

*Pray the Devil Back to Hell:*  
**Film Teaching Guide**

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## **Abstract:**

*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* is a documentary that tells the story of Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, a women's peace movement in Liberia that eventually ended the Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003) fought between the army controlled by then-President Charles Taylor and the rebelling forces loyal to a variety of warlords. The women's movement also contributed to the reconstruction of Liberia, including a transition to a functioning multiparty democracy headed by Africa's first democratically elected woman president. The film relies on archive footage of Liberia during the civil war as well as interviews with major participants in the peace process reflecting on their work and achievements. The film shows how "ordinary" Liberian women from all walks of life united in their common hope that the war would end, used a variety of protest and civil disobedience strategies to call local and global attention to the suffering the war was causing, and successfully pressured government leaders and warlords to negotiate a sustainable and just end to the war.

The film is noteworthy in that it does not shy away from the violence and horrors of the war (in fact, several scenes are rather graphic, showing or referencing child warfare, torture, rape and sexual violence, and other disturbing topics). At the same time, the film is engaging (even humorous in places), is full of inspirational moments, and carries a message of hope and resilience. This study guide intends the film for a Global Issues course and thus focuses on comparative topics like the causes and effects of war and conflict, responses to oppression and violence, nonviolent protest and civil disobedience, human rights, women's participation in society, and peacebuilding and peacekeeping. However, the film could just as easily be used in a geographically or culturally specific focus on modern or contemporary Africa. The subject matter, while troubling, is not inappropriate for students in high school (although parental permission should be acquired for younger students). Middle school teachers should use discretion in determining whether the film, excerpted or in full, is appropriate for their students.

## **Essential Questions:**

*(Note: these questions are drawn from the discussion guide that accompanies the DVD, which I found to be a valuable resource. I recommend aligning your work with the film to these essential questions in order to maximize the use of the discussion guide.)*

1. How do wars and conflict affect women and children? What role can women play in building and promoting peace?
2. How can citizens overcome differences to work toward common goals?
3. What role does nonviolent resistance play in promoting justice in our world?

### **Vocabulary List:**

1. **Dictator** – a leader who has complete, unshared power over a country and uses this power unfairly or cruelly
2. **Warlord** – a leader who gains and holds power of an area through the use of private, personally loyal armies
3. **Perpetrator** – a person or group who carries out acts of violence or injustice against others (victims)
4. **Victim** – a person or group who is treated violently or unjustly (by perpetrators)
5. **LURD** – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, this was a group of warlords who fought together against Liberian dictator Charles Taylor
6. **ECOWAS** – Economic Community of West African States, this is a regional organization of 15 nations in West Africa, including Liberia
7. **Transitional government** – a temporary government that is not elected but exists to maintain stability after the end of a previous government and until elections for a new, permanent government can take place
8. **Minister** – a prominent leader inside a government, usually responsible for one part of the government's work (examples: Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Minister of Defense; in the U.S., this position is called a Secretary)
9. **Peacekeeping, Peacekeepers** – groups (usually armed forces) who are present in an area after a conflict ends to ensure that violence does not break out again; peacekeepers are usually from another country or area not involved in the conflict in order to stay neutral
10. **Exile** – to force someone to leave an area and not return; “living in exile” means not being welcome to return to your original country
11. **Disarmament** – the official process of an army or group reducing or giving up their weapons

## **Contextual Resources:**

**1. “The Lone Star: The Story of Liberia”** – This 2002 essay from PBS’s Global Connections website overviews Liberian history from the initial creation of a homeland for freed African-American slaves to the 1997-2003 Taylor regime. See **Pre-Viewing Activities** for ideas on how to incorporate the text into instruction.

**2. West Africa Maps** – Given that the film takes place in or references Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, and that ECOWAS plays a significant role in the peace talks, students should be familiar with the countries that make up the region of West Africa. There are a number of maps easily available online, from simple [political maps](#) showing national boundaries and major cities to maps showing [economic activity](#), [ethnolinguistic diversity](#), the [extent of the 2014 Ebola outbreak](#), or other areas of focus. Students could use these maps as independent references during the film, to analyze how geography has shaped the history of and contemporary events in the region, or to generate predictions/prior knowledge about Liberia and its people.

