORLD IN TRANSITION

Shows global protests and clashes between protestors and authority.

## DISCUSS THE MEDIA-BASED VIOLENCE AND IMAGES SEEN IN THE MUSEUM

Children are aware that violence and other issues exist, especially if they are exposed to current media. Ask children to consider why the museum is showing these images. Also, get them to see that violence is a very real problem. Additionally, with the way violence is addressed in video games, movies, and television, demonstrate to children that violence is not a game. Tell them that violence exists and has very real consequences.

## DISCUSS VIOLENCE IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

The museum also works to cover different stories on the fight for human rights throughout the world. Ask children what they know about violence that exists in today's society. Ask them what they learned in school, from the media, and from others. Gauge their feelings on the matter and ask them if they have any questions or are confused about anything. Work to explore what children know about the tough issues. Discuss

with children that the fight for human and equal rights exists all over the world and it still being worked out today.

## PRE-VISIT RECOMMENDED READING

## DISCUSS RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY

The main focus of the museum is to discuss the pursuit of freedom and equal rights that African Americans fight for in the United States. The story does show the discrimination and racism that they experienced as they fought for those rights. Ask children if they learned about racism, discrimination, and diversity in school and what they learned there. Discuss discrimination and racism with children. Explain to them that racism and discrimination do exist and are very real problems even today.

If they do not know, explain what racism means. Racism is making a difference between people based on heritage and skin color. Also, explain discrimination, if children ask. Discrimination is often based on making a difference between the way one group treats or sees another.

Have the discussion on diversity. Tell children that we must be more considerate of everyone's individuality and differences. Make sure they understand that diversity is a positive idea, rather than the negative one. Teach children to appreciate differences rather than exclude those who are different.

## MAKE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Children may often be fearful or anxious about violent or negative behavior. Make sure that they know you are there with them and that everything is okay. Acknowledging and validating their concerns and fears helps children to process the environment around them. This will also help them to feel more comfortable within the environment. Explain to them what the images or words mean and tell them why they are present in the museum.

## POST-MUSEUM DISCUSSION

Have children discuss their experiences. Ask them how they felt about what they saw or if they have any questions on something that scared or confused them. Make sure to keep communicating with children even after the visit is over.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

“What did you think about the museum? Is there anything that really stood out to you?”

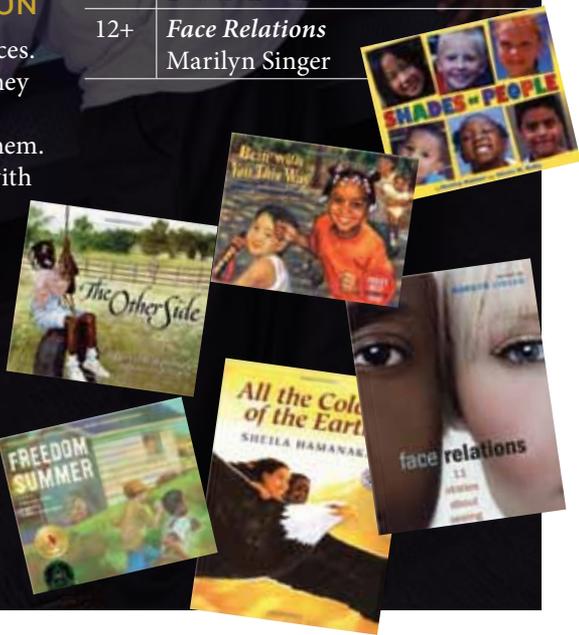
“Do you have any questions or thoughts about the visit? Was there anything that made you uncomfortable or scared? What did you like?”

## KEEP OPEN AND CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

Let children know that this conversation can be revisited later on. Make sure they know that it is okay to ask about these different subjects in different contexts and in the future. By keeping open and continuing communication with your children, you can promote healthy learning that will help them in the future.

