

Movie Discussion Guide

THE BLIND SIDE

This movie is based on the true story of Michael Oher, offensive tackle for the Baltimore Ravens. As a homeless teenager, Michael was invited into the lives and hearts of the Tuohy family and had his life completely changed forever.



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Programming Suggestions

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate educational programs after viewing the film THE BLIND SIDE. Its purpose is to generate discussion based on social issues found within the movie and for program participants to reflect on themes that may be pertinent to them. Therefore, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to questions in this guide.

The discussion facilitator may choose to utilize one of the following activities as a means of developing discussion:

- Organize a drive to collect items for foster youth in your community. You can collect jackets, shoes, clothes, books, or other items that would be appropriate.
- Invite your residents to write a letter to a teacher who inspired them and made a difference in their life. Provide the paper, envelopes, and stamps to make mailing the letters easy.
- Coordinate a tutoring program at a local school near your college or university. Help kids learn to read, do math, or just build a stronger sense of self.
- Show off your school spirit and take your residents to a football game or other sporting event. Don't forget to make signs for the team members and dress in school colors.
- Design a bulletin board with pictures and stories about famous people who had to overcome obstacles to achieve their success. An obvious start for this board would be Michael Oher.
- Invite your residents to bring their favorite children's book to a community program. Ask them to share it with the group and discuss what it means to them and why it is their favorite children's book. Don't forget to pick up your copy of Ferdinand the Bull. You could even have students donate copies of their favorite books and give them to a foster youth program in your area.

An important consideration in choosing any facilitation option is that all students have an opportunity to participate. Be aware that many of the topics addressed in the film are not often talked about in public settings. Students who attend the program may have varying degrees of comfort level with the discussion.

ISSUES

DIVERSITY
LIFE STORIES
PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Discussion Questions:

- What themes and important messages did you find in the movie?
- Why do you think this movie is called “The Blind Side”?
- Beyond the help of the Tuohy family, what do you think was the difference between Michael Oher and his friends in Hurt Village (i.e. Dave)? What may have prevented them from finding a way out?
- Would you be willing to take in a complete stranger as the Tuohys did with Michael Oher? What are the rewards of helping someone in that way? What could be the challenges?
- Do you think the Tuohy are good people? What does it take to be considered a good person?
- Did you have a teacher who believed in you more than you believed in yourself? Tell us about that teacher and what he/she did to push and inspire you. How can you inspire others in your life?
- Did you ever have a teacher or person in your life who you felt was holding you back? Why do you think one of Michael’s teachers was unwilling to just pass him in order for him to get a football scholarship? Would you have passed him without him earning the grade? What was the impact of many of Michael’s teachers passing him along in school when he did not complete the work?
- The Tuohy family described themselves as Christians throughout the movie. What aspects of Christianity did you witness throughout the movie?
- Sean Tuohy told Leigh Ann that she had a “sick satisfaction” for helping others. What do you think he meant by that statement? How can this be a good quality and a challenging quality to have?
- What was your reaction to how Leigh Ann’s friends treated her when they found out she was helping Michael? Do you think you would be strong enough to stand up for what you think is right with your closest friends?
- What were the various trust issues that existed in the movie for Michael?
- What were the motives of Coach Cotton for getting Michael admitted into the school? Are all selfish motives bad? Give some examples.
- Do you think it was necessary for the NCAA to do an investigation of Michael’s situation? Were the questions that were asked fair?
- What were some issues of racism that existed in this film? Does racism still exist today? Discuss some current examples. What can you do to stop racism?
- What was Michael’s secret for being able to forget his past and not allow it to impact his future? How does his determination and motivation impact you? Do you think you can overcome the obstacles in your life to reach your goals?
- How did Leigh Ann react when Michael used her own words against her (i.e. “Don’t you lie to me”)?
- Why do you think Michael never told anyone before Leigh Ann that he hated being called “Big Mike”? Do you have a nickname? Do you like it or not? Why or why not?
- Do you know anyone as controlling as Leigh Ann Tuohy? What are the benefits and challenges of spending time with someone with this quality? What are the benefits and challenges of being that person?
- Share your thoughts on Michael’s poem (White Walls). What did you think about his reaction to The Charge of the Light Brigade?
- Why do you think Miss Sue felt it was important for Leigh Ann to know she is a Democrat? Do you think that could have impacted her tutoring of Michael? Do you think political views can have an impact on what is taught in the classroom? Please explain.
- What does it mean to you when someone says they have your back? Do you have people in your life who have your back? Please share how they have your back.
- In what ways are you helping others in your life right now? If you are not, where can you start?
- Discuss and reflect on the following quotes from the movie:
 - “You don’t admit Michael Oher because of sports. You admit him because it’s the right thing to do” (Coach Cotton).
 - “He scored in the 98th percentile for protection instincts” (Leigh Ann to Coach Cotton).
 - “She’s about to get her way” (Sean to S.J.).
 - “You’re changing that boy’s life” said Leigh Ann’s friend. “No, he’s changing mine” said Leigh Ann.
 - “The first check you write is for the mortgage, but the second is for the insurance” (Leigh Ann comparing football player salaries to household bills to be paid).

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