**3. Discussion Guide** – The discussion guide that accompanies the DVD includes shorter texts that give brief context to the film and its themes. For example, there is a one-paragraph overview of Liberia’s history from independence to 2006 that would more quickly orient students to the background of the conflict; there is also a summary of UN resolutions dealing with the impact of war on women and children. These could be provided to students as background texts if time does not allow for more in-depth study of Liberia’s history or women and children in conflict areas. Similarly, the discussion guide includes several questions that students could use as journal prompts, topics for discussion or debate, etc., during or after the film. Many of these connect the content of the film that is specific to Liberia to broader global themes.

## Pre-Viewing Activities:

1. **“The Lone Star: The Story of Liberia”** – a 2002 essay from PBS’s Global Connections website that overviews Liberian history from the initial creation of a homeland for freed African-American slaves to the 1997-2003 Taylor regime.

- a. Give students a [copy of the essay](#) with the question: *What were significant “turning points” in Liberia’s history? What are possible causes of conflict in Liberia?* Working independently or in pairs/small groups, students should read the essay and, based on evidence in the text, discuss answer to these questions.
- b. Give students a blank timeline (Appendix 1) with 12 dates: 1100s-1700s; 1816-1822; 1824-1864; 1847; 1909; 1930; 1944-1971; 1979; 1980; 1985; 1990-1995; 1997-2003. Using the text, students should summarize what happened in Liberia on these dates. Then based on the timeline, they should revisit their initial answer to the question: *What are possible causes of conflict in Liberia?*

(There is an opportunity here for a jigsaw activity. The class could be divided into 3-4 groups, each responsible for 4 or 3 entries on the timeline. Once groups come to consensus on their assigned entries and an answer to the discussion question, students would move to work with peers who completed different portions of the timeline and should jointly construct a complete timeline. Students in the new groups would then discuss different answers to the question before sharing out in a whole-class discussion.)

- c. Having twice reviewed the text and timelines, students now can discuss, as a whole class, possible causes of conflict in Liberia. These should include ethnic diversity, social inequality (the text implies but does not explicitly state that descendants of freed slaves have traditionally enjoyed higher socioeconomic status in Liberia – this point should be made by the teacher if students do not bring it up themselves, and students should find evidence to support this assertion in the text), control of natural resources, the legacy of slave trading and forced labor, involvement of international groups (ACS, corporations like Firestone) and other nations, extreme poverty, weak government, corruption, and other factors.

2. **Identity Charts: The Women of Liberia** – The film includes several interview with the women who led the peace movement, but does not explicitly introduce them, leaving much to be inferred in terms of their relationships and work together. This activity could help students meet the “main characters” prior to beginning the film, or could be done during or after the film to help students more fully connect with the women they have learned about and more deeply analyze the factors that brought them together and ultimately made them successful.

- a. Print out the brief biographical sketches of the women featured in the film (see Appendix 2): Leymah Gbowee, Sugars Cooper, Vaiba Flomo, Asatu Bah Kenneh,

Etty Weah, Janet Johnson Bryant. (Gbowee's sketch has been edited to a shorter length, or its full length version can be given to faster/more advanced readers.)

- b. Give each student one biographical sketch to read. Students should read these with the question in mind: *Who is this person? What parts of her character or events she has experienced are most significant? Where does her unique identity come from?*
- c. Students will then draw an identity chart for their given woman. (NOTE: if students have not drawn or used identity charts previously, it would be good to show them an example and/or have them draw their own identity chart before beginning this activity. [Background on identity charts and an exemplar](#) are available online through Facing History and Ourselves.)
- d. Students can work in heterogeneous groups of 6 to compare identity charts of all the different women (jigsaw style), or can pair up to compare two different identity charts. Regardless, students should pay attention to patterns – *What do these women have in common? What could have brought them together? What differences do these women have among themselves? What could have divided them? Based on what we know about these women, why were they successful in bringing peace to Liberia?*
- e. In small groups, pairs, or a whole class, students can discuss their answers to the previous questions, or can use these in journaling or reflective writing to respond to the film. An extension prompt for reflective writing could be: *What do I have in common with these women? What are examples of people in my community that these women are similar to, and how are they similar?*

**3. Film Viewing Guide** – To help students track the events of the film, give them the viewing guide (see Appendix 3) to complete and discuss as they watch. The viewing guide can be a helpful tool for formative assessment of student understanding. Several questions can also be an opportunity to pause the film and ask students to turn and talk to discuss answers, raise additional questions, etc.

