

Emmett Ramseyer

Mr. Maibach

Grade 5

Green Elementary School

Marching Home

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr was in Birmingham, Alabama, the most segregated city in the south. He believed that segregation should end, so he planned several protest marches and sit-ins. All of which didn't have much effect on the city. Dr. King needed a new idea that would grab the attention of not just Alabama, but all of America. Dr. King asked the children of the black schools to march into the city and get arrested. Was this idea the right choice?

Dr. King's idea was a necessary choice for three reasons. The first reason was the sit-ins and marches weren't making the impact that was needed to make a big difference. Using the children would make a very large and important statement. Using the children in the march was important because it made the adults think about the fact that they probably wouldn't have sent the children to jail if they were white, and would have just kindly let them pass through. Also, "... to show that the children cared about their own freedom and were willing to help" (Freeman Hrabowski III Stanford University and Education). Therefore, because of those reasons, he took the risk of sending children to jail. That risk paid off, the white people understood that the black children needed a better education.

I think that a lot of the black teens and children joined in the marching because they wanted to help their family and friends gain freedoms and be treated equally with the white people. They wanted to have the same treatment as white children, to go to the same schools, bathrooms, and even more. They also wanted to show that they truly cared about how they were

being treated. I would have joined because I would be making history, and would have liked to be of any help that I could to be treated equally.

When the children marched into the city of Birmingham, they were almost immediately arrested and harassed. There were so many children that when the police's wagons were full, they had to bring in school buses to take them to the jail. When they kept coming, they started to bring the police dogs in to harass and snap at the kids, but they still continued coming. In addition to the dogs, they brought in fire hoses. These hoses hurt the kids very badly, but they still continued to come. All the while, they were being arrested. When the jails were about to overflow with all of the kids, they had to send them to the fair grounds. After three days, Dr. King later came with their parents, and they went home with them. These kids helped to change history.

The children's march changed Birmingham and later America. The march helped to end segregation, and showed everyone that kids do care, and want to help. They helped to end segregation by alerting president John F Kennedy that Birmingham was severely mistreating the black people there. Kennedy supported the federal civil rights legislation, which later began the Civil Rights Act, which allowed African Americans to be treated equally with white people. All of which probably wouldn't have happened if John F Kennedy didn't support them. I found this information from the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Children today can change their town and the people around them by getting other people to agree with them. They can help them in the things that they plan to do. They can make signs, and posters. If they want to make a more severe change, then they can make a petition. They could also go, or write to the person in charge who could make such a change. They could also join a club of some sort regarding the topic. And lastly, they should share their ideas.

The Children's march in Birmingham made a big and useful impact. It helped to end segregation, it made people think, and it made people realize that the things that they were doing to the African American people were very wrong. It changed America to the free country that it is today. The children played a very important part in the civil rights movement. They changed America for what was right, and we should all do that as well.