

# Teacher Tool 144: Stories of the Civil Rights Movement - Sister Mary Antona Ebo 1 Study Guide

Study Guide for Civil Rights 10: History In the First Person: Stories of the Civil Rights  
Movement – Sister Mary Antona Ebo 1

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## History in the First Person: Stories of the Civil Rights Movement Sister Mary Antona Ebo

**Original Air Date: February 14, 2013**

**Grade Levels: 7-12**

### **Program Description:**

What was it like to grow up black in America in the 1930s and 1940s? What did it mean when words like “equality” and “justice” seemed to have a different meaning for you than for others in American society? What was it like to be the first African American to graduate from your high school? What was it like to have nursing schools reject your application only because you were black? What was it like to be one of the first African American nuns in your order? What was it like to be inspired by leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr.? What was it like to see the treatment of Civil Rights demonstrators during the “Bloody Sunday” events of March 7, 1965 in Selma, Alabama? What was it like to fly to Selma and march for Civil Rights dressed in your nun’s habit in that same place just a few days later? What was it like to keep the flame of Civil Rights alive as you became the first African-American woman religious leader to be in charge of a Catholic hospital in America? What was it like to have your story told as part of the award-winning documentary, *Sisters of Selma*? Be inspired by the answers to these questions and more as you spend time with Sister Mary Antona Ebo, a trailblazer for Civil Rights.

Our focus in this program is not exploring the details of America’s struggle for Civil Rights throughout its history, but it is to provide students the rare and important opportunity to hear directly from an amazing woman whose life exemplifies the struggles and triumphs of the movement. Much more information about Sister Mary Antona Ebo and her life can be found at the following web links:

[http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local\\_news/article\\_aeb73072-7940-11e1-9cb9-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/article_aeb73072-7940-11e1-9cb9-0019bb2963f4.html)

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Mar2007/Feature1.asp>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~sistersofselma/sos1.htm>

<http://anunslife.org/2006/12/19/sisters-of-selma-bearing-witness-for-change/>

### **Program Objectives:**

1. The participant will gain a greater understanding of what it meant to live during and participate in the struggle for Civil Rights for black Americans.
2. The participant will interact with individuals providing primary source accounts of recent world events.
3. The participant will meet people and hear stories from diverse perspectives.

### **Program Format:**

The program consists of the following segments. Questions are included throughout the program from students who joined us interactively as well as e-mail questions we received from TV and web viewers. [Time codes are included in blue to help you find specific segments in the program.](#)

**1. Welcome and Introduction**—Student groups and experts will be introduced and welcomed to the program. Sister Ebo describes the religious order to which she belongs. [0:00 to 03:00]

**2. Interaction with Sister Ebo**—Students will hear directly from Sister Ebo as we discuss the topics below. Questions from students who joined the live program interactively as well as e-mail questions from web and TV viewers are included throughout. Pictures from Sister Ebo’s personal collection as well as video excerpts from the documentary *Sisters of Selma* are also included throughout the program.

A. Early Years [03:00 to 11:35]

1. Born in 1924
2. Growing up black in 20’s and 30’s in Bloomington, IL
3. Impact of the Depression
4. Loss of mother and growing up in a Children’s Home
5. Types of segregation and discrimination she experienced
6. Educational experience and friendships

B. High School, Going into Nursing and Becoming A Nun (1940s) [11:36 to 27:23]

1. Difficulties getting in to nursing school
2. Help received by non-Catholic nursing friend
3. Joining the Sisters of Mary
4. Working at hospitals which would not treat her due to her race
5. Discrimination faced by her father and other black hospital patients
6. Discrimination experienced in the Catholic Church at the time
7. Beliefs of her faith and how her faith helped her

C. Selma and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s [27:24 to 48:09]

1. Voting Rights Movement in operation in Selma
2. The events of Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965
3. Going to Selma to March after the Bloody Sunday events
4. Her experience in Selma and impact of her presence there
5. Results of the protest in Selma
6. Importance of faith in her life