**4. Analyzing Strategies for Change** – Some students may be familiar with strategies of nonviolent resistance and protest (having studied, for example, the American Civil Rights Movement, Gandhi's work in India, the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa, etc.). Invite students to keep track of the strategies that they see the women of Liberia using in the film and, based on evidence, analyze what would make these strategies successful. The graphic organizer (see Appendix 4) may be helpful for this.

## Post-Viewing Activity:

**Global Perspectives on Women’s Leadership** – In 2011, Leymah Gbowee won the Nobel Peace Prize, sharing the honor with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Yemeni activist Tawakkul Karman. They were the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth women to win this award in over 100 years (since then, another female was been honored, 2014 Nobelist Malala Yousafzai). *Why have only 16 women won the award out of 128 recognized individuals and groups? What activities have women won for? What can women offer the world in terms of promoting and protecting peace?* Students will explore these questions by researching the female Nobel Peace Prize recipients and presenting their findings.

- a. Students should use computers to access the [Nobel Peace Prize website](#). All materials are available online, including: a fact sheet for each Laureate, a full biography, transcripts of her Nobel speech, and other supplementary media materials (audio files, photographs, videos). Additional materials are widely available online.
- b. Students work individually or in pairs to research ONE of the following Nobel Laureates:
  - Bertha von Suttner, 1905
  - Jane Addams, 1931
  - Emily Greene Balch, 1946
  - Mairead Corrigan, 1976
  - Betty Williams, 1976
  - Mother Teresa, 1979
  - Alva Myrdal, 1982
  - Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991
  - Rigoberta Menchu Tum, 1992
  - Jody Williams, 1997
  - Shirin Ebadi, 2003
  - Wangari Maathai, 2004
  - Leymah Gbowee, 2011 (having just watched a film largely about Leymah Gbowee, it is up to the teacher’s discretion whether to include this option for students)
  - Tawakkol Karman, 2011
  - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2011
  - Malala Yousafzai, 2014
- c. Students will curate a visual presentation (poster, display, multimedia representation like Prezi, etc.) that combines text and imagery to explain who their Laureate is/was, what her background and accomplishments were that led to this recognition, and what special message for or about women she had upon winning the Nobel Prize.

- d. When presentations are completed, arrange them in chronological order around the classroom, along the hallway, or in some other space where students can move easily.
- e. Students will proceed through the presentation in a Gallery Walk, paying attention to information they glean or patterns they notice that help them answer the questions: *Why have only 16 women won the Nobel Peace Prize? What activities have women won for? What can women offer the world in terms of promoting and protecting peace?*

## Background Readings:

**1. Global Connections: Liberia, PBS/WGBH, 2002** – This website includes a depth of historical context on Liberia, particularly focusing on independent Liberia’s roots in and connections to the United States. The essay in the pre-viewing reading/timeline activity comes from this website, but additional essays and video clips provide richer background on the forces that have shaped Liberia in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/liberia/index.html>

**2. Memoirs** – Several memoirs of the Liberian Civil Wars have been published in recent years, particularly by women, whose personal narratives can enrich the information presented in the film. Among these are:

Helene Cooper, *The House at Sugar Beach: In Search of a Lost African Childhood*, Simon & Schuster, 2008. Currently the Pentagon correspondent (and previously White House correspondent) for the *New York Times*, Helene Cooper was born in Liberia and raised there before the rise of Samuel Doe. The first half of the book details life for Liberia’s elite before 1980 as well as the horrors suffered under dictators like Doe and Taylor. (The second half focuses less on Liberia itself and more on Cooper’s experience as an expatriate.)

Leymah Gbowee, *Mighty Be Our Powers*, Perseus Books Group, 2011. Leymah Gbowee’s memoir of her life before and during the civil wars, including additional detail on the experiences that drove her to a leadership role at the forefront of the Liberian women’s peace movement.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*, Harper/HarperCollins, 2009. A memoir of the life of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who grew up and lived most of her life in Liberia, was exiled in 1997 by Charles Taylor, and returned to be elected Africa’s first woman president in 2006.

