

Protesting Peacefully



John Lewis was a leader. He fought for equal rights. He worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

John led many protests. A protest is when people get together to show they are upset.

John felt that it was best to protest in a peaceful way. This is called a peaceful protest. There are many ways to do this. One is a sit-in. You do this by sitting in one place and not moving. John led many sit-ins. Most of the protesters were black. They sat down in places marked "whites-only." They did not move. They stayed for hours. Sometimes the sit-ins lasted for days.

John remembers his first protest. He went with a group to a "whites-only" restaurant. They all sat down at the counter. They were told: "We don't serve your kind here." But they did not leave.

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Most sit-ins ended when police came. The police dragged protesters away. The protesters didn't fight with the police. They let police carry them like dolls.

A boycott is another type of peaceful protest. A boycott is when you stop buying or using something. In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for sitting in the front of a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The front of the bus was “whites-only.” This was unfair to black people.

The black community was angry that Rosa was arrested. They wanted the bus to change its rules. They boycotted the bus company. The boycott lasted for a whole year. They did not ride the buses. They did not buy bus tickets. The bus company lost money. There were not enough people buying tickets.

The boycott showed the company that it needed its black customers to stay in business. It showed the company that it had to treat all its customers equally. The boycott got the bus company to change its rules.

