

ACADEMY AWARD WINNER
**REESE
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The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity



**THE
GOOD
LIE**

Miracles are made by people
who refuse to stop believing.



Student
Discussion
Guide

THE GOOD LIE

We are excited about an upcoming film *The Good Lie* opening in theaters on October 3rd (www.thegoodliemovie.com). *The Good Lie* presents a great platform to share about your school or group's unique work alongside a moving story of triumph and transformation.

Here are some creative ways you can use the film to maximize its reach:

1. SHARE:

Post, blog, tweet about the film and your group. Take advantage of the film's publicity to bring awareness to the advocacy work you are doing. Visit TheGoodLieResources.com for sample posts and co-branding ideas.

2. ORGANIZE A VIEWING AND DISCUSS:

Ask your classmates, club members, and students to attend a screening of *The Good Lie* in your area. Then schedule a time to gather and discuss the film together. Free downloadable resources have been created to spark provocative discourse on poverty, bureaucracy, and our social system, to name a few.

3. TAKE ACTION:

Nearly 70,000 refugees were resettled across the United States last year, many arriving with little more than they could carry. Contact advocacy@enoughproject.org to learn how you can volunteer your time and efforts to support such refugees as they adjust to life in your community.

Thank you for championing the rights of those in need, for being a voice to those silenced, for advocating where those are overlooked. You and your work are making a difference.

TOPIC GUIDES:

Theo's Sacrifice

Forefathers - Brotherhood

It Was My Fault

Jeremiah's Integrity

The Ultimate Good Lie



THE GOOD LIFE

SCENE

The boys finally rest after days of walking. The morning after, soldiers come dangerously close to the boys hiding in the grass. Mamere awakes, still wrapped in his blanket, stands up and is seen by one of the soldiers. Theo, the oldest of the boys, quickly grabs the same blanket and stands up saying he is alone. Theo sacrifices himself and is taken by the soldiers so that his brothers would not be captured.



Theo's Sacrifice

REFLECTIONS

Out of all the tragedies the boys and girls experience as they flee for safety, this incident is one of the most horrific, as the film depicts how it haunts them as they grow into adults. They watch as Theo, their leader, willingly sacrifices himself to save them. Later in the film, they are barely able to talk about the event, and Mamere's desire to set this right drives the narrative.

Often, America is thought of solely as a land of opportunity. We overlook hardships that new arrivals to the U.S. may have experienced, focusing instead on the assumed potential before them. America is and has been a safe haven for many people, but in arriving on these shores, they leave behind a life and a home.

As we engage with refugees in our communities, like these Lost Boys and Girls, it's imperative that we remember that they might be carrying loss with them. It is not always easy to be a newcomer in the U.S. Many were running from something. Many are still dealing with the hardships they experienced.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- Describe a time when you felt out of place, or on the outside of a community.
- When did your family come to the U.S.? What were your ancestors' journeys like on their way here?
- How have you reacted to people on the outside of your community, or newcomers to your school/classroom? What are some concrete steps you can take to better welcome and support them?



THE GOOD LIFE

SCENE

Theo and Mamere play a simple hand over hand game reciting the names of their forefathers. The film opens with this game but the main scene is the morning of Theo's capture where Mamere draws a box in the sand and initiates the game.



Forefathers - Brotherhood

REFLECTIONS

Loss of a homeland due to war isn't simply a loss of land. It's a separation from a history as well. The boys play a game where they take turns reciting the names of their many generations of forefathers as a way of binding themselves to their heritage. Then, they have to run for their lives and they lose that deeply rooted sense of belonging.

Later, when Mamere loses his brother, Theo, he is separated even further from his heritage. The immediate loss of his parents, their home, and his brother is substantial. Yet, the uprooting and the complete destruction of a people in a place, could be thought of as even greater. Mamere no longer feels part of something larger than himself.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- How do you feel connected to your family's past? What traditions and histories do you carry on with your own family?
- Why is it important for some to feel connected to their ancestors? What does that bring to their lives?
- How might we better connect with our pasts with or without physical land to remind us? How might we better honor the past of someone like Mamere?



THE GOOD LIFE



It Was My Fault

SCENE

Late at night, Jack talks with Mamere who is wrought with guilt. Mamere feels as if he has once again failed the family and lost another brother as he had lost Theo. Jack reminds Mamere that his brother Theo made his choice and that Mamere should not live in the guilt of that one moment.