Agnes Fallah Kamara-Umunna, *And Still Peace Did Not Come*, Hyperion, 2011. Written by a radio journalist in Monrovia, the book details her efforts to publicly promote reconciliation after the end of the civil wars, particularly focusing on child soldiers and their victims. The stories she recalls and records give deeper background on the role played by child soldiers in this conflict and the trauma they suffered, which the film hints at. The book also allows readers an update on life in Liberia after the end of the war.

**3. Ebola in West Africa** – Although the film does not include any discussion of Ebola (the events take place some 15 years prior to the outbreak of the virus), Liberia has most recently been in the U.S. news due to the epidemic of 2014 that spread throughout Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. As of August 2015 Liberia is Ebola-free, but analysis of the public health disaster included factors like education, sanitation, infrastructure, government funding, etc., which remain challenges in Liberia today. Familiarizing oneself with factual information, narratives of victims and survivors, and up-to-date

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status of Liberia's health situation could be helpful should students ask questions about Ebola in the course of watching the film, and could also give students a sense of the serious stakes facing Liberia even with the end of the civil war.

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/e/ebola/index.html>

## Tips for Teachers:

While there is not explicit violence in *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, neither does the film shy away from hinting at or discussing the atrocities that the civil war entailed. Particular examples:

- 5:00-6:30 – child soldiers dancing with a human skeleton, a man being shot off-camera, and a crowd dragging a bloody body
- 13:20-15:25 – Vaiba Flomo recounts a story of a woman traumatized after witnessing the rape of her daughter and the torture and death of her husband
- 24:15-25:20 – the women discuss the sex strike, which may not be appropriate for all viewers
- 25:20-27:00 – footage of the attacks on refugee camps includes brief violence
- 47:10 – a child soldier brags about killing three enemies

Teachers may want to skip these scenes. At the very least, warnings should be given. Students who are sensitive to, or have personal experience with, abuse or violence may be triggered by the images, language, and sounds (gunshots) in these excerpts.

The DVD includes two versions of the film. This study guide was based on the full 72-minute version. The 60-minute version has been edited to remove some of the footage that gives background on Charles Taylor and the members of LURD, and focuses more on the work of the women in the peace movement. I recommend using the full 72 minutes; I did not find any part of the film extraneous. If time is a concern, the following clips are essential:

- 7:30-12:00 – the beginning of the peace movement contrasts with the formation of LURD and the resumption of fighting between rebels and the government
- 19:00-24:00 – the organization of the first protests
- 27:00-34:30 – the women demand that Taylor and the rebels attend peace talks
- 49:00-55:00 – the women force negotiations, bringing an agreement

Specific moments for discussion, reflection, or teaching are highlighted on the study guide (see Appendix 3). One additional point for teachers to pause and discuss, or at least to refer back to, occurs at 15:30, when Leymah reflects on the amount of suffering visited upon the refugees, “looking at people who had lost everything and still had hope”, and how this hope was itself an inspiration and catalyst for her to go further with the women’s movement. The film can be bleak at times and the extensive images of poverty, violence, disease, death, and so forth can even unconsciously reinforce negative stereotypes of Africa and Africans. Without being unduly optimistic, acknowledging this moment and other moments in the film where Leymah and the women demonstrate hope, joy, empathy, celebration, etc., can help students relate to the characters not as Africans but as human beings – and can also reinforce to students the importance of inspiration, hope, and joy as sources of purpose and resilience in anyone’s life, including their own.

A suggested sequence for lessons using this film is:

- Day 1: Introduction – map viewing, text reading, and timeline construction
- Day 2: Identity Charts and begin the film (with viewing guide or chart)
- Day 3: View film through end, with time to pause and discuss during/after the film
- Day 4: Review film notes/questions as needed and begin female Nobelists research
- Day 5: Finish research as needed, gallery walk, and final discussion of essential questions

This material and activities could be used to support the following standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2 – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7 – Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 – Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.7 – Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## **Subjective Review:**

*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* was one of the sources used in the Primary Source course Modern African History that I found not only illuminating and inspiring in the context of the class, as an asset to my own learning about Africa today; it was also a source that I knew immediately would be engaging for teenagers and young adults. Leymah Gbowee is an immediately appealing and charismatic figure whose testimony and recollections combine fearlessness in the face of injustice as well as the lack of vanity to express anger, self-doubt, humor and humility. The other women interviewed and shown in the film are not presented as distant, exalted figures but as recognizable and relatable everyday people who took a stand. Students frequently learn about the work of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi in their US and world history courses, and well they should. But a contemporary example of the power of nonviolent protest is just as powerful, particularly when it comes from a part of the world (Africa) and a section of society (women) that are frequently underestimated, stereotyped in limiting ways, or outright ignored.

