

# *Oh Mercy*

## *Searching for Hope in the Promised Land*

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



## Introduction

The following are some recommended 'prompts' for discussions that are encouraged after a viewing of *Oh Mercy*. They are suggestive only, and facilitators are encouraged to adjust them to the context in which the film is screened, as well as to the specificities of the audience. The engagement of children and young people in conversations about the issues that *Oh Mercy* focuses on is important. For this reason, modifications and/or different approaches to these discussion questions may be needed.

Stay up to date. Find updates and facts regarding the current state of the U.S. immigration system at the [National Immigration Forum](#).

## Pre-screening Discussion

### Suggested Questions for Pre-Screening Discussion

- What is the difference between an [asylum seeker, refugee, and forced migrant](#)?
- What are the Migrant Protection Protocols? Can you give examples of how they might or might not protect migrants or asylum seekers in the United States?
- How long do you estimate it would take someone to gain legal entry into the United States?
- What are some reasons why someone would feel compelled to leave their home and seek asylum elsewhere?
- What are some disadvantages that might come with living in a tent encampment for an extended period of time?

## Reflection Questions

### Suggested Questions for Post-Screening Discussion

- The crisis depicted in the film is a very sensitive and emotional topic. What emotions were you feeling during the film and at what points? Was there a particular scene that made you feel a particular emotion (sad, frustrated, hopeful, angry)?
- What were you shocked or surprised by in the film?
- What scene from the film sticks with you the most? Why?

- What did you learn in the film you weren't aware of before? Reflect on why you think you weren't aware of this topic or idea. Does this topic not come up in conversations with family or friends? Is it framed in a different way, or not mentioned, in the media sources you follow? Brainstorm some ways you can stay informed and continue to educate yourself on the topic.
- How did you view migrants at the border, or migrants in general, before viewing the film? Did your views change after watching the film, and if so, in what ways?
- If you could ask an asylum-seeker in the film a question, what would you ask and why? Is there a specific person in the film that you would pose this question to?
- Put yourself in the shoes of one of the migrants in the Matamoros tent encampment. Close your eyes and think about the story of one of the migrants. Now, imagine yourself in the shoes of that migrant. Imagine that you have been separated from your child, your mother or father, or are trying to bring your child to safety. Picture the camp as you just saw in the film (tents, poor sanitation, little food and water) and imagine days, turned into weeks, turned into months, waiting in the camp with no knowledge of when it will end. Imagine you finally get called to an asylum hearing, but then with little advice and opportunity are turned away in a matter of minutes, back to the country you just fled. What are you feeling?
- Did any part of the film relate to something personal in your life? Maybe something reminded you of a personal experience you have had, or reminded you of your own children, siblings, or friends.
- What are your hopes for the asylum-seekers at the border depicted in the film? What are your hopes for the future of the U.S. immigration and asylum system? Is there enough public information available, in the right languages, to keep everyone aware of changes and developments in these issues?
- Immigration in the U.S. has become a very partisan topic. Discuss the different arguments surrounding U.S. immigration, what the root of these arguments are, and ways both sides can find common ground. How can Republicans and Democrats come together in a common understanding to aid the asylum-seekers at the border who desperately need help?
- What more do you seek to understand about the current crisis at the border?
- Do you know some of the root causes of Central America Migration, including the United States' past involvement?

## **Ways to get involved:**

We hope this film has educated you about US immigration policies and has improved your understanding of the terrible and inhumane conditions these policies have inflicted on innocent women, men and children. Here are some ways you can contribute to the effort to aid the asylum-seekers, refugees, and forced migrants not only on the US/Mexico border, but also in your community:

- Write your congressperson and express your concern about the population who are currently on the border seeking access to the US. Follow the link directly below to find who your current representative is based on where you live:

### [Find Your Representative](#)

- An excellent example of how a community can embrace this issue is the [Hearts & Homes for Refugees](#) model for how to resettle, assist and advocate for our new neighbors. Explore ways in which your community can replicate this model of welcoming and advocacy and learn more about how to be a voice for refugees and the policies that affect them. Read why community sponsorship is so important [here](#).
- Tell your friends and family about this documentary and the current situation at the border. Oh Mercy website: [ohmercyfilm.com](http://ohmercyfilm.com)
- Volunteer or support one of the non-profit organizations who conduct on-the-ground work on the border. Here is a website to get you started, but do explore the internet for more options. [Immigration and Refugees: Charity Navigator](#)
- Educate yourself. There are plenty of resources online, including, but not limited to, the ones listed directly below.

### [Myths and Facts About Immigrants and Immigration](#)

### [Returned Series](#)

### [How the U.S. Immigration System Works](#)

### [What are the Migrant Protection Protocols \(MPP\)?](#)

### [National Immigration Forum](#)

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