



THE ARMOR^{*of*} LIGHT

COMMUNITY FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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ABOUT *The Armor of Light*



Reverend Rob Schenck is an Evangelical Minister of more than 30 years and is known for his belief that one's Christianity must be expressed vigorously through one's relationships and actions. As his ministry and influence grows he is confronted with the controversial debate surrounding gun violence in the U.S. When he begins to explore gun violence from a faith-based perspective, he is shocked by the opinions of longtime friends and colleagues who caution him to tread carefully on such a politically divisive issue. An ardent pro-life activist, Reverend Schenck struggles with the ethical implications of being both pro-life and pro-gun as he seeks to facilitate conversation and understanding amidst a country divided.

Throughout his journey, Rev. Schenck links up with Lucy McBath, the mother of Jordan Davis, an unarmed teen who was murdered in Florida and whose story cast a spotlight on "Stand Your Ground" laws. Despite being pro-choice, McBath and Schenck resolve to work together as they explore the moral underpinnings of gun violence and their desire to protect human life. Lucy must cope with the loss of her son while using her grief to catalyze conversations about gun violence and fuel a movement towards effective and practical change.

These two unlikely allies confront rejection, heartbreak, and anger as they work boldly to get people to examine gun violence from a moral and ethical perspective. On their journey, they bring people together across deep party lines to have a discussion about beliefs and the value of human life. Their ability to transcend disparate beliefs illuminates our individual capacity to hold productive conversations and make the conscious decision to find common ground.

LETTER FROM *the Director*



"Miraculous things can happen when people put aside their differences and choose to inhabit the spaces they share. Those spaces tend to be way above politics. That's what Rob and Lucy and I chose to do. And I think we have all been changed for the better."

Abigail E. Disney

I was raised in a filmmaking family. We talked about "story" and took apart other people's films over dinner. To me, it was just business, and when I was young I didn't think about making my own films. My family was also church going. I was raised on the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. But along with filmmaking, I left faith behind when I left home for college.

So it's interesting to me that when I did finally come to filmmaking I was drawn to stories about people of faith—remarkable people who put themselves on the line for what they believe. They succeed because of, or possibly in spite of, doing the unexpected. They can be contrary, they can be bold, but they are willing to take risks for something bigger than themselves.

Reverend Rob Schenck is one such person. The subject of guns was not on his front burner when I approached him about an idea for a film in 2013. I was looking for someone—anyone—from the pro-life movement who would be willing to entertain the idea that there were some logical and even theological inconsistencies in the positions that many conservative evangelicals were taking on abortion and guns. In short, I wanted to know how a person could be both "pro-life" and "pro-gun."

For instance, most conservative Christians back "Stand Your Ground" laws. Those laws essentially say that when a person carrying a weapon feels threatened, he or she can shoot without first trying to de-escalate the situation. It seemed to me that if the law relieved citizens of the burden of retreat from conflict, then it was stating that there are some things that are worse than taking a human life. Whether a life is that of a good person or a bad person is irrelevant—Jesus charged us with loving all of them.

From my perspective, shooting first is not a pro-life ethic; I wanted to find someone who could explain why so many Christians are arming up these days. I called many faith leaders and got nowhere. I was just about to give up when Reverend Schenck invited me down to Washington for a conversation.

I was worried. Reverend Schenck had spent a lifetime fighting with all his heart and soul on the opposite side of every social issue I believed in—most importantly abortion. He was a founding member of Operation Rescue. To my friends he was the "devil." Yet Reverend Schenck was full of surprises. He said the growing gun violence in our culture could no longer be ignored; he wondered why so many Americans were living in fear and taking up arms. And it goes without saying that far from being the devil, Rob is extremely nice, smart, literate, and tolerant. Shame on me for my preconceptions.

I have learned some important lessons on this journey, the most important of which is that if you approach people with genuine respect and an open heart, they will almost always respond to you in the same way. Reverend Schenck and I formed the most unlikely friendship and it was in that spirit that we went forward on this journey together, poking into the darkest of political corners, asking the hardest, most sensitive of questions and pushing back on some of the most dearly held American creeds.

