

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

# George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper

**Source:** The Daily Show with Trevor Noah

**Release Date:** May 29, 2020

**Length:** 18 minutes

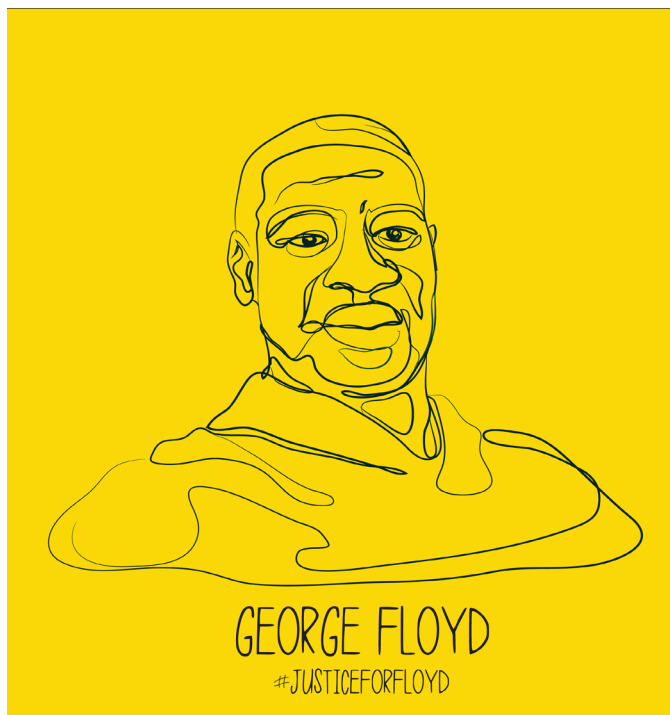
**Grades:** 9-12

**Language Note:** There are two uses of mild language in the video.

### SYNOPSIS

The Daily Show with Trevor Noah is an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning program that looks at the day's top headlines and provides commentary and satire.

In this video, Trevor Noah provides social analysis on current events in the United States in 2020. In this somber reflection, Noah connects the dots between a recorded incident in Central Park in which Amy Cooper, a white woman, threatened to call the police on Christian Cooper (no relation), a Black man who asked her to follow the posted regulations regarding keeping her dog on a leash; the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and subsequent national protests; the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, a black man who was chased, shot, and killed by two white men in Georgia; and the racial inequities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that provide the backdrop for these tragic events. Throughout the video, Noah makes connections between racial injustice, police brutality, and the social contract between society and the Black community that has been broken throughout history.



### CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT THEMES IN THE VIDEO

- Dignity of the Human Person
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Solidarity
- Rights and Responsibilities

**Link to Official Video:**

<https://bit.ly/3cwyvqW>

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What ideas from the video challenged you, opened you to new ways of thinking or supported a previously held belief?
2. Noah mentions that each story is seemingly unrelated but are actually like dominos that connect. What connections do you see between the events he mentions in the video? How do these events connect to political, social, and economic realities in society?
3. Regarding Amy Cooper, Noah states, "This woman blatantly knew how to use the power of her whiteness to threaten the life of another man and his blackness. What we saw with her was a really powerful explicit example of an understanding of racism in a structural way." Read the definition of systemic racism. How did this event explicitly demonstrate systemic racism in a way that is not always as blatantly obvious?
4. Noah defines society as an unwritten contract that human beings sign about the common rules, ideals, and practices that define us as a group. He then states, "Some members of that society, namely black American people, watch time and time again how the contract they have signed with society is not being honored by the society that has forced them to sign it." In what ways has the social contract not been honored with communities of color, and specifically the black community, in the United States? Use examples from your own life, current events, or history.
5. What principles of Catholic Social Teaching have been violated in the events described in the video, and what actions need to be taken to address these violations? How might different groups of people have unique roles in this work?
6. What else is on your mind from the video? How do you feel called to respond to the reality of systemic racism in your own community? How can you help others understand how these issues connect?

### DEFINITIONS

**Racism:** Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.<sup>1</sup>

**Systemic Racism:** A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Racism Defined," accessed June 4, 2020, <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "11 Terms You Should Know to Better Understand Structural Racism." The Aspen Institute, June 1, 2020. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/structural-racism-definition/>.