

Eyes on the Prize

Do you ever listen to a song that makes you want to change the world? Music has the ability to inspire us, give us ideas, and bring us together. Songs played a significant role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, as African-Americans struggled to be treated fairly and equally. At protests, marches, church meetings, and even from jail cells, people lifted their voices together, singing about their hope and determination.

"Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" shows how a song can help motivate and strengthen people. African-Americans and others who supported them were threatened, beaten, and jailed for participating in peaceful protests. But like Paul and Silas in the song, they did not give up. They kept working, hoping, and singing, "holding on" for a time when they would achieve equality.

Directions: Read the poem "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," by Alice Wine. Then answer the questions on the next page based on the poem and the above passage. Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Paul and Silas bound in jail,
had no money for to go their bail,
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

We're gonna ride for civil rights,
we're gonna ride for both black and white.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

We've met jail and violence too,
but God's love has seen us through.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

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1. What did "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" mean for people during the civil rights era?

2. In the second verse, what does "We're gonna ride for civil rights" refer to?

3. How could the message of this song apply in other situations?

4. Can you think of a song you know today that inspires you to achieve something?

Critical Thinking

Choose either "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" or another song, and write a paragraph about how the song applies to you. Is there a time you kept your eyes on a prize?