



Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement

Ann Bausum

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Freedom Riders compares and contrasts the childhoods of John Lewis and James Zwerg in a way that helps young readers understand the segregated experience of our nation's past. It shows how a common interest in justice created the convergent path that enabled these young men to meet as Freedom Riders on a bus journey south.

No other book on the Freedom Riders has used such a personal perspective. These two young men, empowered by their successes in the Nashville student movement, were among those who volunteered to continue the Freedom Rides after violence in Anniston, Alabama, left the original bus in flames with the riders injured and in retreat. Lewis and Zwerg joined the cause knowing their own fate could be equally harsh, if not worse. The journey they shared as freedom riders through the Deep South changed not only their own lives but our nation's history.

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Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement Details

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From Reader Review Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement for online ebook

Howie Kahekili says

This book tells the story of John Lewis and Jim Zwerg two powerful leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and their role as Freedom Riders. Two different points of view are offered, Lewis and Zwerg came from different backgrounds and life journeys, and however they shared the same dream; to end segregation in America. Lewis grew up black in a poor family in the segregated south, while Zwerg grew up white in a wealthy family in a part of the country where there was little to no diversity. Eventually, their paths crossed when they decided to join a group of students in Tennessee who would board a Greyhound bus and head to the Deep South. These group of students embarked on this journey with the goal to integrate in each bus stop; they became known as the Freedom Riders. This book is truly amazing and should be used in the classroom to help teach the civil rights movement. The author stays very truthful and does a great job connecting the text to the reader. This book is not a dense history book which makes it very easy to follow along. and the pictures do a great job with the visuals.

Bausum, A. (2006). Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement. U.S: National Geographic Society.

Maria Ritchey says

In her book, "Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement", Ann Bausum shares the stories of two men of very different backgrounds whose paths crossed when they decided to join the Freedom Riders and support the non-violent protest against discrimination. John Lewis is a black American born into segregated Troy, Alabama and Jim Zwerg a white American born into a small Wisconsin town whose total population included only one person of color. They lived very different lives and had very different childhoods. However, in the early 1960's, these two men both found themselves in Nashville, Tennessee where they joined the freedom riders. The rest of the book chronicles their journey together and the events which took place while a part of the Freedom Riders. The book begins with introductions written by both John Lewis and Jim Zwerg. These letters are captivating because in them the men about whom this book is written invite the audience into their story. It immediately grabs the reader's attention and says, "We have a story worth sharing." I also think this is an excellent book to use in the classroom because it tells the story of this tumultuous period in our nation's history from the perspectives of both a white American and a black American. In doing this, Bausum provides a more well-rounded picture of these events. It also makes the book more relevant and relatable for a greater number of students. I highly recommend the use of this book within the classroom. It is thought provoking, insightful and will capture the attention of the reader.

Roshely Roy says

I chose to read Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement by Ann Bausum because it seemed very interesting to me, but mostly because I needed some extra credit. This book was the best extra credit assignment I have ever done. It compares and contrasts the

lives of two Freedom Riders and how they came to be Freedom Riders. The two freedom riders are John Lewis and Jim Zwerg. The bizarre part is that they had two completely different childhoods. One was an African American boy struggling to survive on the little he was provided while the other was a boy from an average white family who had an amazing childhood. John Lewis, in the book stated that he wanted to get out of Alabama because of the restrictions the state placed only because of the color of his skin. He struggled all throughout his childhood and he couldn't do anything about it. Jim Zwerg, on the other hand, stated that he had a wonderful childhood. He lived in a nice two-story house. A remarkable thing is that he has not seen a lot of blacks in his childhood either. When Jim Zwerg applied to university, he finally befriended colored people. Even his roommate was colored and ever since his roommate got picked on because of his color, he became interested in civil rights. He even applied to Fisk University which was a predominately black school. This is where he met John Lewis and the story of the Freedom Riders starts. The Freedom Riders went through many struggles. They had to deal with backlash from their parents as well as the public. They had to bear brutal beatings and constant arrests. However, they didn't let these problems stop them from fighting for equality. In fact, more people joined them because of the motivating spirit the Freedom Riders instilled in many people. The story of how they continued their fight after the problems started is described wonderfully in this book. The pictures and song lyrics included in this book really help the reader visualize the movement and the struggles of these gentlemen. This story is not just a story for entertainment; it's for gaining a sense of knowledge of America's history. I think the pictures in the book were a great add-on because it really aides in visualizing the movement for the reader. The pictures helped me see the struggles that they went through, visually, and the captions helped me see what they went through, emotionally. I strongly recommend this book to someone who wishes to know about America's history or someone who wants to read an inspirational book. If I didn't read this book for extra credit, I might have never come upon this book and that would've been a huge mistake. I usually don't like to read these kind of books but this was one good read.. definitely a page turner.