D. Continuing Civil Rights Work in Her Profession [48:10 to 55:08]

1. Formation of the Black Sister’s Association
2. First Black woman religious to lead a Catholic Hospital
3. Human Rights work in St. Louis archdiocese
4. Changes in the church from late 60’s forward
5. Returning to Selma years later
6. Involvement Today

**3. Closing Segment**—Including closing thoughts, summary of topics discussed, and final questions from students. [55:09 to 58:10]

## Featured National Standards (History):

### Grades 5-12:

#### Historical Thinking Standards

##### 2. Historical Comprehension

B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.

F. Appreciate historical perspectives--(a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded--the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness,” judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

##### 4. Historical Research Capabilities

A. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

##### 5. Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-Making

A. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

## Featured State Standards (Missouri):

Missouri state standards are provided for Missouri schools since partial funding for this program comes from Missouri organizations.

### Show Me Performance Standards:

Goal 1 – 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9

Goal 2 - 1, 2, 4, 7

Goal 3 - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Goal 4 - 1, 5, 6

Social Studies Knowledge Standards - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Communication Knowledge Standards - 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

### Program-Related Activity Suggestions:

1. **Learn More About Sister Ebo**—Students should explore the web links included in the Program Description in this document to learn more about Sister Ebo and her life story.
2. **Learn More About Bloody Sunday**—Students should explore the web links dealing with the events of “Bloody Sunday” and other marches in Selma, Alabama that are included in the supplemental resources at the end of this document.
3. **View Sisters of Selma**—If possible, give students the opportunity to view the documentary, *Sisters of Selma*, in which Sister Ebo appears.
4. **Share Their Learning**—Have students compare their previous understanding of what they thought it would mean to be a black American in the 1940s, 50s and 60s with their view of that situation after participating in the program. What surprised them the most? What reinforced what they already believed? What new insights did they gain into the military and wartime experience? Have students share their thoughts in class discussion, journal entries, or written reports.
5. **Learn More About the Civil Rights Movement**—To extend their study of the Civil Rights movement for black Americans even further have students explore the web resources on Civil Rights included as part of the supplemental resources in this document.
6. **Send A Thank You**—Have each student write a letter to Sister Antona Ebo detailing an insight the student gained from hearing their story, an appreciation for her participation, and/or another focus area of their choice. Contact us via e-mail at [live@hectv.org](mailto:live@hectv.org) to learn the mailing address for your three letters. We will accept the letters and forward them to Sister Ebo and then forward you any reply she has for your students.
7. **Bring in a Guest Speaker**—Have students research the struggle for Civil Rights in their own area and see if they can locate a guest speaker to come to your class and share their story. Think in terms of individuals who participated in the struggle for black American rights as well as those who joined in other civil rights struggles for women and/or other minorities.

### Supplemental Resources:

<http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/desegregation.html>

Learn a great deal about the development of Civil Rights in American history from its origins until today. The site includes a chronology, glossary, explanations of important events in Civil Rights history including the movement for Black American civil rights as well as additional movements for other minority groups and women.

<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/> Website of the National Civil Rights Museum. Teacher and student educational resources are included.

Articles on Sister Mary Antona Ebo's life and contributions can be found at:

[http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local\\_news/article\\_aeb73072-7940-11e1-9cb9-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/article_aeb73072-7940-11e1-9cb9-0019bb2963f4.html)

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Mar2007/Feature1.asp>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~sistersofselma/sos1.htm>

<http://anunslife.org/2006/12/19/sisters-of-selma-bearing-witness-for-change/>

More information about "Bloody Sunday" and the other marches in Selma, Alabama can be found at:

<http://mlk->

[kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_selma\\_to\\_montgomery\\_march/](http://kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_selma_to_montgomery_march/)

<http://www.history.com/topics/selma-montgomery-march>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/mar07.html>