Lucy McBath, also a deeply faithful person, was far easier for me to meet and to understand. She is warm, eloquent and passionate. The story of her love for the son she lost in what can only be described as a monstrous act of cruelty was too awful to listen to, and too compelling to turn away from. Her honesty, her willingness to fight against the "shoot first" mentality that contributed to her son's murder, and her deep convictions as a Christian moved Rob to take more risks and to dig yet deeper for his moral courage.

Miraculous things can happen when people put aside their differences and choose to inhabit the spaces they share. Those spaces tend to be way above politics. That's what Rob and Lucy and I chose to do. And I think we have all been changed for the better. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk about this film. May it inspire deep introspection and the spirit of cooperation in each of you.

BIOGRAPHIES *of the Cast*



Abigail E. Disney

Abigail E. Disney is a filmmaker, philanthropist, and the CEO and President of Fork Films.

Disney's longtime passion for women's issues and peace building culminated in producing her first film, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (winner, Best Documentary Feature, Tribeca Film Festival 2008). She then executive produced the five-part PBS series, *Women, War & Peace*. Her executive producing and producing credits include Fork Films supported films *1971*, *Citizen Koch*, *Family Affair*, *Hot Girls Wanted*, *The Invisible War* (2012 Academy Award Nominee, Best Documentary Feature), *Return and Sun Come Up* (2011 Academy Award Nominee, Best Documentary Short).

Her most recent projects include Fork Films original productions *The Trials of Spring*, which she executive produced, and *The Armor of Light*, her directorial debut.

Disney is also the founder and president of Peace is Loud, a nonprofit organization that uses media and live events to highlight the stories of women who are stepping up for peace and resisting violence in their communities.



Reverend Rob Schenck

Reverend Rob Schenck is an Evangelical minister and founder of the Christian outreach organization Faith and Action, based in Washington, DC. His candid and personal views on Capitol Hill activities have put him at the center of many Washington news conferences. He is often a guest on TV and radio shows, and he has been the focus of feature stories in the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Houston Chronicle, and Los Angeles Times. Rev. Schenck is also the president of the National Clergy Council and the chairman of the Evangelical Church Alliance.



Lucy McBath

Lucy McBath is the mother of Jordan Davis, an unarmed teenager who was shot and killed in Jacksonville, Florida in November 2012. Since his death, McBath has advocated for solutions to the problem of gun violence as a national spokesperson for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. In her work as a gun safety advocate, she has been invited to the White House, testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, and appeared on CNN and MSNBC. She recently founded the Walk With Jordan Scholarship Foundation.

USING *This Guide*

It is difficult to have conversations about firearms and their place in our communities, yet the topic is an inescapable part of our lives in this country. Discussion often turns to angry debate, highlighting differences, not shared values. Not talking about this issue does not make it go away—it only keeps us from what might be possible. But talking about it takes courage and some careful planning. This guide is intended to offer your community a unique forum for education, discussion, self-reflection, and connection.

Before you decide to host your own screening, we invite you to study the tips in this guide to help you host a discussion that's welcoming, engaging, and filled with curiosity and insights.

This guide is for organizers to help you think through all the steps to creating a successful event and meaningful conversation.

There is a planning section to help you think through the logistics of the gathering—including space needs, timing, publicity, etc. There is a facilitator's agenda—including sample scripts—to encourage thoughtful speaking and deep listening. There is a companion Audience Guide, which can be given to those in attendance to orient them to the event.

The questions we have designed for the conversation are maybe the most important part of the whole guide—we encourage you to use them in your discussions. Conversations follow the questions that prompt them: Ask a divisive question, get a divisive conversation; ask a question from the heart, get an answer that comes from the heart.

Feel free to copy parts of this guide and hand them out to the people involved to inform their work.

If there is some part of this guide meant specifically for small groups and some for large groups, that will be noted on each section. If it is not noted, it is because the information in that section applies to both large and small groups.

If you have questions, contact us at Outreach@ArmorOfLightFilm.com—

PLANNING *a Screening*

Be clear on your purpose

Being clear on your objectives is important as an organizer because those purposes set the tone for the whole event and will guide the decisions you make. What are your purposes?