There are several almost indelible moments in the film – Leymah and Asatu recalling the early alliance between Christian and Muslim women; Vaiba struggling to express the depths of her sadness and outrage upon meeting the woman whose family was tortured; the indignation of the woman in Accra upon being threatened with arrest and the ingenuity and spirit with which they responded; the continuously joyful image of the women singing and dancing in their white clothes as they demand peace. The beauty with which all of these human stories are presented, in the context of a war that decimated a country and the repercussions that continue today, harken back to the message of Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie to avoid a “single story” and seek out multiple perspectives, as scholars of Africa today seek to do in overturning a legacy of one-sided histories and political/cultural imperialism. This is a film that clearly and boldly lays out a problem faced by African people. Yet instead of asking us, the non-African viewers, to act and solve the problem, this film presents us with a solution from within Africa – a solution that many of us, and certainly many of our students, can stand to learn from ourselves.

*Appendix 1*

**Liberian History Timeline**

**Directions:** Review your copy of the text “The Lone Star: The Story of Liberia.” Use the information in the text to fill in the timeline below. For each date or set of dates assigned, summarize what happened in Liberia.

1100s-1700s

1816-1822

1824-1864

1847

1909

1930

1944-1971

1979

1980

1985

1990-1995

1997-2003

Appendix 2

**The Women of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell***

**Directions:** Read the biographical sketch below of one Liberian woman. As you read, keep these questions in mind: *Who is this person? What parts of her character or events she has experienced are most significant? Where does her unique identity come from?*

**Leymah Gbowee**



Leymah Gbowee (pronounced LAY–mah BEAU-wee) was a 17 year-old girl when the war first came to Monrovia. As she says, she turned "from a child into an adult in a matter of hours." As the war dragged on, Leymah had difficulty focusing on anything but her thwarted opportunities to go to college, and out of bitterness she dodged any political or social involvement. But as time wore on she came to see that it would be up to the citizens of Liberia, especially its women, to bring the country back from the insanity of civil war. A social worker by profession, Leymah trained as a trauma counselor and worked from 1995 to 2003 with refugees and later with the ex-child soldiers of Taylor's army. The more she worked with them the more she came to see that they were too were victims.

In 2000, Ms. Gbowee joined the Woman in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) and quickly rose to leadership thanks to her leadership and organizing skills. She brought all the women of the Christian Churches together into a group called the Christian Women's Initiative and began issuing a series of calls for peace. Soon she formed a coalition with the women in the Muslim organizations in Monrovia and eventually Liberian Mass Action for Peace came into being. Under Leymah's leadership the group managed to force a meeting with Charles Taylor and extract a promise from him to attend peace talks in Ghana. She then led a delegation of Liberian women to Ghana to continue to apply pressure on the warring factions during the peace process.

Ms. Gbowee is the author of her memoir, *Mighty Be Our Powers*, a gripping chronicle of a journey from hopelessness to empowerment that will touch all who dream of a better world. Leymah has spoken publically numerous times on the issue of women in conflict situations. She was a panelist at several regional and international conferences, including UNIFEM's "Women and the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) Process," and the United Nations Security Council's Arria Formula Meeting on women, peace, and security.

Leymah has been honored by multiple organizations, most recently with the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize along with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Tawakkul Karman. She has been awarded the Blue Ribbon for Peace by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and in May 2009 she accepted the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award on behalf of her countrywomen.

Ms. Gbowee is presently the founder and executive director for Women, Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-A) a women-focused, women-led Pan-African Non-Governmental Organization with the core mandate to promote women's strategic participation and leadership in peace and security governance in Africa. She holds a MA in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University. She is the mother of six and resides in Accra, Ghana.

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### **Etweda “Sugars” Cooper**



Etweda “Sugars” Cooper is one of the notable leaders of the Liberian women’s movement and is known for speaking out. In 1994, during one of the darkest hours of the civil war in Liberia, she and other women -- tired of being victimized and frustrated at the stalemate in the peace process -- founded the Liberia Women’s Initiative to advocate for disarmament and free and fair elections, and also to bring pressure to bear on stakeholders for the inclusion of women in negotiating a settlement of the Liberian conflict. Sugars served in a leadership role as Secretary General of the Liberian Women’s Initiative.

