

TEACHER'S GUIDE
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MISSION US: "No Turning Back"

Fannie Lou Hamer's "I Woke Up This Morning"

Throughout the civil rights movement, participants sang freedom songs to boost morale, to strengthen the movement, and to be in solidarity with one another in difficult moments. Fannie Lou Hamer was known for her powerful voice, leading civil rights groups in songs like this one. Many of these songs were inspired by church hymns while some were based on popular songs of the time. This one was adapted from a gospel song called "I Woke Up This Morning with My Mind Stayed on Jesus."

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelujah

Oh, well I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelujah

I'm walking and talking with my mind stayed on freedom
Walking and talking with my mind stayed on freedom
(You know I'm) walking and talking with my mind stayed on freedom
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelu (hallelu)
Hallelujah

Come on and walk, walk, walk, walk
Walk, walk, with your mind on freedom
Walk, walk, walk, walk
Walk, walk with your mind on freedom
Oh, oh-oh-oh

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Walk, walk, come on and walk, walk

(We gotta) talk, talk

talk, talk, talk, talk

With your mind on freedom

Talk, talk, talk, talk

Talk, talk, with your mind on freedom

Oh, oh-oh-oh

Talk, talk, talk, talk

Has no little harm to keep your mind (to keep your mind)

Stayed on freedom (on freedom)

Ain't no harm to keep your mind (keep your mind)

Stayed on freedom

Ain't no harm to keep your mind

Stayed on freedom

Hallelu (hallelu)

Hallelu (hallelu)

Hallelujah

walk, walk, walk, walk

Walk, walk, with your mind on freedom

Walk, walk, walk, walk

Walk, walk with your mind on freedom

Oh, oh-oh-oh

(Come on now) walk, walk, walk, walk

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom

Hallelu (hallelu)

Hallelu (hallelu)

Hallelujah

Source: <https://folkways.si.edu/social-power/fannie-lou-hamer/i-woke-up-this-morning>

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you notice about the crowd behind the sit-in participants?
2. What do you notice about the behavior of the sit-in participants in this photo?
3. Why might have the photographer felt it was important to capture this moment?