COURAGEOUS BAPTIST WOMEN



FREEDOM FAITH

The Life of Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall

BAPTIST HISTORY & HERITAGE SOCIETY

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OVERVIEW



Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall was a Baptist preacher, teacher and leader in the Civil Rights Movement. She also helped communities work together, studied and taught faith, and spoke from the experiences of Black women. She was connected with the Progressive National Baptists and American Baptists, two groups of Baptist churches. Churches across the country invited her to preach and speak, and she advised church groups and encouraged young ministers. Throughout her life, she stood up for the freedom of others and urged the church to do the same.

BIBLE VERSE

Luke 4:18-21: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. He [Jesus] began to explain to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it."

SESSION OUTLINE

Prepare

- Make copies of the Student Handout.
- Review the story and Bible Verse.

Welcome

- Greet students as they arrive.
- **Ask:** Whom would you call courageous?

Engage

- Distribute the Student Handout.
- Read and discuss the Bible Verse.
- Work on the Handout Activity.
- Transition to Story Time.

Share

- Share about Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall.
- Share the photo and caption.
- Discuss Prathia's courage and pray.
- Watch videos about Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall.

Conclude

- Lead students in Bonus Activities as time permits.

STORY

Who Was Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall?

Prathia Hall was a preacher, a teacher and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. This movement worked to end unfair laws and unfair treatment of Black people. Born in 1940, Prathia was the daughter of a preacher and grew up learning that God's love is for everyone. Beginning as a young woman in college, she worked with others in the movement to change unfair laws. She prayed and spoke at many civil rights gatherings. She had even been put in jail after joining a sit-in, a peaceful protest in which people sat down and refused to leave.

One night, after several churches had been burned, Prathia prayed at a gathering. In her prayer, she said, "I have a dream." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was there. Many people believe Prathia's prayer helped inspire the words he later made famous in his "I Have a Dream" speech. Dr. King said Prathia was one of the strongest speakers he had ever heard.

Prathia later became pastor of her father's church in Philadelphia and served there for almost 25 years. She taught at schools that trained pastors and helped many young ministers—especially women—follow God's call.

Prathia believed that God calls everyone and gives every person gifts to use in God's kingdom, no matter their age, skin color or gender. She worked for "freedom faith"—a faith that helps set people free, breaks down barriers that keep people apart and teaches that all people are equal. She challenged church leaders who would not allow women who were called and prepared to preach.

Even when Prathia became very sick with cancer, she kept preaching, teaching and helping others.

Prathia Hall's life reminds us that God gives us dreams of freedom and courage to stand up for what is right. She was a courageous Baptist who stood up for others, even when doing so meant going to jail, so that everyone could be treated fairly.

DISCUSSION AND PRAYER

- **Ask:** What did Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall believe about God's call?
- **Ask:** How did she show courage?
- **Ask:** How did Prathia change things?
- **Say:** Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall believed God wants every person to be free and treated fairly. She taught that God sets us free and calls us to help others be free too. Through the Civil Rights Movement, she helped challenge unfair laws. She also taught churches that God gives gifts to both women and men. She called churches to oppose unfair treatment based on race, gender or age.
- **Pray:** Dear God, thank you for courageous women like Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall. Thank you for how she shared your great love with others and for how she challenged the Church to stand up for freedom for everyone. Amen.

FACT CHECK

✊ Prathia was arrested for joining a sit-in.
📣 She said the words "I have a dream" in a prayer before Dr. King's speech.
⛪ She was one of the first Black women to become a pastor in her denomination.
🏆 A magazine called her one of the best preachers in America.
🎓 She taught future pastors at schools and helped over 200 women prepare for ministry.

WATCH

1) The connection between Prathia Hall and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1 min, 14 sec): *https://www.thebhhs.org/prathia1*
2) A brief history on Prathia Hall (6 min, 37 sec): *https://www.thebhhs.org/prathia2*
3) Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall preaching "A Nightmare in Broad Daylight" (28 min, 5 sec): *https://www.thebhhs.org/prathia3*
4) A Moment in Baptist Black History: Dr. Prathia Hall (1 min, 38 sec): *https://www.thebhhs.org/prathia4*

ACTIVITIES

Enjoy a Popular Treat

Option 1

Items needed: *bowls, spoons, ice cream, ice cream scoop, chocolate syrup, cherries, sprinkles*
Ice Cream Sundaes: Give each child a bowl of ice cream and encourage them to make their own ice cream sundae.

Option 2:

Items needed: *cups, hot chocolate mix, hot water or water and a microwave*
Hot Chocolate: Give each child a cup of hot chocolate.

For both options: As they eat or drink, talk about how lunch counters were places inside stores where people could eat. They offered sandwiches as well as treats like ice cream sundaes and milkshakes. Lunch counters became important places for protests during the Civil Rights Movement. (For more information, go here: *https://www.thebhhs.org/lunchcounter.*)

Learn about the Civil Rights Movement (Scavenger Hunt)

Items needed: *pictures and facts from https://www.thebhhs.org/scavenger1 or https://www.thebhhs.org/scavenger2*
Print copies of pictures and hide them around your room. Encourage children to find them. Ask for volunteers to show their pictures. Talk about what each picture means and how it shows people standing up for everyone's freedom.

Play Freeze Tag

Items needed: *stopwatch (or timer on a phone)*
For this game, children will play a traditional game of freeze tag with a twist: One person will be the proclaimer (or preacher, depending on what title you'd like to use). Every 60 seconds, the person who is the proclaimer will say, "Be free!" and everyone who is frozen will unfreeze. Play for a few rounds, asking for various volunteers to be the tagger and the proclaimer. Talk about how Jesus came to set us free.
Read Luke 4:18-21.

DESIGN TEAM

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Create a Quilt

Think about who you are and what you like to do. In each square, draw one part of your life—for example, something you enjoy, your grade, your family or a pet. Share your quilt with others. Hang everyone's quilts together to tell the stories of your lives.

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Help share the Baptist story.

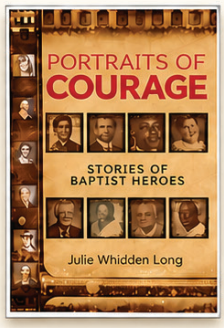
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