FILMMAKER JONATHAN DEMME

Since Jonathan Demme began his career working with Roger Corman in 1971, he has directed and/or produced more than 30 movies. New projects in the works include the third installment in his performance trilogy with Neil Young, *Neil Young Life*, an animated version of Dave Eggers’ book *Zeitoun*, an adaptation of Michel Faber’s novella “The Courage Consort” and three forthcoming New Orleans portrait documentaries along the lines of *I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful*.

LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

After Carolyn’s house was flooded and she endeavored to rebuild her home after the waters subsided, I was privileged to gain her permission to keep track of her progress. I didn’t know at the time that these filming visits would stretch over the next five years, including 21 visits. Nor did I realize what an amazing portrait of an “ordinary” American would emerge over time. The film changed from a record of reclaiming her home into a documentary about a truly extraordinary woman.

Jonathan Demme
Filmmaker. *I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful*
When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in August 2005, neighborhoods across the city were flooded. But nowhere was devastation greater than in the Lower Ninth Ward, a neighborhood bordered by the Industrial Canal and the Mississippi River, home to a vibrant African-American community and one extraordinary woman. Several months later, Academy Award®-winning director Jonathan Demme and producer Daniel Wolff set out to document the devastation and rebuilding of the Crescent City.

After Demme met Carolyn Parker and gained permission to film her progress, what began as a historical documentary morphed into a deeply personal character study of the courage and resiliency of this fierce, opinionated matriarch and community activist. I'm Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful, shot over the course of five years, is Demme’s intimate, unvarnished chronicle of Parker’s five-year crusade to rebuild her beloved neon-green house, her church, her community—and her life.
I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- Your local PBS station
- Groups that have discussed previous PBS and POV films relating to institutional racism, social activism, community leadership and/or perseverance, including *The Barber of Birmingham: Foot Soldier of the Civil Rights Movement*, *Flag Wars*, *Chisholm ’72: Unbought & Unbossed* and *Street Fight*
- Groups focused on any of the issues listed in the Key Issues section
- High school students
- Faith-based organizations and institutions
- Cultural, art and historical organizations, institutions and museums
- Civic, fraternal and community groups
- Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities and high schools
- Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as local libraries

I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful is an excellent tool for outreach and will be of special interest to people looking to explore the following topics:

- Activism
- Community organizing
- Disaster relief
- Economic justice
- Environmental justice
- Equity issues
- Family
- Government
- Hurricane Katrina
- Leadership
- New Orleans
- Philanthropy
- Race and racism
- Religion
- Resilience
- Social justice
- Socioeconomic class
- Spirituality
- St. David Catholic Church
- Urban planning
- Volunteerism

**USING THIS GUIDE**

This guide is an invitation to dialogue. It is based on a belief in the power of human connection, designed for people who want to use *I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful* engage family, friends, classmates, colleagues and communities. In contrast to initiatives that foster debates in which participants try to convince others that they are right, this document envisions conversations undertaken in a spirit of openness in which people try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet your needs and interests. And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult.

For more detailed event planning and facilitation tips, visit [www.pbs.org/pov/outreach](http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach)
Profile: Carolyn Parker

As the levees broke and the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina barreled up the mouth of the Mississippi River, Carolyn Parker’s home in the Holy Cross neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana, was submerged, and her neighbors had to be rescued from their rooftops by helicopter. After authorities found no trace of Parker for weeks, the local newspaper pronounced her dead. But Parker had survived. She had been one of the last people to leave her neighborhood under mandatory evacuation and was one of thousands of other newly homeless victims of the storm.

Parker eventually reunited with her children and her brother, Raymond. She then became a voice for the displaced people of the city’s Lower Ninth Ward, who were scattered all over the country, waiting to come home. Parker gained instant recognition in January 2006 after her public rebuke of New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin—she railed at him and a committee of experts, promising that if they pulled down her house it would be “over my dead body.” The entire country took notice, and Parker says that when President George W. Bush was asked about her indictment of the government, he replied, “No comment.”

