



## FILM & DIALOGUE GUIDE *by Jacquelyn Pogue*

*Hosting a film provides a wonderful opportunity for dialogue. Below are step-by-step guidelines that follow a modified Conversation Café model. For more detailed hosting instructions and many resources, visit [www.ConversationCafe.org](http://www.ConversationCafe.org).*

### Preparation for the Film & Dialogue Event

Select a film that you think will stimulate dialogue and send invitations.

*Needed:*

- Host/facilitator for each group of 5 to 9
- The film and means to show it (VCR/television, laptop, screen, etc.)
- A “talking object”, such as a stone or tennis ball
- Copies of “*The Agreements*” for each participant (*To print, visit: [www.ConversationCafe.org](http://www.ConversationCafe.org); click on Host a Café; then Materials to Print; then Agreements.*)
- A watch or clock
- A bell
- Name tags
- A question or topic related to the film
- Seating for viewing film (preferably U-shaped rather than rows) and break out rooms with chairs in a circle for each group.
- Refreshments **after** dialogue (*optional*)

### Opening

Ten minutes after the appointed hour, welcome the group and invite each person to share ***their name and why they are here*** in 10 seconds or less. Begin by modeling this yourself. Show the film.

**Dialogue Groups**—Break into circles of 5 to 8 people, if more than 9 participants.

#### 1. Making Agreements (Pass out copy of “*Agreements*” to each person.)

- a. Going around the circle each person reads an agreement and comments on it.
- b. Explain that the bell may be rung if an agreement is not being followed, or if someone wants reflective silence . Anyone may ring the bell.
- c. Agreements :

**Open-mindedness:** listen to and respect all points of view

**Acceptance:** suspend judgment as best you can

**Curiosity:** seek to understand rather than persuade

**Discovery:** question old assumptions, look for new insights

**Sincerity:** speak from your heart and personal experience

**Brevity:** go for honesty and depth but don’t go on and on

*continued*



## FILM & DIALOGUE GUIDE, *continued*

### 2. Explain the Process: Host/facilitator briefly explains the process:

- a. Talking Object—Speak only when holding it. You can refrain by saying “Pass”.
- b. Rounds—Going around the circle for **brief** sentence completion.
- c. Open Dialogue—Spontaneous responses to topic and participants’ comments.
- d. Final Round—Going around the circle for brief sentence completion.
- e. Rejoining the Large Group (when applicable) for final sharing.

### 3. Dialogue Begins

- a. **Round 1:** Using the talking object and emphasizing 30 second brevity, host goes first: ***“The scene or phrase from the film that had an impact upon me was . . .”*** Go around the circle.
- b. **Round 2:** Again host begins round: ***“After listening to what the others have said, I would like to add . . .”*** Go around the circle again.
- c. **Open Dialogue**—Place the talking object and the bell in the middle of the circle. Introduce the topic or question that you have selected for this film. Some examples are: ***“How does the film relate to your personal life and what are the implications of it for the world beyond you?” OR “What actions might the film inspire you to take?”*** Phrase your question such that a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ will not suffice. The open dialogue does not follow the circle pattern. Using the talking object, anyone may comment, passing it on when finished speaking. Host does not start.
- d. **Final Round**—Model this final prompt, ***“What was meaningful to me about this conversation was . . .”*** Host goes last.

### 4. Closing—Rejoining the larger group (when applicable) for final sharing—Ask for sharing using prompts such as: ***“A new insight I received was . . .”*** or ***“One of the best ideas or action steps I heard from this dialogue was . . .”*** or ***“What I liked about the process of dialogue was . . .”*** After sharing, thank everyone for coming to the event.