Our purpose in creating this guide is to help you to have a respectful conversation about firearms and community safety. We want people to share perspectives on these issues in ways that others can hear and understand, and for people to be able to listen with the intention of understanding others, even those with whom they disagree.

The goal is not to debate with one another, but rather to use the film as a springboard for conversation that brings new observations, deepens understanding, and identifies shared values.

Building a Team & Partners: Roles and Responsibilities

It helps to share the workload and get other people involved from the start. Who in your community can you find to help with planning? Who shares your goals of opening a new kind of conversation on this topic?

You will want:

- community partners
- an event coordinator
- a host/moderator (for a large group)
- conversation facilitators

Community Partners

For many reasons, it is good to have community partners:

- **Share the work.** There are a lot of details from food, to A/V needs, to publicity, to speaking in public—we are not all good at all of these things. Find partners who bring their skills to the table.
- **Bring in a diverse audience.** You want to bring as many different types of people into the conversation as you can. This means finding ways of reaching out to diverse groups. If you are the campus Republican Club, for example, reach out to the campus Democratic Club.
- **Build trust.** People come with a certain amount of suspicion about who is trying to convince them of what. If someone you trust invites you to an event, you are more likely to come with a level of trust, which means you will be more likely to be able to listen and speak from the heart.

What Makes a Good Facilitator?

Anybody can learn to facilitate, and this guide has a more extensive section to support facilitators in their work. But as an organizer, these qualities will help guide you on who you might choose to be a facilitator. The facilitator role is best-suited for someone who is:

- relatable, friendly, and warm.
- collaborative—willing to take direction and to offer suggestions with grace.
- fair and respectful—willing to make space for a diverse group and to listen carefully to all involved.
- curious—able to lead with a question rather than an assertion of fact.
- boundaried—able to keep from entering into the conversation themselves and can hold confidentiality.
- able to intervene—strong enough to redirect the group if it needs to be guided back to the agreements and purposes, but also graceful enough to do it with care.

Who Makes a Good Speaker?

If you are going to invite a speaker to address the group before or after the film, here are some things to think about:

- Make sure they know the purpose of the event is to have an open conversation and not to advocate a single position.
- If you are choosing someone with a well-known opinion on the topic of firearms, you might invite someone with a different view to create some balance.
- Prepare them in advance with the kinds of things you would hope them to speak to.



Deciding On a Date, Location, Time

Date:

- **Check the community calendar** for the organization you are in and for the larger community. There is nothing worse than planning an event only to find out that someone else planned a big event the same night and for the same people.
- Pick a date at **least a month in advance**—at a minimum—so that you have time to plan and publicize.
- Get your date on everybody else's calendar so nobody will plan an event on the same day as yours. A **save the date** email may be useful.

Location:

- Make it accessible for all.
- Make sure to have the audio/visual equipment necessary to show the film.
- It will help to be able to move tables and chairs to get into circles of 4-6 people or to have small spaces outside the screening room to break out into smaller groups.
- If you are planning to have food, make sure you can get access to the kitchen or will have what you need on the day of the event.

Time:

- Pick a time appropriate to your audience. (For example, senior citizens tend not to want to be out too late; students may not be able to start too early; people coming straight from work may have trouble getting to certain locations in time during rush hour.)
- Leave enough time for an introduction, the screening, and the discussion. The film runs about 90 minutes. We recommend scheduling 2.5 hours if you will watch the film together and then dialogue. We recommend 1.5 to 2 hours if people will have seen the film independently and are simply coming to dialogue. Consider the different sample agenda options in the next section.



Sample Agenda

For conversations that don't immediately follow the film (about 1 hour & 45 mins.):

1. Refreshments and meeting one another: prompts for people to introduce themselves informally. Best if done in a space separate from the dialogue space, e.g. some kind of reception area. (15 min.)
2. Greeting and explanation of purpose and process. (10 min.)
3. Agreements: present proposed, get edits, additions, commitment (10 min.)
4. Discussion (60 min.)
5. Feedback form & Closing (10 min.)