As the waters retreated, Parker was one of the first residents to move back to the Lower Ninth Ward. While she waited for funds to reconstruct her house, she lived in a 10-by-24-foot FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) trailer for three years with her daughter, Kyrah Julian, who had returned home from Syracuse University to help. Her son, Rahsaan, joined the family from California, where he had just completed his master’s degree, and he lived in the gutted shell of Parker’s home. Parker immediately began advocating for the rebuilding of her cherished St. David Catholic Church, the only Catholic church that welcomed blacks when she was growing up. It was the glue that held her community together, and its resurrection became a primary mission for Parker.

Parker gives viewers a guided tour of her home after its destruction. She recounts her early memories of segregated New Orleans: Because she was fair-skinned, she was allowed to ride in the front of the bus while her grandmother sat in the back. Parker’s family may have been poor, but she was resourceful. To make sure her mother looked fashionable, Parker would cut pictures of the latest styles out of the newspaper, make her own patterns and sew new dresses for her mother. “And boy, did she look good going to church every Sunday!” Parker exclaims.

New Orleans Before Katrina

Daniel Wolff, I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful producer and author of The Fight for Home: How (Parts of) New Orleans Came Back, describes Hurricane Katrina as more of an acceleration of the history of New Orleans than a turning point. The storm illuminated systemic problems that had existed in New Orleans for decades, and the city’s geographic vulnerabilities, social inequalities and lack of support systems set the stage for a long and difficult recovery.

The population of New Orleans had been on a steady decline for nearly a half-century before Hurricane Katrina. According to the 2010 census, New Orleans had lost more than 140,000 residents from 2000 to 2005, reflecting a 29 percent drop from its peak of 600,000 in 1960. This was largely due to the high crime rate and lack of jobs in the city and ultimately resulted in thousands of abandoned homes and vacant businesses, driving median rent down to approximately $650 a month. Before Katrina, half of the city’s residents lived in households with incomes of less than $25,000 a year and nearly a quarter were living at or below the poverty line. New Orleans ranked second among the nation’s 50 largest cities in terms of the number of neighborhoods it had in extreme poverty. New Orleans also ranked second in the United States in terms of the gap between rich and poor.

Despite New Orleans’ vulnerabilities the city was (and has long been) critical to the nation’s economy. The cargo that flows through the Port of New Orleans creates $37 billion in economic output annually and close to 380,000 jobs in the United States depend on goods handled by the Port of New Orleans. In addition, southern Louisiana rivals the Persian Gulf in the number of natural gas and oil refineries and its fishing industry is one of the largest in the United States, responsible for 40 percent of all seafood consumed by Americans each year.

Sources:

Greater New Orleans Community Data Center.
http://www.gnocdc.org/

House Committee on Ways and Means. “Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Trade.”

http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1194016,00.html


**Holy Cross and the Lower Ninth Ward**

In New Orleans, poverty was concentrated in low-lying places like the Lower Ninth Ward, and Hurricane Katrina exposed the intertwined problems of racial discrimination, segregation, and poverty in the city. Eighty percent of the city’s African-American residents lived in these flood-prone areas, compared to 54 percent of the city’s white population.

The Lower Ninth Ward was one of the last areas developed in New Orleans and consists of two neighborhoods, the Lower Ninth North (to the north) and the Holy Cross district, where Carolyn Parker lives, to the south. The neighborhood was formally recognized as the Lower Ninth Ward in the 1920s, following the construction of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, more commonly known as the “Industrial Canal.” This canal bisects the Ninth Ward, creating the Lower Ninth Ward to the east of the canal and the Upper Ninth Ward to the west. Holy Cross stands six to eight feet above sea level, between the levees of the Industrial Canal and the Mississippi River. The neighborhood’s unique architecture and historical fabric earned it designation as a historical district in 1990.