REFLECTIONS

Mamere has become overwhelmed with his circumstances. Escaping difficulty in Sudan, he and his family have encountered obstacles in America. With every choice Mamere makes, he struggles to escape the guilt of the past. He feels as if he is at the center of everything that has gone wrong and thus concludes that he is at fault for it all, beginning with the taking of Theo by the soldiers.

When we are facing difficult situations, it's easy to begin to turn towards blame. We often blame others or we can blame ourselves. However, we cannot blame our way to success and happiness. Blaming keeps our eyes focused on the past. And yet, success lies in the future.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- What is the difference between responsibility and guilt? How can each lead us to make changes or take action?
- Look at Jack's role in the conversation. Have you had someone be a "Jack" in your past? How did it help knowing someone was cheering you on? Look at the people you know—your own family, friends, and classmates—is there someone to whom you could be an encourager?



THE GOOD LIFE



Jeremiah's Integrity

SCENE

One of the tasks of Jeremiah's job is to discard food that have expired dates. He and Mamere have a difficult time accepting this wasteful requirement in light of their experience with poverty in Sudan. When Jeremiah is scolded for providing this to a homeless woman, he finds this unconscionable and quits.

REFLECTIONS

Need isn't relegated to refugees or immigrants. There are many people in great need right here in America pushing shopping carts through our back alleys and praying for a fruitful dumpster dive to feed their families for a few more nights.

Jeremiah's decision to quit his job rather than participate in his boss' wasteful practice is a very radical decision. Jeremiah felt that serving those around him was essential to his life. He chose to meet someone's needs even though it directly cost him. When there are needs around us, it will take effort and there might be a price to meeting those needs.

That inability to look past our immediate concerns to see the struggles of another is close to the heart of many of our unethical and selfish practices.

Jeremiah's boss, on the other hand, sees neither Jeremiah nor the woman Jeremiah is helping. All he sees is an FDA regulation and a cart full of expiring food. Sometimes, people can block out the needs and experiences of others, intentionally not listening to or recognizing them, because it may require some uncomfortable choices once the reality is understood.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- Has there ever been time that you've stood up for something that is right, even when others told you not to?
- What are some of the biggest needs in your school or community? What are some ways that you can be a part of a solution to those crises?
- When do we let our present concerns blind us to the needs of others? Who around us might we help if only we took the time to see them and to understand them?
- Whose stories are we unwilling to listen to lest they require greater sacrifice from us?



THE GOOD LIE

SCENE

Mamere is taking classes in the United States and studying *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. In the classroom, he is asked about Huck's lie and if it was a good lie. Mamere responds that because the outcome saved his friend's life, that it was a good lie.



The Ultimate Good Lie

REFLECTIONS

Huck's lie was considered a good lie because it was done to help someone else and it could've cost Huck if he'd been discovered. The focus of the good lie was serving someone else. Often, lies are self-serving. In class, Mamere makes a key distinction that the lie became good because it saved the life of another person.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- Talk about a time that you told a "white lie" or "good lie" in your own life. What was the circumstance? Was it the right choice to make?
- Is it ever okay to break the law to do the right thing? If so, how do you determine when that might be okay?
- What are some guiding principles that you adhere to, regardless of their place in the law?
- From what kinds of practices and beliefs do people draw their sense of justice? What happens when people have different understandings of what is right and wrong?
- What laws or policies do you think are hindering the doing of good in our world today? Is it ever, and if so, at what point is it, appropriate to break those laws? How might you work to overturn those laws?





Learn More and Take Action in Your Community.

Following the war portrayed in *The Good Lie*, South Sudan achieved independence in 2011, a major milestone promising peace to a new generation. However, in December of 2013, a power struggle within the ruling party turned into a brutal armed conflict that continues today - and civilians are paying the highest price as the ones often targeted by violence. Despite agreements from the heads of the warring parties to “end the conflict,” the leaders continue to exploit ethnic differences to fight the civil war. Nearly 1.7 million men, women, and children have been forced to flee their homes as South Sudan continues its slide towards what could be one of the worst man-made famines the world has seen in decades.

To join the movement to Stand for Peace in South Sudan, please visit:
www.enoughproject.org/apps/thegoodlie/

For more information on the current conflict in South Sudan and other educational resources, please contact advocacy@enoughproject.org.



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