**U.S. Immigration: Linking Past to Present  Film Discussion Guide**

Here are some suggested questions for facilitating a dialogue after screening the short film *U.S. Immigration: Linking Past to Present*.

**PHASE 1A: INTRODUCTION**

Welcome

Let people know about website Resource List that they may want to refer to on their own after seeing the film and participating in the dialogue.

Tell people you will be holding a dialogue with the audience after the screening, where everyone is invited to participate. The goal is the feel comfortable talking about and listening to others talk about immigration, perhaps opening ourselves up to new ideas.

**PHASE 1B: SCREEN FILM**

**PHASE 1C: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Explain what a dialogue is/agreed upon guidelines to make everyone feel comfortable:

- Listen fully and respectfully
- Make space for all voices to be heard
- Seek first to understand—ask questions to clarify, not to debate
- Stay open: we are all free to change our minds
- Try not to be judgmental

Encourage participation from everyone in room.

**NOTE: SAMPLE FOLLOW UP/PROBING QUESTIONS to use throughout the dialogue**

Tell me more about that.

How did you come to feel that way?

What are the assumptions you make when you think about this topic?

What difference do you notice in the ways that you’ve experienced this topic?

How was your personal experience different / similar from others in the group?
START DIALOGUE DISCUSSION

PHASE 1: QUESTIONS/Non-threatening questions that allow folks to share about themselves

When people ask you where you are from, what do you tell them? Why do you respond that way?

When I say the word immigrant, what comes to mind (or the words immigration, border, criminal, family, migration, illegal)?

PHASE 2: QUESTIONS/sharing our own experiences

What thoughts or feelings do these peoples’ stories bring up for you?

Think about people you know—from where did their families come from before becoming residents of the United States?

From what countries have large numbers of immigrants and migrants come to the United States over the centuries?

Why did your acquaintances, friends, and own family choose to immigrate or migrate here? Why might you immigrate to a new place?

What examples of historical events can you think of that have caused people to leave their homes to come to the United States? Why do people choose to immigrate or migrate to the United States?

What impact does immigration have in your daily life? How has immigration touched your life?
How would you feel if region you lived changed “ownership” and this brought in new people to your community who said it was their land?

How do you think early immigration and later U.S. annexation of territories affect those already living in America?

**PHASE 3: QUESTIONS**/to provoke people to dig deeper

Was there anything in the film that surprised you, angered you, made you proud or effected you emotionally?

How is immigration different today than 500 years ago?

What examples can you think of for reasons the U.S. has encouraged immigration during different periods of history?

What are some examples of people coming to the U.S. against their will (past to present)? How did that affect those immigrants and their families? What was the impact of their forced immigration on the U.S.?

How did living in the United States change your or your family’s sense of identity?

How have immigrants contributed to the identity of the United States?

How have immigrants contributed to the building of the United States and to its power as a nation?

Why do some people advocate for closed borders and restrictive immigration policy?

Who decides immigration policy (state vs federal)?
How have fear and racism shaped immigration policy in the United States?

How does the border and immigration laws affect people with families on both sides?

Who do you think should be welcome to immigrate to the United States today? How did you come to feel this way?

Thinking about the today’s refugee crisis (Syria) and the history of immigration in the United States, what values affect how we respond to these events?

Imagine that you have been granted the ultimate power to set immigration policy. What would you do? What would the criteria for entering the country look like? What is informing how you think about this?

**PHASE 4: QUESTIONS/synthesizing and closing the dialogue**

How did you feel about immigration before watching this film? Did the film or discussion change your thoughts or feelings in any way? If so, how?

Are there things in the film that you want to understand better?

Of the topics covered in the film, did anything make you want to take action or get involved? If so, how might you get involved?