



Birmingham Children's March  
Birmingham, Alabama, 1963



Artwork by Leah Parsons Cook

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## Birmingham Children's March, Birmingham, AL, 1963

In 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, was the “most segregated city in the country” according to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On May 2, thousands of students walked out of schools in protest of segregation, racism, and the violent terrorization of Black people. The action was planned by youth leaders and Reverend James Bevel. They worked for weeks to organize the march, recruiting influential youth like cheerleaders and football players to mobilize students and train them in nonviolent action. Radio DJs announced the date of the walkout on air using coded language. Over 5,000 students marched to city hall in coordinated groups of 10-50. As protests continued, Police Chief Bull Connor attacked them with snarling dogs and blasted them with fire hoses. Mass arrests flooded the jails. Close to a thousand children were arrested, including an eight-year-old. The protests continued until May 10. The television footage of the attacks on children horrified the nation and prompted the federal government to take action. A 72-hr negotiation with city officials ended segregation in Birmingham and removed Bull Connor from office. This campaign led directly to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### Look Closer! Check out these details:

- Is that kid jumping out the window? Yes! When administrators realized what was happening, some of them locked the school doors. Students jumped out the window to join the march.
- Can you spot the toothbrush? The girl in the center of the image is carrying a toothbrush in her hand. Many youth brought them to school, anticipating that they would be arrested during the action.
- Do you see someone clapping? Singing, clapping, and music were major parts of this campaign, along with many others in the Civil Rights Movement. Music lifted people's spirits when they faced difficult situations.
- How old do you think these students were? This image shows high school students, but children as young as 8 years old also participated. Their bold courage inspired everyone who was working for racial justice. Many adults joined them in the streets.

### Discussion Questions:

- The Birmingham Children's March was a campaign for racial justice. How are people working to achieve racial justice and end racism today?
- What is one thing you can do to support racial justice?
- What other issues have students organized walkouts for?
- The cheerleaders, football players, and radio DJs all played an important role in spreading the word. How do the influencers you follow stand up for social justice?
- Is it okay to break the rules for an important cause? Why or why not?
- The Birmingham marchers faced snarling dogs and painful fire hoses. What do you think gave them courage to face the dangers in order to achieve justice?

**Find more information, discussion questions, articles, documentaries, and more at:**

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The March of the Mill Children  
Philadelphia to New York, 1903



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## The March of the Mill Children, Philadelphia, PA, to New York, 1903

In 1903, two hundred children marched 130 miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to President Theodore Roosevelt's summer house in Oyster Bay, New York. Their demand? They wanted to go to school. Even where it was against the law, children as young as 5-6 years old were working 11-15 hours per day in mills, factories, and mines. Many lost fingers, limbs, or even their lives in workplace accidents. Parents and labor activists accompanied the young marchers, including the feisty organizer "Mother" Mary Harris Jones. In cities and towns, they gave speeches and held rallies calling for their rights to receive education and be protected from exploitation, injury, and harm. Although President Roosevelt refused to meet with them, the March of the Mill Children propelled the issue of child labor to national attention. In 1915, Pennsylvania established a minimum working age of 14. In 1916, the first federal labor law was passed.

### Look Closer! Check out these details:

- Why is that girl's arm in a sling? Many children were injured and maimed at work, including losing fingers and limbs.
- How many stars are on the flag? 48. In 1903, Alaska and Hawaii were not part of the United States.
- Who's that woman in the middle? Mary Harris Jones, known as Mother Jones, was a feisty 65-year-old, Irish-American labor organizer and a key organizer of the march.
- How young is that little girl? Children as young as 5 or 6 were working in the mills, mines, and factories, even where laws forbid the owners from using them.
- Why does that man have a drum? Historical photos of the marchers show that they played drums as they went through towns and cities.
- What does the sign say? "We Want To Go To School" and "More Schools, Less Injuries" are actual slogans from the campaign.