Before Hurricane Katrina, Holy Cross had about 5,500 residents in 1,900 households. Its population was 90 percent African American, with 30 percent of the population living at or below the poverty level. The Lower Ninth Ward, as a whole, was home to 19,500 people with a poverty level of 36 percent—three times the national average. According to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, while nearly 60 percent of heads of household in the Lower Ninth Ward owned their own homes, there was no real opportunity to build individual assets or to enjoy house appreciation. At the time Hurricane Katrina hit, three-quarters of residents in the Lower Ninth Ward had been living in the same houses for five years or longer.

Though the Holy Cross neighborhood now has only half of the people it did before Hurricane Katrina, the community has fought hard to keep its land, navigating often vague, broken recovery programs and bureaucratic red tape to do so. However, the Lower Ninth Ward has always battled inequality and marginalization. Geographic isolation fostered neighborhood unity as early as the 1870s, and the city’s attempt to widen the Industrial Canal (effectively removing homes) strengthened that unity further. The high rate of home ownership also reflects the residents’ strong attachment to the Lower Ninth Ward.

Pam Dashiell, late director of the Lower Ninth Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development describes the community, saying, “The Lower Ninth Ward is a place that folks love. It is a place that is vulnerable, there’s no question about that. It was a place that had its issues and problems. It had no economic infrastructure even before Katrina, but it’s a place that can serve as an example of how people can bring back, restore and regenerate their own neighborhoods and communities in a way that is beneficial to them and the larger community, to the larger New Orleans community.”

**Sources:**


**Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans Levees**

On August 29, 2005, a 15-foot surge approached the city of New Orleans from Lake Borgne. Water violently inundated the Industrial Canal, breaching its levee system in three places and flooding southeastern areas of New Orleans, including the Lower Ninth Ward. The tsunami-like rush of water was so powerful that homes were ripped from their foundations and scattered inland. A barge docked in the Industrial Canal also breached the floodwall, adding to the massive surge of water.

The surge and waves that Hurricane Katrina generated greatly exceeded the capacity of the levees, exacerbated by the fact that on average levees in the United States are 54 years old. In all, Hurricane Katrina resulted in more than 50 levee failures, the flooding of 75 percent of the city and more than 1800 lives lost in the Gulf Coast region.

The damage did not stop with the storm, as the stagnant water in the flooded areas remained stagnant for weeks without anywhere to drain.

**Sources:**


**Post-Katrina: Federal Aid and Recovery**

In terms of dollars and cents, Hurricane Katrina was the largest weather disaster in U.S. history. Total damages were somewhere between $96 and $135 billion. By comparison, Hurricane Andrew (the second largest U.S. natural disaster) had estimated damages of $22 to $33 billion.

In fewer than 40 hours more than one million people left the city of New Orleans, twice the number that had ever evacuated a U.S. city before. However, close to 50,000 people remained, many of them poor or elderly and with no place to go or means for traveling. Most of these people lived in the most flood-prone areas of New Orleans and were taken to the Superdome sports and convention center as a last resort. For six days, the Superdome housed more than 25,000 people stranded in the city.

Once these people left the Superdome, many of them became dependent on federal grant money and local relief programs for home repair and survival. Due to its location on the canal, the Lower Ninth Ward was one of the most affected neighborhoods with the highest percentage of damaged areas and the highest number of deaths by drowning. Many Lower Ninth Ward residents did not qualify for or carry flood insurance because they were considered outside the flood zone—the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had certified the levee walls to be resistant to flooding.

**Sources:**


Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. “Four Years after the Storm: the Road Home Program’s Impact on Greater New Orleans.” http://www.gnocdc.org/CongressionalTestimony/FourYearsAfterTheStormTheRoadHomeProgramsImpactOnGreaterNewOrleans.pdf

Louisiana Land Trust. http://www.lalandtrust.us


Road Home Program

The housing challenges that already existed prior to Katrina made rebuilding particularly difficult. With no central place to get information about property acquisition, investment was very low. Blighted, abandoned and tax-adjudicated properties were common, and there was no system in place for handling them effectively. Prior to Katrina, 26,000 blighted properties were either tax-adjudicated or not under for handling them effectively. Prior to Katrina, 26,000 blighted properties were either tax-adjudicated or not under the city’s control.