Working With Large Groups, Breaking Into Smaller Units

(Option A) Brief presentation from the podium:

- Reflections on the film
- Elaboration of one or more points made in the film
- Posing dilemmas: "On the one hand; on the other hand..."
- Questions for audience to engage (see #1-3 below)

(Option B) Speakers:

- Two or more people selected in advance tell their stories about their connections to guns. Choose people who have complex stories and can speak of them engagingly. Example: a man who owned firearms his whole life who was grateful that the police took all of them away from him when he was depressed.

(Option C) Panel Discussion:

- Panel discussion (brief) with multiple perspectives represented. Vet and prepare speakers in advance to demonstrate respectful speaking and listening. Their goal is to help the audience engage, not to score points or convince anyone.
- After they speak, moderate a brief exchange among them as they pick up on themes and ask one another questions of genuine interest about their perspective

Break-Outs:

- Establish agreements for the discussions to follow
- Index cards will have been left on every seat or will be distributed
- Divide into groups of 4 to engage questions or dilemmas;
- Request that people join together with others they don't know well, if possible
- Groups either choose their own focus or are assigned one
- Discuss; write answers/reflections on index cards
- Helper gathers cards; brings to speaker/moderator
- Moderator shares an answer or two from each group
- If the group is all from one place (e.g. a school or community center), post all the cards on a wall and leave them there for people to use for further reflection
- If not all from one place, offer to compile and send to all interested via email, or post them on your organization's web site

Working With Large Groups, No Break-Outs

- Choose one of the presentation options (podium presentation, speakers, panel discussion) outlined above
- Establish conversation agreements with the audience for the discussions to follow
- For this topic, avoid just opening the floor and having people stand at microphones or having the mic passed, which tends to invite people to hold forth
- Index cards will have been left on every seat or will be distributed
- Prompt group to write questions for the speakers as they're listening
- Give 5 min. for people to write questions (no rhetorical questions, attacks, or statements in disguise, please...) on index cards and pass them to the end of the row.
- Helper collects, brings a few to podium; keeps the rest to sort by speaker while first speaker answers
- Moderator selects one card and gives it to a speaker.
- Once sorted, each speaker gets her/his cards and chooses one or more questions to answer.
- And/or, give people a card on which they can write a statement or perspective. Find a place to read some from the podium.

For All Events: Discussion Duration and Preparation

Discussion time may vary depending on how many sample questions you choose to use, the number of participants, and discussion format. Breaking into small groups of 4 people allows everyone to respond to a question in 10 minutes. Another time-saving technique is to ask participants to pair up with a neighbor to take 2 minutes each to address a particular question, rather than going around the entire circle to each person, though the circle format allows everyone to hear a broader range of perspectives. Review the sample questions to choose in advance which ones you would definitely like to focus on and others you may get to if time allows. For an overview on preparation for your event, consult the checklist in Appendix.

TIPS FOR *Facilitating Discussion*

Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. But by their very nature, those same topics can also give rise to deep emotions and the expression of strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere in which people feel safe, encouraged and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share their ideas openly and honestly.

Your overarching role is to shepherd a process that enables people to have a conversation that frees them to speak to be understood rather than to defend, correct, convince, or win, and encourages them to listen to understand rather than to find weaknesses.

To achieve that, you will help the participants:

- honor or explicitly revise a set of communication agreements
- stay on track
- use the available time in a purposeful manner
- work through any challenges that may arise

The way you carry yourself as a facilitator will have a great deal to do with how people receive the conversation process. The best facilitators are human, collaborative, fair, respectful, curious, boundaried (if possible, it's better to have a facilitator who is not also a participant), and transparent about process. Your ability to demonstrate these qualities will be greatly enhanced by preparing yourself in advance.



