



Active Reading

★ **STAR** How did marshals protect the people at the freedom rally?



VOCABULARY

Target Word

massive

mas•sive (adjective)

Rate It: ① ② ③ ④

Meaning

_____, heavy,
and solid

Example

_____ are
massive animals.



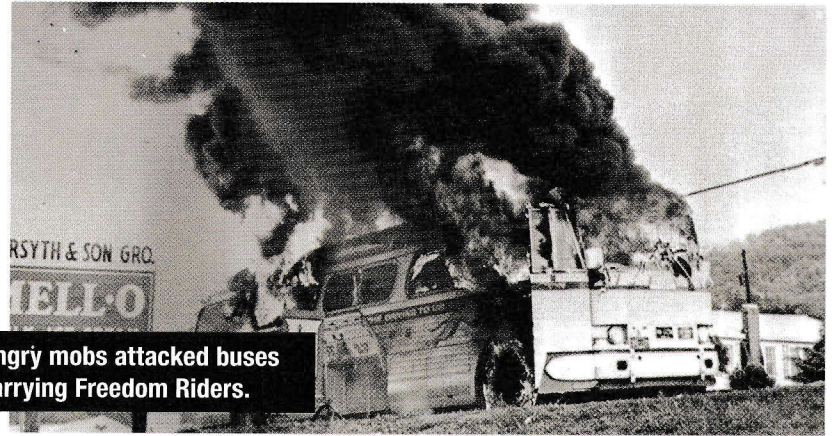
React and Write

▶ **WRITE** How would you have felt if you were at the rally that night?



Summarize

In one or two sentences, summarize the topic and important details in "1961 Freedom Rides."



Angry mobs attacked buses carrying Freedom Riders.

The church was packed. I would say there were 1,500 to 2,000 people. When we started chanting songs, we just got together and started singing and rocking with the wave. It was something to behold. Never in history has a group stuck together like that.

All of a sudden, you could hear the crowd outside getting louder and louder. You could hear bricks hitting the building. The people outside were screaming, "Bring them out, bring them out! Let's go in and get them!"

We had a little recreation room with some baseball bats downstairs. So a bunch of us were going to grab some bats, but the older people said, "Put them down!"

The telephone service at the church was off. Someone said, "How are we going to get a message out?"

The marshals had surrounded the church and were repelling the crowd. But some of our windows were broken, and tear gas seeped into the church. The fumes hurt our eyes. Some of those marshals were really hurt by the bricks that were thrown. One or two marshals were, I think, damaged for life.

I can only say this: Those marshals prevented a **massive** bloodshed that night. If that mob had gotten into the church . . . there would have been many lives lost, many lives. ▶

Words to Know! **behold** to see

Comprehension Focus

Make Inferences

► Complete this chart to make an inference about "1961 Freedom Rides."

What I Learned From Reading

*At the church, the older people
told the younger people to put
down the bats.*

What I Already Know

My Inference



Active Reading

★**STAR** Who was killed in the Birmingham bombing?

VOCABULARY
Target Word

sacred

sa•cred (adjective)

Rate It: ① ② ③ ④

Meaning

_____ or _____

Example

_____ are *sacred* places.

CRITICAL READING



Synthesize

▶ **WRITE** If you had witnessed the Birmingham Bombing, what details do you think would have affected you most? Why?



React and Write

▶ **WRITE** Bernita says that she was taught not to be angry. Would you have been angry? How else would you have felt?

1963 THE BIRMINGHAM BOMBING

On September 15, 1963, a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. It killed four African-American girls: Addie Mae Collins, 14; Denise McNair, 11; Cynthia Wesley, 14; and Carole Robertson, 14. All decent people were horrified. Three women who were teens at the time remember the event clearly.

➤ **Mary Gadson**



I knew two of the girls who were killed at the Sixteenth Street bombing. Cynthia Wesley and I sang in the choir together. And Denise McNair went to Center Street School with me, although she was younger than I was. Denise's mother was one of my teachers.

I was at home getting ready to go to church when I heard the news on the radio. My whole family was at home. The lady next door called my mama to ask her to turn on the TV. She did, and they had the news report about the bombing. My mama was crying. We all started crying. The news report said that as far as they could tell there were some deaths, but at that time they didn't know how many. Later, the report came that it was four girls who had been killed.

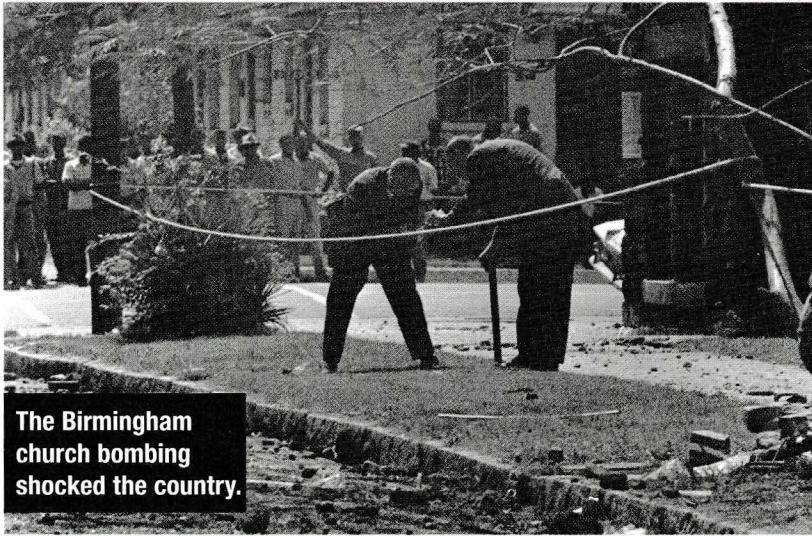
I couldn't believe anybody would do something like that at a church. We knew they had bombed houses and cars. That was nothing new. But when you take it out of the street and into the church, it was like nothing was **sacred** anymore.

➤ **Audrey Faye Hendricks**



I was at church when someone came and told my pastor. He let us know that there had been a bombing at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. People were real upset. They cried. I cried. Later on that night I learned that the girls had died. I wondered how somebody could be so

Words to Know! **horrified** shocked or upset



The Birmingham church bombing shocked the country.

hate-filled about color. I remember seeing Denise's mother at school one day after they had buried her. But I don't think she ever taught again. Denise was an only child.

➤ **Bernita Roberson**

When the bomb went off, we felt it in our Sunday school class four blocks away. I lived across the street from Bethel Baptist, so I knew the feeling of a bomb. In about fifteen minutes, word got to us that they had bombed Sixteenth Street, where the children were in Sunday school. Then our Sunday school immediately let out, and everyone got together in prayer.

I was a friend of Denise McNair. I knew her grandfather. He owned a cleaners, and I knew her from there. I was a flower girl for her funeral. Three of the funerals were held at the same time. There was nothing like seeing those three families there, and the three coffins. I was just trying to understand how somebody could do this to children. To this day, I don't really know.

I wasn't angry because I was taught not to be. I was taught to forgive people. Things were happening so fast during that time, you didn't know what to expect next. Anger and sorrow were just a part of trying to get accomplished what you wanted. ➤



Fact and Opinion

1. **UNDERLINE** A fact is a statement that can be proven. Identify one fact about the Birmingham bombing.
2. **CIRCLE** An opinion tells what someone thinks. It may seem correct, but it cannot be proven. Mark one opinion about the Birmingham bombing.



REVIEW

Compare and Contrast

Compare and contrast how Mary, Audrey, and Bernita reacted to the bombing.
