

## Title of Lesson: *Birmingham, Fall 1963*

(Suggested grade level: 11)

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### Background Information:

Background information for teacher:

- An excellent resource for teachers is *But for Birmingham* by Glenn T. Eskew, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- A copy of the September 15, 1963, *New York Times* article describing the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church can be found at <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0915.html>.
- Newspaper articles from the *Birmingham World* and the *Montgomery Advertiser* describing the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist can be found at [http://www.useekufind.com/peace/a\\_1963\\_church\\_bombing.htm#RACIAL%20TENSION](http://www.useekufind.com/peace/a_1963_church_bombing.htm#RACIAL%20TENSION).
- The entire text of Martin Luther King's eulogy for Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair, and Cynthia Diane Wesley can be found at [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc\\_eulogy\\_for\\_the\\_martyred\\_children/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_eulogy_for_the_martyred_children/).

**Overview of lesson:** This lesson is the fourth in a four-part series on the struggle for civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama, and the nation in 1963. The focus of this lesson is the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Student will analyze photos from this tragedy and relate the bombing to future events.

### Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)  
Eleventh Grade: Standard 12, (p.79)

#### [National Standards for History, 1996](#)

Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p. 121)

Era 9, Standard 4 – The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

4A – The student understands the “Second Reconstruction” and its advancement of civil rights.

#### [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies](#), (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (p. 139)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

#### [National Standards for Civics and Government](#), (1994)

Standard II – What are the foundations of the American political system? (p. 99)

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about issues concerning the disparities between American ideals and realities.

**Primary Learning Objective(s):**

The student will be able to:

- Analyze photos showing the aftermath of the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.
- Evaluate the outcome of the bombing on Birmingham, Alabama, and on the nation.

**Additional Learning Objective:**

- Compare and contrast the coverage of the bombing from three different newspapers. (objective for extension)

**Time allotted:** 50 minutes

**Materials and Equipment:**

- *PowerPoint*, "[Birmingham, 1963, Fall Despair](#)"
- The attached *Tearing Down Barriers* is provided for use with all four lessons on Birmingham in 1963. However, it can also be used if only one of the lessons is taught.
- Copies of the newspaper articles from the *New York Times*, the *Birmingham World*, and the *Montgomery Advertiser* are needed if the extension is assigned. The URLs for these articles are given above.

**Technological Resources:**

- Computer with internet access
- *PowerPoint* (v. '97-2003) - If you have a newer version, [a viewer](#) (free) can be downloaded from the internet.
- Digital projector

**Background/Preparation:**

- The students should have an understanding of:
  - Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments
  - Jim Crow
  - *Plessy v Ferguson*
  - *Brown v Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*
  - Montgomery bus boycott
  - Little Rock school integration
  - Freedom Riders

**Procedures/Activities:****Engagement/Motivation Activity:**

Show the students the picture found at

[http://216.226.178.196/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/photo&CISOPTR=312&CISOBOX=1&REC=7](http://216.226.178.196/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/photo&CISOPTR=312&CISOBOX=1&REC=7). This [photograph](#) from the Alabama Department of Archives and History was taken by Anthony

Falletta of the *Birmingham News* on September 15, 1963. Ask the students the following questions:

- "What do you think is happening in this picture?"
- "What could have caused the damage pictured in the photograph?"
- "Who do you see in the picture?"
- "Are any of those pictured acting in an official capacity? How do you know?"

- “What type of building do you think is pictured on the right side of the photograph?”
- “What type of building do you think is pictured on the left side of the photograph?”
- “Are there any clues as to the date the picture was taken?”

Tell the students that in this lesson they will learn about the events that led to this photograph being taken and about the aftermath of those events.