Much of the federal aid for recovery went toward the Road Home program, which was administered by a private contractor hired by the state and designed to help Louisiana residents get back into their homes. This program, however, ended up serving as a road block for many. Renters were largely ineligible for aid, and the program gave maximum grants of $150,000 based on the assessed values of homes pre-Katrina, without accounting for the rise in the cost of building materials and contractors following the storm. As a result, the funds residents were able to attain were much lower than the actual cost of rebuilding (a cost which rose to nearly $100 per square foot.) According to the Seattle Journal for Social Justice, the average homeowner in the Road Home program received $54,586 less than he or she actually needed to rebuild. Relief aid was based on property values, so homeowners in more affluent neighborhoods, which were largely populated by white people and generally had incurred less damage, received more aid than homeowners in places like the Lower Ninth Ward.

Though by fall 2006 approximately 34,000 homeowners had completed Road Home applications, the relief program had issued a total of only 13 checks. Carolyn Parker was one of the first to apply for Road Home assistance and was told the process would be accelerated since her mortgage had been paid off for 10 years, but she did not receive funds until 2008.

After many state-level investigations into the failure of the Road Home program, a 2008 lawsuit was filed against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alleging discriminatory practices. In July 2011, HUD agreed to pay $62 million to 1,300 Louisiana homeowners.

Sources:


The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the U.S. government agency responsible for disaster response, and it was heavily criticized for slow and fragmented recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina. FEMA was downsized and put under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and had lost some of its strongest leaders. In New Orleans, there were reports of FEMA turning down personnel and supplies offered by local businesses, police forces and emergency crews, while residents tried to figure out how to get back into their homes. In addition, FEMA had never dealt with a storm of Katrina’s size, and preparations and resources were ultimately insufficient for a natural disaster of such magnitude. A later Congressional report deemed the response in New Orleans “a national failure, an abdication of the most solemn obligation to provide for the common welfare.”

FEMA eventually supplied emergency food, water, medical supplies and services to residents, though the supplies were quickly depleted due to the number of residents in need. A lack of rebuilding funds and health problems left residents living in FEMA-supplied trailers—frequently criticized as a Band-Aid solution—for up to six years. Studies found some of those trailers were contaminated with formaldehyde, which contributed to various illnesses. The Times-Picayune, the city’s major newspaper, reported that at one point New Orleans had more than 23,000 FEMA-issued trailers and mobile homes. The last trailer was removed from New Orleans in February 2012.

In the film, Carolyn Parker lives in a trailer for more than three years before moving back into her damaged home.
The city instituted a “look and leave” policy, which allowed residents to return to their homes only briefly to assess damage, but Parker, fearing the city would take her property, instituted what she called her own “look and stay” policy.

Sources:


Rebuilding the Lower Ninth Ward

Carolyn Parker’s concern that the city would claim her damaged home was not unfounded. Shortly after Katrina, Dennis Hastert, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives at the time, declared that rebuilding the city didn’t make sense, saying “It’s a question that certainly we should be asking. It looks like a lot of that place could be bulldozed.” Professor of natural sciences at St. Louis University Timothy M. Kusky writes that New Orleans has long been sinking and that it very well may be 18 feet below sea level by the end of the century. He notes, “New Orleans is one of America’s great historic cities, and our emotional response to the disaster is to rebuild it grander and greater than before. However, this may not be the most rational or scientifically sound response and could lead to even greater human catastrophe and financial loss in the future.”

In 2005, New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin commissioned a panel that recommended converting the hardest hit areas of the city (including the Lower Ninth Ward) into “green space.” As depicted in I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful, many members of the local community saw this as an attempt to change the makeup of the city by eradicating the poorest neighborhoods with the largest African-American populations. Nagin ultimately rejected the recommendation and allowed residents to return.

Since Mitch Landrieu took office as mayor of New Orleans in 2010, funding for construction projects has surged. The first neighborhood to receive new funds was the Lower Ninth Ward. These funds included $60 million for street repairs, $50 million for rebuilding schools and $14.5 million for a new community center. But as of 2012 there was little sign of new construction.