Jessica Gilligan says

Bausum, Ann (2006). *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*. National Geographic Society: Washington, DC.

Junior Book Project: Biography

2007 Sibert Honor Book

This is an engaging book detailing the history of the freedom riders, as they fought to gain rights by taking an initiative during the Civil Rights Movement. The book portrays the history of the riders by focusing on the experiences of two of its riders: John—a black college student from the deep South, and Jim—a white college student from the north. These men, coming from two very different backgrounds, came together for the same, just cause: to achieve integration of buses, which would later help to bring about more rights through integration. Real photos from the time period add to the authenticity of the book and offer students a shocking glimpse of abuses that stem from segregation and racism. This is such a great book for 6-8 grade history lessons because of the depth and quality of information it offers about the Civil Rights Movement, but it also speaks about civic duty and makes the reader think about what kinds of social injustices should be fought and how far are they willing to fight for it. I really liked how the chapters began with lyrics from freedom songs. I think this factor could also lend itself to a good class exercise in both History and English while crafting their own songs and lyrics from the time period.

Don says

This was a great short history of the Freedom Riders highlighting the contributions of Congressman John Lewis and Jim Zwerg. It's a must-read for anyone looking to learn more about the Civil Rights Movement.

Rachel Doran says

Wow, Wow, Wow. I loved everything about this book. From the introduction, where Bausum introduces John and Jim and her personal interviews with them, to the real pictures scattered throughout, to the information in the back about the entire book. I loved every bit of it. This book is about two sides of the story. John Lewis was black and Jim Zwerg was white who lived in an area that knew little about diversity, the chapters let the reader see how they both lived- as separate lives, and when they came together on the freedom ride. The early chapters are about the two boy's lifestyles such as, school life and home life. John Lewis went to a segregated school, and everything about it was hand-me-downs from the rich white schools around the area, such as busses and textbooks. Jim Zwerg's life was a lot different. For example, He attended schools that consisted of only white children. He had opportunities of student council and he attended college. The later chapters talk about the freedom riders and who they are and what they were all about.

Santana Martensen says

Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement written by Ann Bausum is a book that not only allows the reader to get extremely valuable knowledge on such an important time in history, but the reader gets informed through a beautiful story line. This book follows two different freedom riders, one by the name of John Lewis and the other by the name of Jim Zwerg, that have had completely different upbringings but were led to the same place fighting for the same cause. John Lewis was an African American who joined the Freedom Riders at a very young age despite his parents disapproval. Jim Zwerg was a white Freedom Rider who grew up in a sheltered community with all whites until he went to college and quickly joined the Freedom Riders despite his parents disapproval as well. This beautiful piece walks alongside these two men through all the brutality and hatred they experienced all the way until the Freedom Riders finally achieved what they had been working towards for so many years. I think that this book would be a fantastic book to put in your classroom library or incorporate into your civil rights unit because it shows 2 completely different perspectives regarding the same issue. This is a picture book as well that includes graphic and real pictures and images, which I think is valuable information for the students to see and to be aware of.

Beth Crawford says

Freedom Riders takes a unique perspective on the Freedom Rides that took place throughout the civil rights movement. John Lewis, a African American, and Jim Zwerg, a white man, both participated in the freedom rides to Montgomery Alabama. This book describes in great detail the journey of both men and the struggles

and triumphs they faced throughout this time.