<b>Step 1</b>	Show slides one through three of the <i>PowerPoint</i> , “ <a href="#">Birmingham, 1963, Fall Despair</a> .” Ask, “Are there any foreshadowing words on slide three? If so, what are they?” Ask student to remember the content of slide three as they view the remainder of the <i>PowerPoint</i> .
<b>Step 2</b>	Show slides four and five. Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “What ‘political or social objectives’ do you believe the Klan hoped to achieve with this bombing?”</li> <li>● “Why do you think the Klan chose this particular church for this act of violence?”</li> <li>● “Why was the fuse time-delayed?”</li> <li>● “Can you think of any other examples of domestic terrorism which have occurred in the United States?”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	Show slides six through eight. Allow time for reflection. Tell the students that these four young girls had gone in the restroom after Sunday school to get ready for the Sunday worship service. The restroom was directly under the dynamite. Ask the students, “What do you think these girls were talking about in the minutes before the blast?” Tell the students that dozens of church members were injured by flying debris, and at least twenty were so badly injured that they required hospitalization.
<b>Step 4</b>	Show slides nine through thirteen. Allow time for reflection after each slide. Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “What can you tell about the magnitude of the blast from these pictures?”</li> <li>● “Who do you see in the picture? What are they doing?”</li> <li>● “If you had been a photographer or reporter, what would your thoughts have been as you surveyed this scene?”</li> <li>● “If you had been a member of that church, what would have been your reaction to the bombing?”</li> </ul> <p>Tell the students that the minister of the church, the Reverend John H. Cross, picked up a megaphone and told the angry crowd to go home. Some sources say he then recited the Twenty-Third Psalm; others sources report that he prayed the “Lord’s Prayer.”</p>
<b>Step 5</b>	Show slides fourteen and fifteen. Ask the students, “What irony is pictured in each of these two photographs?” Tell the students that the stained glass window shown on slide fifteen was the only stained glass window in the church that remained in its frame.
<b>Step 6</b>	Show slide sixteen. Ask the students, “Why do you think the police officer was never charged with a crime?”

<b>Step 7</b>	Show slides seventeen and eighteen. Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How did Michael Farley’s and Larry Joe Sims’s attendance at a segregationist rally affect their later actions?”</li> <li>• “Can you give other examples of unintended consequences or tragic results of someone’s actions?”</li> <li>• “What event overshadowed the deaths of Johnny Robinson and Virgil Ware causing their deaths to be less well known?”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 8</b>	Show slide nineteen. Give students the opportunity to discuss “Bull” Conner’s comments.
<b>Step 9</b>	Show slide twenty. Give students time to predict how the outcome of Kennedy’s assassination might be related to the outcome of the church bombing.
<b>Step 10</b>	Show slides twenty-one and twenty-two. Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Do you agree with King that good can come from evil? If yes, give an example.”</li> <li>• “What does the phrase ‘but for Birmingham’ mean?”</li> </ul>
<b>Step 11</b>	Show slide twenty-three. “How is the event pictured on this slide an outcome of the events in Birmingham in 1963?”

**Assessment Strategies:**

- Suggested essay question for unit test:  
Explain specific examples of how the events in Birmingham in 1963 led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Grade the *Tearing Down Barriers* worksheet for accuracy.

**Extension:**

- Hand out copies of the three newspaper articles (URLs given above) which reported the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Allow students in groups or individually to read the articles and to give examples of how the reporting is similar and how it differs.

**Remediation:**

- Allow students to take copies of the *PowerPoint* home for additional study.

**Accommodation:**

- Review Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and Gifted or ELL Plans for instructional and assessment accommodations or modifications.

**Modification:**

- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of appropriate learning objectives.

## Tearing Down Barriers Worksheet

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

As you watch each *PowerPoint*, analyze the events being described as to whether or not the event was instrumental in tearing down barriers to equality for African Americans. Examine the outcome of each event in terms of these categories: economic barriers, social barriers, political barriers, and educational barriers. Fill in the table below with your analysis. Remember that some events may have impacted more than one category and defend your analysis with facts.

### ***PowerPoint – Lessons 1 and PowerPoint – Lesson 2, Spring 1963***

<b>Event</b>	<b>Barrier(s)</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Albany Movement		
Project C Adult protests		
“Letter from Birmingham Jail”		
Project C Children’s March		
Use of dogs and fire hoses by “Bull” Conner		
President Kennedy’s Intervention in Birmingham		

### ***PowerPoint – Lesson 3, Summer 1963***

<b>Event</b>	<b>Barrier(s)</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Assassination of Medgar Evers		
Integration of the University of Alabama		
March on Washington		
“I Have a Dream” speech		

**PowerPoint – Lesson 4, Fall 1963**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Barrier(s)</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church		
Death of Johnny Robinson		
Death of Virgil Ware		
Assassination of John F. Kennedy		
Civil Rights Act of 1964		

## **Tearing Down Barriers Analysis Worksheet**

As you study the events in Alabama and specifically in Birmingham in 1963, examine each event that is presented in the *PowerPoint* to determine how the event impacted the struggle to remove barriers for African Americans.

**Economic barriers**

**Political barriers**

**Educational barriers**

**Social barriers**