Much abandoned space remains in the Lower Ninth Ward and clearing or developing these lots is still a priority for the city. In the area, 739 homeowners sold their properties to the state after Katrina. The idea was that the state would resell them, but about 570 of those properties remain unsold, with entire blocks undeveloped. Hundreds of other homeowners retained their properties but have been unable to rebuild. On many streets, there is only a single occupied house.

In total, more than 3,000 flooded lots in the city were bought with federal money in an emergency bailout, and it is costing city and state governments an enormous amount of money to maintain these properties. According to the Louisiana Land Trust—the federal agency managing the properties until federal funding runs out in 2012—$34 million have been spent on maintenance, $4.5 million on security and $9.1 million on overhead costs since the homes were acquired in 2007.

According to a 2012 city-sponsored analysis of U.S. postal service data, it is estimated that 43,000 blighted properties still exist in the city.

Despite these challenges, people continue to return to New Orleans and the city is growing. From 2010 to 2012, nearly every neighborhood experienced gains, with overall city population growth reaching nearly 5 percent from April 2010 to July 2011—more than six times the national average of 0.73 percent. Aggressive tax incentives and low cost of living have been cited as factors in luring new businesses to the city. A Kaiser Family Foundation report found that one in nine current New Orleans residents was not living in the area prior to Hurricane Katrina, a trend that is expected to contribute further to the city’s recovery and reform.

According to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, New Orleans is now the fastest growing city in America.
Sources:


Louisiana Land Trust. http://www.lalandtrust.us


Did you know...

- Hurricane Katrina displaced 200,000 residents. The majority of residents displaced relocated to Southern metropolises, including Dallas, Houston, Little Rock and Atlanta. (2010 Census)


- Many of the events that helped to drive the 1960s civil rights movement nationally emerged in New Orleans. After the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson case, an 1892 trial that centered on a light-skinned mixed race man from Tremé who was arrested for sitting in a whites-only Louisiana train car, numerous organizations and coalitions began protests against segregation laws.

- Only 905 of the 1,508 churches that existed before Katrina were functioning one year after the storm. Research revealed that 60 percent of Southern Baptist churches in the five-parish area were functioning. (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary)

- When St. David reopened four years after Hurricane Katrina, the church stayed unlit throughout the rite of dedication, which included a passage from Genesis about Noah and the flood. (Catholic News Service http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0901372.htm)
**DISCUSSION PROMPTS**

**Carolyn Parker**
- In your view, what are the sources of Carolyn Parker’s strength and resilience in the face of apathy, discrimination and poverty?
- Does Parker earn her community’s respect? If so, how?
- Do you think Parker’s reaction to Katrina has anything to do with her early participation in the civil rights movement? If so, how?
- At the beginning of the film, Father Joe Campion describes Carolyn Parker, saying, “Miss Parker is a trip.” How would you describe her? How do you think that people she has confronted (such as the people on the panel at the town meeting) would describe her? How do we (and media outlets) use adjectives to cast someone as a role model or, alternately, as a troublemaker?
- What lesson(s) did you take away from Parker’s story about choosing to retire rather than share her recipes with a chef?
- Parker describes a near-death experience when she had her knee surgery, saying, “I went on a little trip.” She describes seeing deceased loved ones and singing songs from the 1960s, and says, “This is where the fun time was in my life.” What does Parker’s experience reveal about her life, values or personality? How does it compare with other stories of near-death experiences that you have heard?