Both men were students in Nashville that were hoping to make a difference in the rights of African Americans. Jim Zwerg entered college with hopes of becoming a minister. Once in college he decided to put that dream on hold while participating in the freedom rides. At the end of the book, readers learn that he did end up as a minister after recovering from the rides and severe attacks he was involved in. Much like Jim Zwerg, John Lewis also wanted a life of helping others which was a main reason for him joining the movement. He felt he was called at the country's time of need to bring equal rights to all citizens.

This book would be a great edition to a civil rights movement unit; however, due to the graphic language and description of the attacks and beatings, it would be most appropriate with older students. The book takes an interesting perspective from two involved in the rides and attacks which makes it one of the more credible books to include in a unit.

Laura Paulisich says

Wow! iL♥️?VE this book♥️? I love the unique details and photos. I love the timeline, roster of riders, research notes and so much more! So much learning! So much gratitude for and awe of riders and all involved!
#thankyousomuch @annbausum

Jeimy says

Brief yet powerful description of the Freedom Rides, the events that preceded them, and how they helped desegregate buses once and for all.

Andrea says

This books tells the story of John Lewis and Jim Zwerg two powerful leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and their role as Freedom Riders. Two different points of view are offered, Lewis and Zwerg came from different backgrounds and life journeys, and however they shared the same dream; to end segregation in America. Lewis grew up black in a poor family in the segregated south, while Zwerg grew up white in a wealthy family in a part of the country where there was little to no diversity. Eventually, their paths crossed when they decided to join a group of students in Tennessee who would board a Greyhound bus and head to the Deep South. These group of students embarked on this journey with the goal to integrate in each bus stop; they became known at the Freedom Riders. I love how this book retails the events of the Freedom Riders. The author provides its readers not only one point of view but two which adds to the books credibility. The illustrations are also wonderful. The author added pictures showing events that the text talked about. So the text was backed up by real life images. Even though the Civil Rights movement was an era of triumph but also an era of violence, the author does a great job in presenting this touchy subject in appropriate manner.

Taylor Syring says

In the book Freedom Riders Bausum compares and contrasts the very different lives of John Lewis and Jim

Zwerg and how they both ended up as part of the freedom riders. I loved this book's ability to offer readers who probably didn't live through segregation a glimpse into what it was like. This is really successful in this book particularly because the two men's lives are chronicled in front of you on the pages as you see their steps, decisions, and beliefs that led them to the same bus ride headed south. This book is great for children because it proves that people that come from very different lives can still come together for shared beliefs. I also love that this book is a piece of civil rights literature that is not about MLK or Rosa Parks. With civil rights literature we often pick the same three stories to follow, I think it is important to branch out with civil rights literature because every person that helped play a role in the movement is valuable, so books that highlight individuals that you may not have heard of like this one make me happy.

Kyle Moerchen says

a quick read. great local connections to the Civil Rights movement.

Rachel Pederson says

Freedom Riders is a book that goes into detail about two men's lives, one white and one black, and how they're journey to help in the Civil Rights Movement made them some of the best of friends. Written by Ann Bausum, the book explores the lives of John Lewis, a young black man that grew up in Alabama, and Jim Zwerg, a wealthy white man that grew up in Wisconsin. Both men lived completely different lives until they ended up in Nashville for college. Here, both white and colored people of the community performed "nonviolent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters of the South" (Bausum, 2006). They gathered at segregated movie theatres to protest as well. Eventually, people became passionate about the cause and decided that riding interstate buses to "reconcile, or resolve, opposing viewpoints on racial segregation" (Bausum, 2006). People were beaten severely, and some were even killed in these Freedom Rides, but all were prepared to fight for the defeat of racial segregation. Through their hard work, the Freedom Riders were successful in that the Supreme Court ordered that seating in interstate buses would not pay any attention to race.

This would be a great book for students to learn about sticking up for what they believe in, as well as gain some background knowledge on what the United States was like during the civil rights movement. Without the people from our history fighting for the rights of African Americans, our society wouldn't be anything like what it is like today. This book gives students the opportunity to appreciate what these amazing people have done for them, and how their impact is still recognized in our every day lives. Students can see how making a difference can last for years and years.

Catherine says

Interesting read. This book followed two of the riders, John Lewis and Jim Zwerg. The pictures were interesting and I really liked how the book included lyrics from the songs that they would sing.