Throughout 14 years of civil war she used mass action including picketing, sit-ins and marches involving grassroots and professional women and their groups to attract world attention to the plight of women and children and to urge the international community to take action to end the war. As a strategist for the Liberian Women peace activities under the auspices of Women In Peace building Network, WIPNET, Sugars was unrelenting in lobbying factional leaders through visits, dialoguing and pleading with them to resolve the stalemate in the Accra Peace Talks in 2003, urging them to agree to a ceasefire and to constitute a transitional government.

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### **Vaiba Flomo**



Vaiba Flomo (pronounced VAH-bah FLOH-moh) was working with the Lutheran church’s trauma healing program when Leymah Gbowee came to intern with the program and the two quickly became good friends. Vaiba, haunted by the constant reminders of war —children dying from hunger or being abandoned because their parents couldn’t feed them—began to press Leymah to mobilize the women of Liberia because as she says “there’s not a single woman in Liberia who will tell you that she doesn’t have pain from the crisis.”

Together with Leymah they worked to bring the Christian and Muslim women’s groups together, with Vaiba serving as president of the Christian Women’s Peace Initiative that later formed. Where there was some initial reluctance to engage with women of the other faith, Vaiba developed the message: “Can the bullet pick and choose? Does the bullet know Christian from Muslim?” Reluctance faded into action, and the women began their campaign.

To this day, Vaiba works with victims of trauma. And she marvels at what the women managed to achieve: “Sometimes when I really think on the work I’m like ‘wow, just two little country African girls’ dream has become so big.’”

*Appendix 2*

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**Etty Weah**



Etty Weah was one of the hundreds of ordinary women who became involved with WIPNET and the Liberian Mass Action for Peace. She was one of the many women who wore white and sat on the field day in and day out. Rain or shine. Bullets or no bullets.

Before the war, she used to sell food in front of her house in one of the suburbs of Monrovia. As a regular church goer she responded to a call from the Christian Women's Initiative to become involved in Liberian Mass Action for Peace, and got to know Leymah. She was moved to attend the meeting because she deemed all Liberian women to be victims and thought there was strength in numbers if their voices were to ever be heard. As the war drew closer to Monrovia, and as the mother of two boys, she also feared for all the children who would be conscripted.

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**Asatu Bah Kenneth**



Asatu Bah Kenneth was a police officer for 25 years—since before the war began. As the president of the Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association, Asatu was invited to the first meeting of WIPNET and then to the launch of the Christian Women's Initiative. She was so moved by what she heard that she stood up and pledged to mobilize the Muslim women of Liberia to help bring peace to Liberia. And she did, creating the Liberian Muslim Women's Organization. Liberian Mass Action for Peace came into being when the two organizations joined. It was the first time Christian and Muslim women had worked together in Liberia.

Asatu's position in the police service gave her access to intelligence about the war. On one occasion, as the war was closing in on Monrovia, Asatu called a meeting with Leymah, Sugars and Janet and other key members of WIPNET. After that meeting the women issued the all-important position statement that they would eventually take to their meeting with Charles Taylor urging him to sit down at the peace table with the rebels.

Her nickname is the "stabilizer" because she doesn't take sides. After the war she became Liberia's Deputy Chief of Police and focused on bringing more women into the security sector. Recently she was appointed the Assistant Minister of Justice for Administration and Public Safety. She is proud to be part of the international peace-building community.

Appendix 2

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Leymah Gbowee (pronounced LAY–mah BEAU-wee) was a 17 year-old girl when the war first came to Monrovia. As she says, she turned "from a child into an adult in a matter of hours." As the war dragged on, Leymah had difficulty attending college, but she eventually trained as a trauma counselor, became a social worker, and worked from 1995 to 2003 with refugees and later with the ex-child soldiers of Taylor's army. The more she worked with them, the more she came to see that they were too were victims.

In 2000, Leyman joined the Woman in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) and quickly rose to leadership. She brought all the women of the Christian churches together into a group called the Christian Women's Initiative and began issuing a calls for peace. Soon she formed a coalition with the women in the Muslim organizations in Monrovia, which eventually grew into Liberian Mass Action for Peace. Under Leymah's leadership the group managed to force a meeting with Charles Taylor and extract a promise from him to attend peace talks in Ghana. She then led a delegation of Liberian women to Ghana to continue to apply pressure on the warring factions during the peace process.