### Discussion Questions:

- These children are marching for the right to go to school. Imagine if you had to work in a factory from 7 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock in the evening. Would you join the march for the right to go to school?
- What is the difference between doing chores at home and child labor?
- Where in the world do you think child labor is still taking place today? How about in your own country?
- How are young people still discriminated against in our society?
- How young is the youngest person in this picture? How about the oldest? What do we gain from working with people of different ages?

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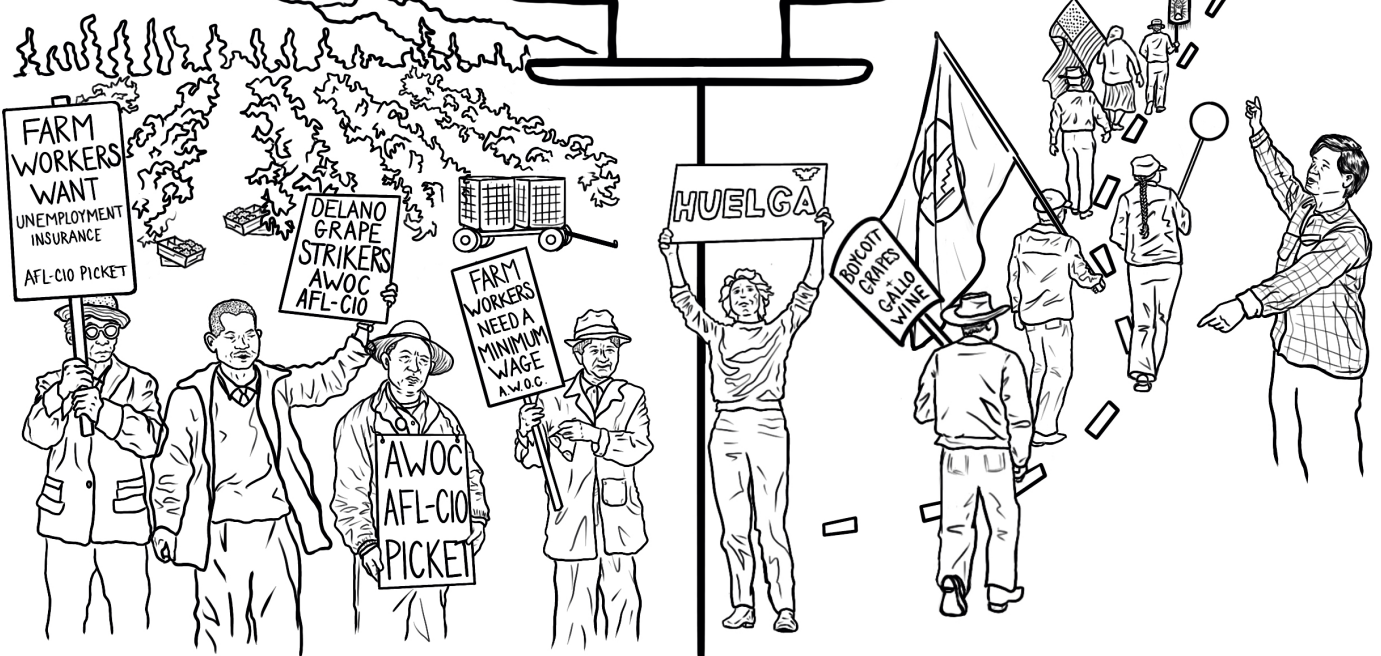
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# HUELGA!



**Delano Grape Strike & Boycott  
California and beyond, 1965-70**



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## Delano Grape Strike & Boycott, California and beyond, 1965-70

In 1965, Filipino farm workers went on strike in the vineyards of California, protesting terrible working conditions and cuts to their pay. When owners tried to replace them with Mexican workers, strike leader Larry Itliong reached out to labor organizers Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Together, Filipinos and Mexicans went on strike together in solidarity. After picketing in the fields, they marched 300 miles to Sacramento to bring their demands to the state capital. Allies and supporters asked people to boycott California grapes and wine. People brought signs to grocery stores nationwide. President Nixon tried to crush the farm workers by buying the grape harvest and sending it to troops in Vietnam. On the docks of Oakland, CA, the longshoremen refused to load the crates. 10,000 tons of grapes rotted. It took five years of striking, organizing, boycotting, and protesting, but the solidarity of the United Farm Workers prevailed. They won a collective bargaining agreement for 10,000 farm workers, and gained pay increases, health benefits, and more.