Before the Event

- **View *The Armor of Light*** and reflect upon your own values and emotions around the film and the issues introduced to consider what you will need to set aside in order to have a productive discussion. Write out what you will want to restrain as well as what qualities and skills you will want to emphasize and put to use.
- **Talk to others** about what problematic exchanges have arisen in the past around this issue (what you want to prevent from happening in the dialogue) and what examples there are of people having discussed differences constructively—practices that you'll want to promote in the upcoming conversation.
- **Establish proposed agreements** (a sample set is provided here in the Appendix) to guide the conversation. Divisive conversations on controversial issues are often fast-paced, reactive, and strewn with provocative slogans, stereotypes, and "hot button" terms. Participants often interrupt each other, competing for the floor. Listening is compromised when participants pay little attention to what is being said, while mentally constructing and rehearsing their next comments at the same time. The atmosphere is likely to be filled with anxiety and antagonism. Speakers anticipate being criticized, dismissed, or being put on the spot. Those who are shy or need time to formulate their thoughts speak less frequently or not at all.

When designing a dialogue format, our task is to shape an environment—a container—that limits such tendencies. The communication agreements that the participants forge together provide the firm boundaries of that container.

The agreements serve two general purposes:

1. they discourage old ritualized patterns of communication, and
 2. they foster a respectful, safe environment in which participants can have a purposeful, fresh, and personal exchange of ideas, inquiries, and experiences.
- **Acquaint yourself with** the background of the film, the discussion guide, associated questions, and scripts. But don't be afraid to read from the guide and the facilitator's script during the discussion—nobody expects you to be an expert, and it is better to read the questions and agreements correctly than to try to ad-lib them.

During the Session: What to Do

- **Be clear and concise.** Explain the purpose, process and your role sufficiently without going into excessive detail.
- **Speak in a warm, respectful way, using plain language.** Present yourself as a regular human being who is playing a particular role.
- **After you introduce the agreements (included in the Appendix and as part of the Facilitator's Script),** ask if anything is missing, if there are questions or edits that anyone wants to make. Make sure that what is created is acceptable to all. Ask for some sign of agreement before moving on.
- **Introduce a section, and then step back** and let it play out. The structure will bring all voices into the room.
- **Ensure that people stick to time limits in go-rounds.** You may want to pass a watch or phone so that people can time one another or, if you are the time-keeper, signal from your seat when people have 15 more seconds and then when time is up.
- **Act on behalf of the agreements,** helping people to keep to their promise. Intervene quickly and fairly. If you let it go with one person, it will be much harder to be seen as fair if you redirect another later.

During the Session: What to Avoid

- **Telling people what they will experience, think, feel.** This almost always provokes resistance when the subject is hot.
- **Thanking people after they speak.** Let them recognize one another and feel their own sense of accomplishment. This practice a) directs attention toward you and breaks the circle of the group, and b) can get you in trouble re: fairness if you're not thanking everyone in the same way with the same level of feeling.
- **Using jargon** or language that might be experienced as putting you on one side of the issue.
- **Being the center of attention,** expert, hub of the wheel, etc. This includes thanking, repeating back what people say after they speak, making interpretive comments, asking your own questions, and speaking more than a little about your personal or professional background or content expertise. Your goal is to have the center of the circle free for people to engage each other. The practices above detract from that purpose.
- **Being overly responsible** for the success of the conversation. If you have a concern or a dilemma about how the dialogue is unfolding, don't feel that you need to know the answer or fix the problem. Raise your concern, see if participants share it, and if they do, discover what ideas they have about addressing it.
- **Losing your cool.** If you are having a hard time managing feelings, find the right spot in the agenda to take a break, go off by yourself to collect yourself, call on your resilience, remember your strengths, and remember your role.
-

Responding to Challenges

- Above all, **be compassionate** by being flexible, positive, curious, transparent, and human. Remember that people are generally trying to do their best.
- **Be legitimate.** Legitimate interventions are those which clearly relate to helping the group realize its purpose and keep its agreements.
- **Use "PSA."** If an agreement is broken, use this "PSA" (Purpose, Slip, Alternative) framework: State the agreement that seems to have been broken and the purpose of that agreement; note what looks like a slip in adhering to the agreement and check in with the speaker or others as appropriate for confirmation, and offer an alternative way of speaking/engaging that's in keeping with the agreement.
- **Help make reparations by examining intentions.** If someone appears to have hurt or offended another, work with them on examining the intention of what they said and check in with the offended party about whether that matched the effect that the speaking had on her/him. If there is a gap, work with both until the person offending can deliver their statement in an acceptable way.

