

Name _____

Charleston: The Day After Film Guide

BACKGROUND:

On June 17, 2015, a white supremacist killed nine people at the historic Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, people across the nation grappled with this racially motivated massacre that took place in a church during an evening of Bible study. In the days after the deadly hate crime attack, the community came together to grieve. Thousands gathered to pay their respects, waiting in funeral lines that wrapped around the streets of Charleston. People – young and old, black and white – formed prayer circles in the streets, their voices cracking with emotion as they joined together sharing stories and singing gospel hymns. In a time of shock and devastation, the healing process began and our spirits were lifted by the grace of the victims’ families.



REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS

A local faith leader, consoling visitors in front of the church, talked about their collective loss. “The killer plucked from the tree nine individuals who made an impact on their communities, their neighborhoods and their city. When they died, a piece of all of us died. And so we are all hurting.”

How does this make you feel and why?

How does a tragic event like this affect the entire community?

THEIR STORIES

Below are the names and a brief description of each of the nine church members killed by a 21-year-old white supremacist.

After each one, please write something you feel is most important about to remember about this person and why:

1. The Rev. Clementa Pinckney, 41: Pinckney was a state senator and the senior pastor of Emanuel AME Church, described by *The Atlantic* as “The preacher who tried to heal the wounds of Charleston.” Pinckney was married to Jennifer Benjamin and he was the father of two daughters.



He had served in the South Carolina state Legislature since 2000, graduated from Allen University in 1995 and earned his master's degree in 1999 from the University of South Carolina. A parishioner reflected on the character of Senator Clementa Pinckney, "He fought for the rights of others. He didn't allow politics to get in the way - he never lost his focus. He was a man of the people." On June 26, President Obama delivered the eulogy at Pinckney's funeral. <http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000003767801/obama-delivers-eulogy-in-charleston.html>

Most important detail and why:

2. Cynthia Hurd, 54: Hurd was a manager of the John L. Dart Library for 21 years. In 2011 she took over at St. Andrews Regional Library, which county officials said would be renamed in her honor. A Charleston County library spokesman said Hurd "spent her life helping people," and she will be remembered as such. An old friend of the slain librarian broke down crying, "It hurts; it's still hurting." All 16 branches in the Charleston area were closed for a day to honor her and the eight other victims.

Most important detail and why:

3. The Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, 45: Coleman-Singleton was a pastor at Emanuel AME Church, a speech therapist at Goose Creek High School, and the coach of the school's girls track and field team. Chris Pond, who coaches baseball at Goose Creek, said, "She loved everyone and always had a positive attitude about everything." A high school athlete honored his track coach, saying "I would not be running if it weren't for her, she inspired me everyday."

Most important detail and why:

4. Tywanza Sanders, 26: Sanders was working as a barber in North Charleston after graduating from Allen University in Columbia last year with a degree in business administration. He was the nephew of Susie Jackson, who was also in the church on Wednesday, and attempted to protect her before they were both killed. In a school press release, Sanders was described as "quiet with a warm and helpful spirit."

Most important detail and why:

5. Ethel Lance, 70: Lance worked as a custodian at the Emmanuel AME Church and the Gaillard Municipal Auditorium for roughly 30 years, but was attending Bible study as a faithful churchgoer last Wednesday. Her daughter described Lance as a "strong woman who just tried to keep her family together."

Most important detail and why:

6. Susie Jackson, 87: Jackson was a trustee of the church, a regular presence at Emmanuel Bible studies and was once a member of its choir. She was also the cousin of Ethel Lance, and an aunt to Tywanza Sanders. "She was a loving person," said her son, Walter Jackson.

Most important detail and why:

7. **Depayne Middleton Doctor, 49:** A mother of four who sang in Emanuel's choir, Doctor began working as an admissions coordinator at Southern Wesleyan University in Charleston last December. University President Todd Voss described her as "always a warm and enthusiastic leader," and her friend Jackie Starkes, who sang in the choir with her, remembered Doctor's voice as one that "could move the very depth of your heart."

Most important detail and why:

8. **The Rev. Daniel Simmons, 74:** A former pastor at Friendship AME Church in Mount Pleasant, SC, Simmons survived the initial attack last Wednesday but ultimately died in a nearby hospital. According to the *The Post and Courier*, he was a member of Emmanuel's ministerial staff and regularly attended Bible study. "We love and we miss him," said his granddaughter Ava Simmons.

Most important detail and why:

9. **Myra Thompson, 59:** Thompson was an active member of the church and a former teacher in the Charleston County School District. One of her students said of Thompson, "She was stern, yet loving and wanted you to succeed." Thompson is survived by her husband Rev. Anthony Thompson, the vicar of Holy Trinity Reformed Episcopal Church in Charleston.