**Katrina**
- What did you learn from the film about the effects of Hurricane Katrina? How does the story of Carolyn Parker and her family compare with the stories from mainstream media reports?
- Some people have argued that the floods following Hurricane Katrina were the result of a manmade disaster rather than a natural disaster. What did you see in the film that supports or contradicts this point-of-view?
- Carolyn Parker’s daughter had just left for college when Katrina struck. Here’s how her mother recounts the story: “Now imagine just leaving out and you’re gone less than a week but you’re happy because you’ve made it and you’re going to New York. You’re going to Syracuse University. Your dream has come true. Okay. Now, imagine, if you can close your eyes, imagine all that’s gone in less than a week.” As Parker suggested, imagine that you are in her daughter’s position. What would you do? Would you give up your scholarship and come home? Why or why not? Where would you find strength or support?
- What do you think of the decision that Parker’s daughter, Kyrah Julian, and Parker’s son, Rahsaan, made to return to New Orleans? Do you think it was a good decision or not?

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you can pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion. Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can’t engage until they have had a break, don’t encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won’t lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question, such as:
- If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would it be and what would you ask him or her?
- What did you learn from this film? What insights did it provide?
- If a friend asked you what this film was about, what would you say?
- Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly disturbing or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?

**GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful
**Life in the Lower Ninth Ward**

- Parker recalls that women in her family cooked muskrat and made gumbo with bird brains. How does food connect us to our families and heritages? What foods do you remember linking you to your family or cultural traditions?
- Parker’s daughter knows that her success in school and as a college scholarship recipient is often met with surprise because she is from the Lower Ninth Ward, where, as she puts it, “They said that none of us would make it.” How did such assumptions about life in the Lower Ninth Ward influence recovery efforts and the allocation of resources for rebuilding?
- Parker blames police for the theft of her valuables after she was instructed to evacuate. She says, “When we first came you had to be careful [because] sometimes the police [were] working like the criminals. Believe it or not.” Why do you suppose she suspects police? If you were a city leader, how would you begin to repair the community’s faith in law enforcement?
- What role did St. David Catholic Church play in the lives of the people featured in the film? How does that role compare to the role played by churches or other religious establishments in your community?
- If you were making a recommendation to members of the Church hierarchy about whether to merge St. David and St. Maurice, what would you tell them? If your recommendation was to close St. David, what steps would you take to integrate its congregants into the congregation at St. Maurice, a church that once barred them from attending based on the color of their skin?
- Parker recounts memories from her childhood on a segregated bus with her grandmother, as well as being forced to eat outside as an employee of the Elmer candy factory when it was discovered that she was black and not Creole. What did you learn from these stories about the impact of segregation and the history of “passing” as white? Does your family history include any similar stories? If so, are these stories being passed from one generation to the next? If not, why not?

**Recovery**

- On the filmmaker’s final visit, Parker and her children argue about change. What criteria do you use to decide when to accept or promote change and when to fight it?
- Do you agree with Parker’s belief that residents of the Lower Ninth Ward have a right to return to their homes? If so, what is the source of that right? Were the police justified in threatening to arrest her for returning before her house was declared safe or had basic utilities?
- If you were sitting on the New Orleans recovery planning board, what factors would you consider in making the decision about whether or not to rebuild the Lower Ninth Ward? What role would the history of racism and discrimination against residents of the Lower Ninth Ward play in your decision?
- Parker talks about the importance of encouraging former residents of the Lower Ninth Ward to return. How would you solve the “chicken and egg” problem of attracting people to return so that they can rebuild, while also needing housing, schools and infrastructure so returnees have shelter, basic services and employment?
- When Parker and the film crew accidentally come across the homes that Brad Pitt’s organization is building, Lars, the architect, is initially suspicious and wants to know if they are members of the press. Why do you think he is concerned?
- Parker has trouble finding honest contractors. What could disaster relief planners do to prevent people from being ripped off and ensure that there are enough skilled workers to meet the need for them?
- Parker and her children worry that their house will not be habitable before their FEMA trailer is removed. How does the deadline for trailer removal benefit or hinder the family’s recovery? What is the impact of the deadline on others who might want to return and rebuild? In your view, what is a reasonable time period for FEMA to supply relief housing?
- Parker announces to the panel at the town hall meeting, “I didn’t die with Katrina.” In your view, why did she think the panelists needed to hear those words? Besides her body, what does Parker want to keep alive? What do you think successfully surviving Katrina would look like to her?

