

FOREWORD & CONCEPT PRIMER

A BRIEF LOOK AT CIVIC
CONCEPTS AND METHODS
OF CHANGE



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MISSION STATEMENT

Animating an iconic landmark, the International Civil Rights Center & Museum opened in 2010 as a comprehensive museum of the Civil Rights Movement and an innovative educational organization devoted to the understanding and advancement of civil and human rights in this country and the world. It commemorates the launch, on Feb. 1, 1960, of sit-ins at a whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, by the N.C. A&T Four college students. Their non-violent direct action challenged the American People to make good on promises of personal equality and civic inclusion enunciated in the Constitution. The fast-spreading Sit-In Movement ignited by the Greensboro Four worked to renew the Civil Rights Movement as a whole.

"THEIR NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION CHALLENGED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO MAKE GOOD ON PROMISES OF PERSONAL EQUALITY AND CIVIC INCLUSION ENUNCIATED IN THE CONSTITUTION."

Prof. Will Harris, ICRCM Principal Scholar



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

We hope that this virtual guide serves as a valuable tool for you as you explore the complex tapestry of the civil rights struggle in the United States and the globe. It is important for each of us to reflect on this consequential series of stories and events that shape our social and civic dialogue and help us inform our future.


John Swaine
International Civil Rights Center & Museum





CENTRAL THEME: CIVIC INCLUSION

Keep these thoughts in mind during your virtual experience and examine how they interact with the stories of struggle for justice and equality.

1 / AGENCY

The capacity to act on one's own behalf, as opposed to being under someone else's control or having one's will supplanted or over-ridden by the will of another. The idea of self-rule and self-determination, often a quality admired historically in America.

2 / COLLABORATION

The ability for a person or persons to come together and create aggregate and semi-permanent or permanent positive change in their community or society. A collection of people, often from different walks of life, who coordinate a plan and work towards a common goal.

3 / EFFICACY

The likelihood that one's actions can make a difference, along with the attitude that accompanies such a sense of effectiveness. The actions and strategies that are used to affect change, while considering and/or measuring its short- and long-term impacts.

NARRATIVES TO CONSIDER

- How do these apply to the **A&T Four** before, during, and after their decision to sit at the "whites-only" lunch counter at F. W. Woolworth's?
- How did students and young people harness these ideas as the Sit-In Movement **expanded**?
- How did those **opposed** to this movement use their own strategies to defend their conventional social norms (i.e. the "Jim Crow" system)?
- **How do you see these ideas being used today?**



THE METHODS OF CREATING CHANGE

STRATEGY



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There were multiple considerations made by the A&T Four and other activists when challenging the status quo of "Jim Crow" segregation and systems that circumvent their inherent Constitutional rights. Lengthy deliberations and planning took place during this process. Multiple questions were (and must) be considered when protesting: **What actions will be taken? When will these be initiated? Who will be involved? What is the rationale behind this action? How will we measure this impact? Can it be replicated and improved upon?**

DISCIPLINE



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Just as civil rights activists planned their actions (using *strategy*), they conducted themselves in a very calculated way whilst protesting. Activists were highly trained on how to operate **in tandem** with one another, ensuring that all participants **engaged in the same direct actions of civil disobedience without inciting violence or causing damage to persons or property.** Leaders and groups would monitor themselves and hold each other accountable, thereby increasing the efficacy of their demonstrations.

AGENDA



Activists recognized that their actions of civil disobedience (using *discipline*) were not wholly the mechanisms for affecting change but, rather, a piece of the process to garner attention and highlight America's systemic denial of rights to Black and Brown Americans. As a result, citizens – through a list of demands and grievances based upon the inequalities perpetuated by the laws and social norms of the country – constructed a vision of an America where the model of the "citizen" based upon our fundamental promises enumerated in the Constitution would finally be conducted in good faith and in good practice. Some considerations: **How does one's protests relate directly with one's goals? What are those goals? What specific changes are being demanded? How does this impact one's community not only as a collection of people but, rather, as a vision for how a people should conduct themselves?**