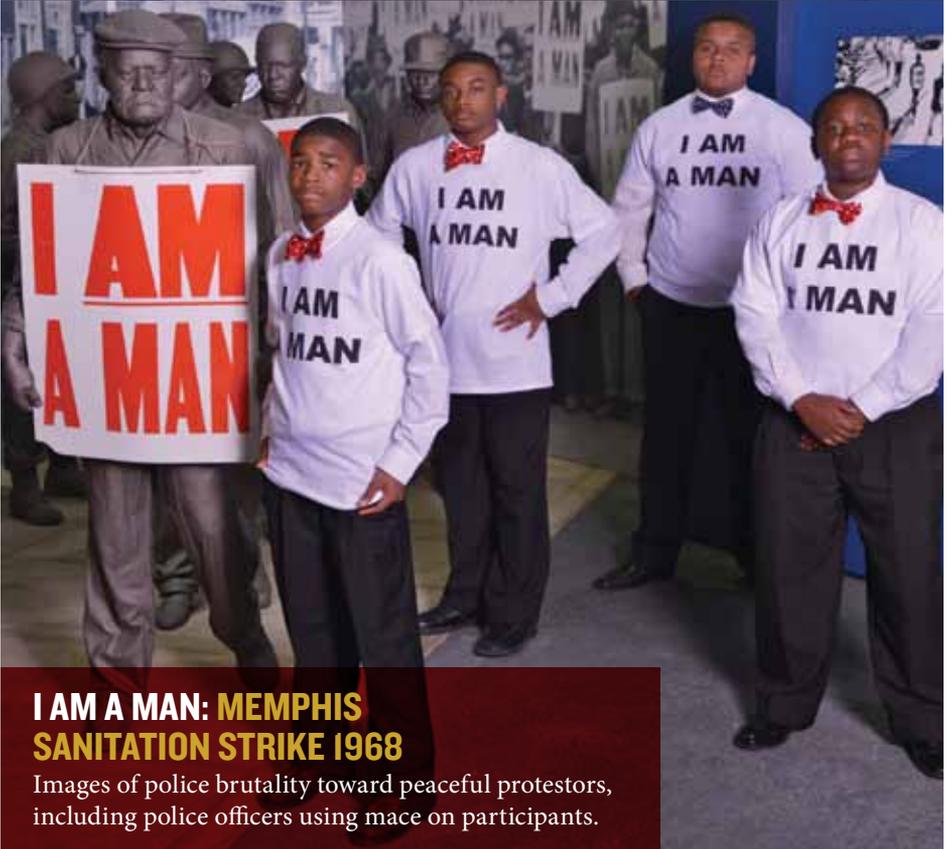
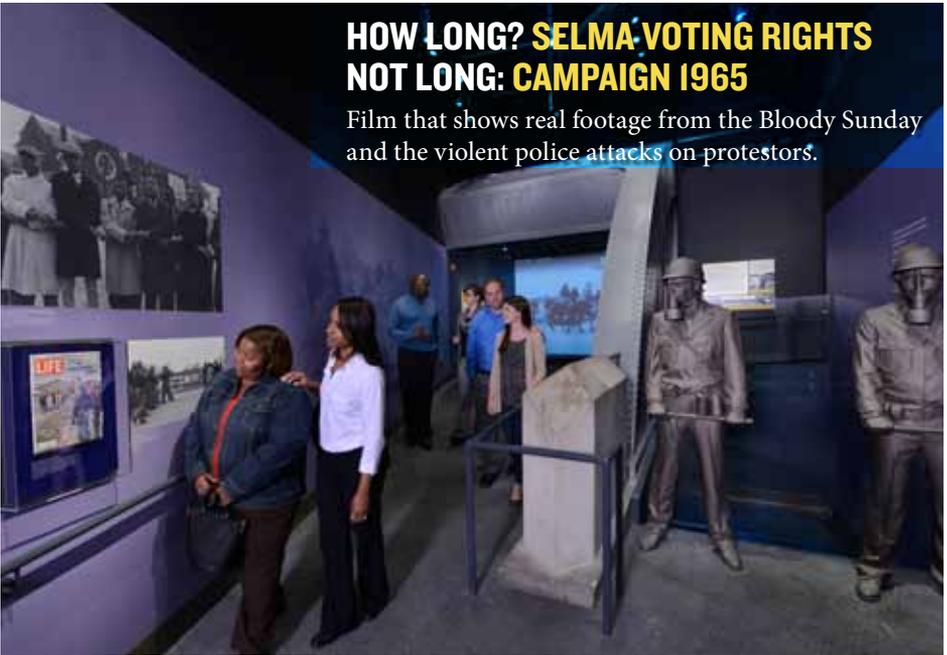
## SOME SUGGESTED READINGS

AGE	TITLE & AUTHOR
3-5	<i>Shades of People</i> Shelly Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
3-5	<i>All the Colors of the Earth</i> Sheila Hamanaka
3-5	<i>Bein' with You This Way</i> W. Nikola-Lisa
5-8	<i>The Other Side</i> Jacqueline Woodson
5-8	<i>Freedom Summer</i> Deborah Wiles
12+	<i>Face Relations</i> Marilyn Singer



## HOW LONG? SELMA VOTING RIGHTS NOT LONG: CAMPAIGN 1965

Film that shows real footage from the Bloody Sunday and the violent police attacks on protestors.



## I AM A MAN: MEMPHIS SANITATION STRIKE 1968

Images of police brutality toward peaceful protestors, including police officers using mace on participants.



## ABOUT THE NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM

The National Civil Rights Museum located at the Lorraine Motel, the assassination site of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., chronicles key episodes of the American Civil Rights Movement and the legacy of this movement to inspire participation in civil and human rights efforts globally, through its collections, exhibitions and educational programs.

The Museum is located in the historic arts district of downtown Memphis, Tennessee.

An internationally acclaimed tourist attraction, the Museum was voted third among *USA Today's* Top 10 Best American Iconic Attractions; Top 10 Best Historical Spots in the U.S. by *TLC's Family Travel*; Must See by the Age of 15 by *Budget Travel* and *Kids* and Top 10, American Treasures by *USA Today*.



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