



**Audrey Faye Hendrick**

**Prompt for Grades 1-4:** Martin Luther King led people in nonviolent marches in cities where the laws kept them out of stores, libraries, parks, and buses that only white people were allowed to use. In Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. King called for black school children to join a Children's March in May, 1963. Read [or listen to] the account of Audrey Hendricks who was interviewed 30 years after she marched, at the age of nine. What happened to Audrey? How would you have felt about joining the Children's March? Account of Audrey Faye Hendricks (in *Freedom's Children*, Ellen Levine, 1993) May 2, 1963, Day One of the Children's March, Birmingham, Alabama.

"I remember it being warm the morning I marched. The night before at a meeting, they told us we'd be arrested. I went home and told my mother that I wanted to go. She just said, 'Okay.' I was in third grade. My teacher knew that I was going, and she cried. She thought, I guess, it was admirable that I would go.

I did not go to school the day that I went on the march. I wasn't nervous or scared. We started from Sixteenth Street [Baptist] Church. We always sang when we left the church. It was a release. And it also gave you calmness and reassurance.

We went down a side street by Kelly Ingram Park and marched about half a block. Then the police put us in a paddy wagon, and we went to Juvenile Hall [jail]. There were lots of kids, but I think I may have been the youngest child in there. **I was nine.** My girlfriend was a year older than me.

Later on they took me to a room where there were some men who asked me about the meetings [at the Sixteenth Street Church, where Martin Luther King and others spoke to Marchers]. I was nervous when they first called me in. It was a room of five or six men. All white. And I was little. They asked me if they forced us to march, and what was said in the meetings. I told them...that there would be singing and talking about freedom, that kind of thing. They said nothing. I was in there *about fifteen minutes. After that they let me go back.*

I was in jail seven days. We slept in little rooms with bunk beds. There were about twelve of us in a room. I was in a room with my friends. We called ourselves Freedom Fighters....We ate in a cafeteria. The food wasn't home cooking. I remember some grits, and they weren't too good. My parents could not get word to me for seven days.

We would get some news, like there was no more room in Juvenile Hall. They were taking the rest of the people to the fairgrounds because that was the only place to house them now. The jails were all full. I felt like I was helping to gain what we were trying to get, and that was freedom.

At the end of seven days they told me my parents were there to get me. I was real glad. They were just smiling and hugging me. I knew they had been nervous 'cause I heard them on the phone talking to friends and saying, "Oh, I'm glad she's back!" I could tell they were proud of me."