

I Live At Ground Zero Facilitators' Guide

This guide is meant to assist teachers and facilitators in initiating discussions with children and/or young adults following screenings of the video "I Live at Ground Zero". The video and this guide can be used to help viewers make sense of the tragic and complicated events in their lives. The guide uses the events and emotions around Sept. 11th as a model to look at not only Sept. 11th but also other personal and societal crises. The guide lists central themes and specific questions around which the discussion may be focused. The questions will help students analyze the larger themes; these themes are provided to aid the facilitator in guiding the discussion.

Facilitating Tips:

- ask questions that promote students to share their personal stories
- ask some broader- themed questions before the documentary is shown so that the students can think critically about the topics as they unfold in the film
- focus on the language and terms used in students' statements as a way to help them analyze the underlying socio-political meaning behind what they are saying, i.e. "The Arabs tried to hurt us," compared to, "Osama Bin Laden tried to hurt us". This raises the question of who they feel is responsible for the event, as well as who "us" refers to and what is meant by "hurt".

Questions and themes for students to consider:

Sense of Security/Fear:

What happened to Isabella's sense of community on September 11th? Even if you weren't an eyewitness, did you feel a similar impact in your community? What were the steps that led Isabella to regain some sense of safety and security? Do you think that sense can ever be fully regained? Do you feel safe?

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Recovery:

Why do you think Isabella was reluctant to talk about Sept. 11th in the days directly after the event? What were some of the steps in the process of her being able to talk about her experience? Have you gone through any similar steps?

Relationship between Personal Life and Current Events:

How does Isabella's personal experience inform her thinking regarding the political situation behind Sept. 11th? Do you feel that the world political situation has any direct impact on your life?

Relating to / learning from Isabella's experience:

When in the film did you most identify with Isabella, why? At what points did you not identify with/ relate to Isabella, why?

Justice and Fairness:

How did you feel when Isabella asked the question, "why destroy an innocent neighborhood?" Did you have similar feelings?

Tolerance:

How do you feel about Isabella's statement, "It was out of pure hatred that they did that (attacked the World Trade Center) but I didn't have hatred against them." Do you agree? Disagree? Why?

Imagery:

How did the images you saw on the news of September 11th affect you? Did seeing them many times change the effect they had on you? What makes Isabella reluctant to discuss the images she saw on Sept. 11th? How and why are images hard to explain? Why do you think they carry so much emotion?