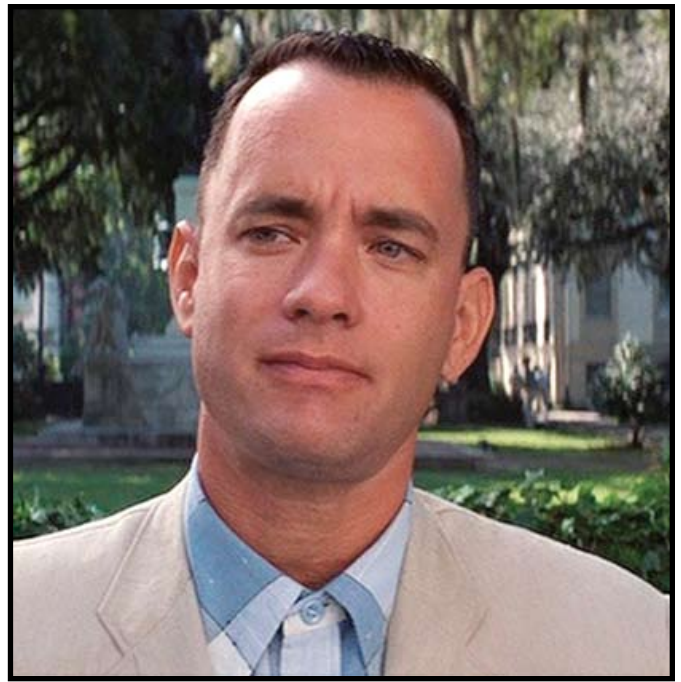


# Movie Discussion Guide

## FORREST GUMP

*“Life is like a box of chocolates...you never know what you’re gonna get...”*

*Forrest Gump* chronicles the life of Forrest Gump, born in Greenbow, Alabama, with a below average IQ and without a plan in place for his life. Through accidental occurrences, friendships and his “mama’s advice,” his life takes him all over the world as his story is intertwined with many significant historical figures and events. While it is obvious Forrest is unaware of the things he’s accomplishing and encounters he’s having, his childhood friend, Jenny, is always on his mind. Unbeknownst to him, his love for Jenny and his experiences make Forrest’s life more complete than he ever could have planned.



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FORREST GUMP

## Programming Suggestions

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate educational programs after viewing the film FORREST GUMP. 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:

- If your school has a disability resource center on campus, ask for resources and/or someone to come to your floor to discuss the services provided by your school to help students with disabilities. Provide a bulletin board with mental illness information for your floor.
- Schedule a ping pong tournament for your students.
- Create an interactive bulletin board with “Mama always said...” quotes from the movie, encouraging others to add their own life lessons/quotes.
- The film shows various views on the military/war. If your school has a military science program, invite someone in to talk about what war and the military look like. You could also find a local veteran to facilitate a discussion as well.
- Many organizations, such as A Million Thanks, (<http://www.amillionthanks.org/>) facilitate the delivery of letters or packages to service personnel in the military. Have a letter writing party on your floor. You could also gather items and send a care package.
- Forrest says there’s a lot you can tell about a person by their shoes. Have everyone at your program take one shoe off and place it in a pile. Then, have everyone pull out a random shoe from the stack. Have them find the person the shoe belongs to and have that person share a little about themselves. (Icebreaker).
- Music plays a prominent role in this film. Have each person pick a song they think best describes them. This can be shared via bulletin board or each person could bring the song and everyone could listen as they explain why they chose that song.
- Running played an important part in Forrest’s life. Organize a floor running group. You may also choose to find an upcoming 5 or 10K race and post a realistic training program for your students to follow and then compete in the race. Consider raising money as a team to donate to a local charity or organization that assists disabled veterans.
- While watching the movie, have people keep track of cultural references and famous people Forrest’s path crosses. After the movie, have people compare lists and give a prize for the person finding the most.
- Forrest experiences and witnesses various forms of segregation and discrimination. If you do not feel capable, invite someone in to facilitate a discussion on how things have changed in regards to both issues and also what may still exist today.
- As many may have seen this movie, create an interactive bulletin board for people to add their favorite movie quotes from this movie both prior to showing and after they’ve viewed it. Have participants explain why that quote is their favorite.

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

DEATH  
DYING  
HISTORICAL EVENTS  
MENTAL ILLNESS  
PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT  
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

# Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel about Forrest? What made him likeable (or not)?
- In what ways did Forrest demonstrate loyalty?
- What can we learn from Forrest in terms of acceptance of all types of people?
- Why do you think Jenny treats Forrest the way she does through most of the film? How do you think she feels as they get older?
- Which historical tie in involving Forrest is most surprising and why?
- Which character do you most relate with and why?
- If you were to describe Forrest to a friend, what would you tell them?
- Talk about a time you met someone by chance who is now a great friend.
- What lessons did Lieutenant Dan learn from Forrest?
- How might Forrest's story be different if he were born today instead of in the 1950's?
- How would you define "unconditional love?" How was that shown in this film?
- What things did you see in the film which would not be permitted in present day (i.e. smoking in the doctor's office, etc)?
- Children and youth can be cruel to each other. What are some examples of this from the film?
- When Forrest was at the University of Alabama, why do you think he picked up the books for the young lady when she dropped them? Have you ever done anything like that for someone who you thought was being treated badly?
- Talk about a time you found yourself defending someone who was being taken advantage of or being teased.
- What do you think the phrase "Stupid is as stupid does" means?
- Forrest used running as a way to retreat from problems or issues. What do you do to get away from your life stresses?
- If you could have one of the experiences Forrest experienced in your life, which would it be and why?
- What types of symbolism are carried out throughout the film?
- Do you think "ignorance is bliss?" Why or why not?
- What type of father do you think Forrest will be?
- Why do you think Lieutenant Dan changed his attitude after being around Forrest?
- Why do you think Jenny's life progressed the way it did?
- Forrest's mother said, "You have to do the best with what God's given you." How have you utilized what you've been given? Do you think Forrest exceeded his mother's expectations?
- What was the significance of the feather at the beginning and end of the movie?

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