### Look Closer! Can you spot these details?

- How old are the Filipino men who are leading the strike in Delano? Because racist laws prohibited older Asian immigrant men from bringing over their families or marrying interracially, many workers on the frontline were the “manongs” (an honorific for older ‘uncles’) who felt they could risk violent repression because they did not have families to support or protect.
- Where’s Larry Itliong? The man in the hat on the right hand side of the vineyard picket line is Larry Itliong, the Filipino leader of this campaign. If you look very closely, you can see that he is missing some fingers—he lost them in a work-related accident.
- What is that word: *huelga*? *Huelga* means strike in Spanish. The woman holding that sign is Dolores Huerta, a key Mexican-American labor organizer of the strike.
- Where are they marching to? On the right, organizer Cesar Chavez is pointing out the route for the 300-mile-long march to the Sacramento State Capitol.

### Discussion Questions:

- What does “solidarity” mean? How did it give the farmworkers power and strength?
- The farm workers used many types of action to achieve their goals. What were they? How did the campaign grow stronger over time?
- Who do you think harvests the food you eat? How can you find out if they are being treated fairly or unfairly?
- Looking back, some people who were children in 1965 remember asking why there were no grapes on the table. Imagine one of your favorite things was the target of a boycott ... like a pizza boycott ... or a cell phone boycott. Would it be hard or easy to give up these items until the workers were paid fairly?

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Capitol Crawl for the ADA  
Washington, D.C., 1990



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## Capitol Crawl for the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Washington, DC, 1990

On March 13, 1990, over 1,000 people marched—or rather, *rolled*—in their wheelchairs to the steps of the US Capitol Building. The Disability Rights group ADAPT was protesting a wide range of injustices - lack of accessibility to basic amenities like transportation, water fountains, entrances, stairs; discrimination in jobs and education; institutionalization and sterilization—but the immediate grievance was the failure of Congress to pass the Americans With Disabilities Act. In front of 50+ journalists, 80 activists flung themselves out of their wheelchairs and crawled, pulled, dragged, and climbed up the steps to illustrate that there was no physical way for them to meet with their representatives with dignity. The youngest member of the action was 8-year-old Jennifer Keelan Chaffins, who had already been protesting for two years. Looking back, she said, “Even though I was quite young, I realized that as one of the very few kids that got to be involved in this movement, it wasn’t just about myself but it was about (the other kids) as well. I realized that people with disabilities are fighting for their right to be acknowledged and accepted ... and I can too, and I want to be a part of that.” Three Congressional leaders came out to meet the activists and vowed to make sure the ADA passed. Four months later, the ADA was signed into law.

### Look Closer! Check out these details:

- Recognize that building? That’s the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC. At the time, it was not wheelchair accessible.
- Why is that person being carried by the arms? The activists who participated in the Capitol Crawl had a range of physical disabilities/mobilities. Some boosted themselves backwards up each step. Some crawled forward on a combination of arms and knees. Some did assisted lifts like the man and the girl on the left.
- What is the symbol on their tee-shirts? The circle with the line through it is the symbol of the Disability Rights group ADAPT. In historic photos, the circle is white on a blue tee-shirt.

### Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to have a disability? What kinds of disabilities can you see? What kinds are less visible? Consider blindness, deafness, reading disabilities like dyslexia.
- Think about this building. If there were no elevators, ramps, or wheelchair accessible bathrooms, it would be hard for someone in a wheelchair to join us today. How can we make our schools and/or society more inclusive and just?
- In the picture, camera persons are broadcasting the action on television. What role does media play in making change? How do you think it moved the politicians to pass the ADA?
- Ableism is a term for discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities or who are perceived to be disabled. Where do you see this in our community?

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