**Additional media literacy questions are available at:**
www.pbs.org/pov/educators/media-literacy.php
Taking Action

- Find an organization that is involved in rebuilding New Orleans and volunteer to help.
- Host a debate on the pros and cons of rebuilding neighborhoods that are flood-prone.
- Identify the “Carolyn Parkers” in your own community and record their stories. Then host an event that honors their resilience and provides an opportunity to share the stories publicly.
- In the film, Parker’s daughter, Kyrah Julian, says, “I want the world to be a better place and I want to be active in that change or what brings the changes.” Use her statement as a prompt for brainstorming ways to bring positive change to your own community. As a group, come to a consensus about one or two items from your list to put into action.
RESOURCES

FILMMAKER WEBSITE

www.imcarolynparker.com

The film’s website includes general information on the film and the filmmakers.

Interact with I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful at PBS.org

POV’s Webby Award-winning website offers a broad range of exclusive online content to enhance the broadcast of I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful. Watch the full film online for free for a limited time following the broadcast (Sept. 21, 2012 to Dec. 13, 2012), download this discussion guide, lesson plans and other viewing resources, view photos from the film and interact with the filmmaker through video interviews and an online Q-and-A soon after the documentary airs on POV.

What’s Your POV?

Share your thoughts about I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful by posting a comment at http://www.pbs.org/pov/carolynparker

MAKE IT RIGHT

www.makeitrightnola.org

This organization’s website includes updates on its home building efforts, green home design, stories from homeowners and ways to get involved.

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE: “JUNGLELAND”

This March 21, 2012 article by Nathaniel Rich provides an overview of what has happened in the Lower Ninth Ward since Katrina.

NEW ORLEANS METROPOLITAN AREA INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/noma/

This page on the FEMA website provides descriptions of ongoing efforts to rebuild New Orleans and links to relevant agencies, organizations and stakeholders, as well as an opportunity to submit comments. Search for “Ninth Ward” for information specific to that area of the city.

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO: KATRINA & BEYOND
www.npr.org/sections/hurricane-katrina-and-beyond/

This page links to an aggregated list of National Public Radio news stories related to Katrina and its aftermath.

GREATER NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY DATA CENTER
http://www.gnocdc.org/

This website includes data about New Orleans demographics in the form of spreadsheets, maps and slideshows.

BLOOMSBURY USA
http://www.bloomsburyusa.com/books/catalog/fight_for_home_hc_797

Producer Daniel Wolff’s new book, *The Fight for Home: How (Parts of) New Orleans Came Back* (Bloomsbury, Aug. 7, 2012), is about citizens returning to New Orleans and rebuilding the Lower Ninth Ward; it is another aspect of the ongoing project he is producing with Jonathan Demme that includes *I’m Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful*.

To purchase, visit Bloomsbury USA http://www.bloomsburyusa.com/books

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *THE FIGHT FOR HOME*:

“The Fight for Home is not just a story about the distinct character of New Orleans; it speaks to the character of our nation. Daniel Wolff shows how the people who rebuilt New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, like the people who rebuilt Chicago after our Great Fire, would not be defined by tragedy, but by their great fortitude and triumph.”

—Rahm Emanuel, mayor of Chicago
HOW TO BUY THE FILM

To order I'm Carolyn Parker: The Good, the Mad, and the Beautiful, visit www.shoppbs.org

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 25th season on PBS in 2012, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, POV's Borders. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. Visit www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Digital www.pbs.org/pov

POV's award-winning website extends the life of our films online with interactive features, interviews, updates, video and educational content, as well as listings for television broadcasts, community screenings and films available online. The POV Blog is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss their favorite films and get the latest news.

POV Community Engagement and Education www.pbs.org/pov/outreach

POV films can be seen at more than 450 events nationwide every year. Together with schools, organizations and local PBS stations, POV facilitates free community screenings and produces free resources to accompany our films, including discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

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American Documentary, Inc. www.amdoc.org

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying, and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream-media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic-engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online, and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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