Ms. Gbowee is today the mother of six and resides in Accra, Ghana. She is presently the director for Women, Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-A) a women-led organization that promotes women's participation and leadership in protecting peace and security in Africa. She holds a master's degree in Conflict Transformation and writes and speaks on the topic of women in conflict situations. Among her many honors was the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

**The Women of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell***

**Directions:** Read the biographical sketch below of one Liberian woman. As you read, keep these questions in mind: *Who is this person? What parts of her character or events she has experienced are most significant? Where does her unique identity come from?*

**Janet Johnson Bryant**



Janet Johnson Bryant was a journalist. Much of the time she worked for the Catholic radio station, Radio Veritas, where she reported on President Charles Taylor, despite his virtual stranglehold over the media. Janet also hosted a radio show about women's issues. Bryant's efforts to expose corruption during Taylor's regime earned her the nickname "Iron Lady of Media."

Janet met the women of WIPNET when she reported on them for a story. She soon became part of their outreach and advocacy program. She used her position to garner important, strategic information that benefited WIPNET. In particular, Janet helped launch the Liberian Mass Action for Peace. She helped draft the first press release calling for an immediate ceasefire and for all warring factions to

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sit down at the peace table. Janet then broadcast the message announcing the first meeting of the women in the field opposite Taylor's house – hundreds of women showed up and stayed.

Janet now lives in Dracut, MA, working towards a new goal: earning a master's degree in international diplomacy and returning to Liberia.

*Appendix 3*

**Viewing Guide: *Pray the Devil Back to Hell***

**Directions:** As you watch the film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (2008), answer the following questions using specific evidence that you hear or see.

1. During the introduction, you will see images from a mural that was painted during the Liberian Civil War. What do you see? What might the images symbolize? Based on this, what do you predict happened during the civil war?
2. How does Leymah Gbowee explain the civil war? What does she say caused the war?
3. Leymah Gbowee states “I had a dream to get the women of the country together to pray for peace.” When she gathered women together in the church, how did they respond to her speech? Why did they respond this way?
4. How did Charles Taylor explain why he remained as president? How did the women decide to pressure him?
5. How did the first protests begin? What did the women do to organize the protest? What did they do to get attention for themselves and their protest?
6. The women state that “Men were the perpetrators of this violence, so either by commission or omission you were guilty.” What does this mean? What strategy did women adopt to pressure men to stop the violence?
7. When Leymah and the women went to Charles Taylor’s palace, what reasons did Leymah give for demanding peace? What was the role of the president pro tem? Why did Taylor agree to the women’s demands?
8. What did the warlords and leaders of LURD say was their goal in meeting with Taylor? How did this compare or contrast with the goal the women had for the peace talks?

9. When the war broke out again, one of the women said that “(Liberian) people felt more secure with the devil they already knew.” How does this explain why Taylor kept power in Liberia despite corruption, violence, and poverty?

10. During the peace talks, the LURD leaders argued they needed positions in the transitional government. Why? The women did not want them to get these jobs. Why not? What would be benefits to allowing LURD members to lead the government after the war? What would be disadvantages to this?

11. When Leymah was told “You are obstructing justice,” why did she “go wild”? How was this a turning point in the peace talks?

12. Although the war in Liberia was a civil war and most of the people involved were Liberian, how did other nations and organizations outside Liberia play a role? Did international organizations contribute to the war or stop it?

13. One woman says “With this T-shirt, I’m very powerful.” What did she mean by this?

14. One woman says “Peace is a process – it’s not an event.” What does this mean?

15. What problems faced Liberia after the war ended? How were the women involved?

**Nonviolent Protest and Civil Disobedience in *Pray the Devil Back to Hell***

**Directions:** As you watch the film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (2008), complete the chart to keep track of resistance and protest strategies that the women used. Based on what you see, analyze why these strategies were successful. If you notice strategies that are not in this chart, use the blank rows at the bottom to add them.

<b>Strategy</b> – define the strategy in your own words	<b>Evidence</b> – what did this strategy look like in Liberia?	<b>Analysis</b> – what made this strategy effective?
Speeches		
Religious organizations		
Media		
Marches		
Sit-Ins		
Music		