Most important detail and why:

A CALL FOR UNITY

The sense of unity became stronger as the community shared the message **that love is more powerful than hate**. During the alleged killer's arraignment in court, **family members of the victims wept openly and told him they forgave him**.

How does this make you feel and why?

Mayor Joseph P. Riley talked about the killer's intent to start a race war, "He had this crazy idea that he would divide us. **All he did was unite us and make us love each other more**."

How does this make you feel and why?



In a sign of solidarity, 15,000 people walked hand in hand across the Ravenel Bridge creating a unity chain to show support for Mother Emanuel AME. Thousands more attended vigils, memorial services and unity events in churches, parks and on street corners. The calls to remove the Confederate flag, a painful reminder of the legacy of slavery and segregation, were swift and bipartisan. The image of a young woman named Bree Newsome, whose ancestors were slaves, climbing the flagpole at the State Capitol to bring down the flag was an act of civil disobedience that inspired us all.

What do you think about this and why?



HONORING THE LEGACY OF THOSE WHO WERE LOST

Through the healing and community action, people talked about the persistence of racism that plagues our communities. A young woman asked, “What will happen when the funerals are over and the media leaves town? Will the Emanuel 9 be forgotten?”

How can you make sure they are not forgotten?

A faith leader hoped that the tragedy would become a call to action. “We can no longer be silent about issues that divide us. Now is an opportunity for us to speak, to say what's on our hearts, but then to start looking for real solutions.”

How do you feel about this and why?

Key Vocabulary:

Supremacist
Grappled
Gospel
Hymns
Consoling
Collective
Plucked

Slain
Parishioner
Arraignment
Wept
Intent
Solidarity
Vigil

Confederate
Legacy
Bipartisan
Disobedience
Persistence
plagues

AS YOU WATCH THE FILM, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW

1. Which voice in this film was most memorable to you? Write down what this person said.
2. Why did you find the message to be powerful?
3. How do you think our school community would respond to a hate crime attack?
4. What do you think should happen to prevent a horrific attack like this in your neighborhood?
5. At the end of the video, a faith leader makes a call for solutions. What steps can we take to begin to overcome these barriers to addressing hate and racism?

Here is one thing we can do now!!!

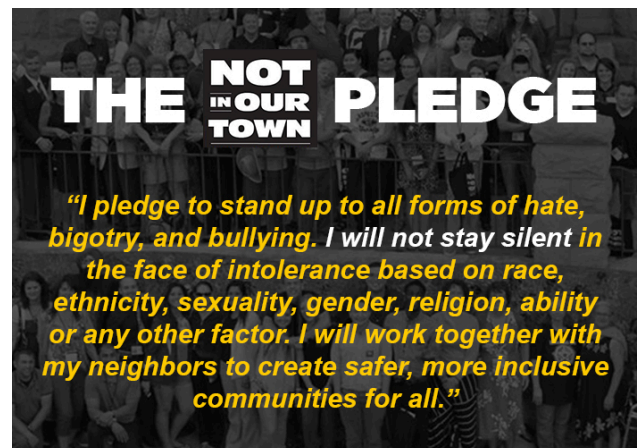
[HTTPS://WWW.NIOT.ORG/PLEDGE/DOWNLOAD](https://www.niot.org/pledge/download)

TAKE THE PLEDGE TODAY! If you stand up to hate and bullying, you can change someone's life—maybe even your own. The Pledge is a reminder to speak up:

- when you see someone being bullied or harassed,
- when you hear a bigoted comment or “joke,” or
- when you see cruel messages on social media.

Keep the Pledge to stop bullying and hate in your head and in your heart. **Share it with others.** It starts with each one of us taking a step. If we all stand up together, we can change our school, our workplace, our community, our country. We can change our world.

What else can we do?



1. **Practice and teach one another** the four ways to be an upstander: i

- intervene safely;
- get help from a trusted adult;
- befriend the targeted student;
- become an activist for positive change.

2. **Recognize and honor differences, while promoting compassion and empathy**

Trying to ignore race or cultural differences only dismisses their lived experiences. This is why it is important to recognize and honor differences, instead of trying to be colorblind.

How is our school a place where we recognize and honor differences?

3. **Be open to having difficult conversations.**

When discussing racism and other forms of bigotry, strong emotions emerge. Candid conversations about these issues bring tensions to light and help us find common ground.

What difficult topics do you think we need to talk about more in the classroom?

Homework:

1. Do something! Take the pledge: [HTTPS://WWW.NIOT.ORG/PLEDGE/DOWNLOAD](https://www.niot.org/pledge/download)
2. Come up with ways our school can become a place where students talk about hard issues, and stand up for others. What would you like to help with and why?