

The Civil Rights Movement: Nashville
“Ain’t Scared of Your Jails” from *Eyes on the Prize* (1:00-26:20)
Viewing and Discussion Guide

Sit-in Activists- Note the actions of each of the following activists as you view this segment.

Diane Nash

Rev. James Lawson

Angela Butler

John Lewis

C.T. Vivian

Z. Alexander Looby

Ella Baker

Dr. Martin Luther King

1. Why did the black college and high school students of Nashville conduct sit-ins at the city’s lunch counters?
2. How did the students prepare for the sit-ins?
3. How did the community and its government officials first respond to the sit-ins?
4. What happened on February 27, 1960?
5. Discuss the wide variety of responses to the sit-ins and the arrests of the participants:

Other black students in Nashville

The white community

Businessmen

The black community

Black Parents

The nation

6. What was the effect of the bombing of Z. Alexander Looby's home on April 19th?

7. What happened when Diane Nash confronted Mayor Jim West?

8. According to Diane Nash, what was the role of Ella Baker in the organizing of SNCC in April of 1960?

9. How were the Nashville students empowered by their sit-in experience?

10. Do you know of any other activists who have organized to deal with an important issue and tried to effect positive social change? Compare the experiences of those activists with the Nashville students.

11. How did the sit-ins impact presidential politics in 1960?

Key Questions

Taken from the *Eyes on the Prize Study Guide* (page 41) written by Facing History and Ourselves. Register for *free* access to the guide *and* its primary sources at

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resources/eyes-prize-study-guide>

1. What were the strategic choices student leaders made in their battle to overcome segregation in Nashville? How did their choices affect the terms of the larger struggle against discrimination?
2. The students called their strategy nonviolent direct action. What does this term mean? What was necessary for their strategy to be successful? Why do you think the leaders of the civil rights movement used Nashville as a model for their nonviolent strategy?
3. How did the activists hope to change the way people throughout America thought about segregation?
4. How do you explain Nashville Mayor Ben West's change of heart in response to the protests?
5. Both local and federal officials were unwilling to enforce legal decisions that outlawed segregation. How did the students try to pressure the government to enforce the law?