

Since the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, several of us in the St. Louis/St. Charles MO areas have begun a process of educating ourselves more about racism, white privilege and taking action. For over 5 years our home has hosted a movie night on social justice regarding racism and sexism. The 10-20 participants are truly sensing a feeling of community as we continue to watch films and learn from each other.

Several friends are asking how to organize a Movie Night so here's what we do:

1. After prayer and reflection, seek out those souls who are willing to learn more about our history and social justice by showing present and historical films that can often counter what is being experienced in the news. i.e.: 13th, Reconstruction, and Black Panther.. Invite those attracted to your movie night to be part of this organic community. (For the Baha'is we Invite, we clarify it is not a fireside, even though sometimes it may become one)
2. We meet once a month on the last Saturday of the month and send out email invitation 1-2 weeks before, often including photo of the film jacket cover.
3. We enjoy a pot luck dinner for an hour before beginning the film.
4. We have carefully selected a film each month being mindful of what is happening in our society.
5. We have found the films from the library, PBS, Netflix, California Newsreel and youtube or bought them.

6. Before beginning the film, chose a facilitator to introduce the film and grounds rules. After the film or when a powerful point is made during the film, the facilitator is to ensure everyone has a chance to speak honestly with the intent not to blame or shame anyone. Honor the sharing of what people have suffered. A loving, safe environment will evolve as they know their thoughts are welcomed and that we, especially white participants are learning to "do the work" on healing our attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

7. This is community building that can increase hope, educate far beyond factual information and deeply connect the participants. This consistent effort may also affect others invited by email or personal invitations for it has a powerful creative force.

8. A list of movies is provided that we have watched thus far and a list of possible future movies to share. If you have films to recommend, we would appreciate it!

9. Due to Covid 19 our group has continued to meet by zoom. We ask the friends to watch the film ahead of time and then we discuss it together. Most of our community met and we were delighted to see each other even though not in person and missing our delicious pot luck dinner!

Bringing knowledge, understanding, love and unity,

Joyce Olinga and Lynn Dornfeld , May 2020