- **Redirect** the discussion should it get off track. When individuals offer opinions about topics other than the one at hand, acknowledge it, remind participants of the goal of the conversation and the topic being addressed, and invite them back to the focus.
- **Take a break.** Some people may be overcome with strong feelings. One person may be visibly sad because someone they know or loved was killed with a firearm. Others may be angry or fearful about having their second amendment rights violated. If someone is having a hard time controlling anger or other strong feelings, it may help to call a brief break and speak to the person off to the side. Ask about the feeling, what sparked it, and what's helped them to move through it in the past. Explain that you want to ensure that their perspective is heard by others and that you want to work with them to shift their speaking to make that possible. Ask them how you can best support them when the group comes back together.



SAMPLE SCRIPT: *Screening Introduction*

Welcome and Orientation

Thank you for coming, and welcome. Firearms are a part of our lives in this country. It is difficult to have conversations about firearms and their place in our communities. Discussion often turns to angry debate, highlighting differences, not shared values. Not talking about this issue has not made it go away—it has only kept us from discovering what might be possible. But talking about it takes courage and some careful planning."

Purposes and Hopes for the Event

Our purpose tonight is for you to have a respectful conversation about firearms, community safety, and the value of human life. The conversation format invites you to share your perspectives on these issues in ways that others can hear and understand, and to listen with the intention of understanding others, even those with whom you disagree. The goal is not to debate with one another or to critique the film, but rather to use the film as a springboard for conversation that deepens our reflection.

Your conversation will be guided by shared communication agreements and will be structured with time limits to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak. We are fortunate to have _____ with us to facilitate your conversation. [or: I'll be serving as your facilitator.] The facilitator's job is to guide you through the format, help you abide by the agreements you make, and work with you to resolve any questions or challenges during the session. [If applicable, introduce any panelists/speakers who will be involved in the discussion.]

Opening Remarks on the Film

The Armor of Light profiles the experience of Reverend Rob Schenck, an evangelical minister, founding member of Operation Rescue, and a national leader of the pro-life movement on his journey of examining the connection between guns and Christian faith. It also features the story of Lucy McBath, whose unarmed son Jordan was murdered in Florida, inspiring her to become national spokesperson for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Lucy and Reverend Schenck have worked together to encourage people to examine their beliefs about firearms, safety, and the sanctity of human life.

After the film we'll be discussing these issues in a way designed to help us talk and listen with one another fairly and respectfully.

As you watch the film, if there are things you want to remember to speak about, note them down so you can refer back. When the film is done we'll take a quick break, then go over some guidelines for the discussion and split into groups to have more intimate conversations about what we've seen.

Show Film

Break (Let participants know how much time they have before reconvening for the start of the discussion, and warmly note that all points of view are welcome)

Agreements

Small or large group engagement

Wrap-up

SAMPLE SCRIPT: *Post-Screening Discussion*

As the facilitator, you should feel comfortable reading this word-for-word if that is helpful to you. Professional facilitators often do this to be exact in language. If you would prefer to use it as an outline, that can work too.

Intentions

The film tells a powerful story about how two people came to their perspectives on the proper place of firearms. The conversation to follow is an opportunity for you to tell some of your story and listen to others. As stated earlier, the purpose of this conversation is to learn from one another and to hear each other's perspectives as well as to feel heard. It is not to persuade, debate, or convince each other of our positions.

We hope that you get a chance to reflect and speak deeply about your own experiences and values and listen with resilience when you hear something that might differ from your viewpoint.

We hope that you will come away with some new understandings about what is important to others and a clearer understanding of what is important to you.

My role as facilitator is:

- *To guide you through the dialogue and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.*
- *To present Conversation Agreements for your approval and/or amending.*
- *To remind you of the agreements, if people need reminding.*

Overview

*We will begin by reviewing the **Conversation Agreements**.*

*We will give you an opportunity to **introduce yourselves**.*

*We'll pose an **opening question**, give you a few minutes to reflect and then you'll speak in a "go-round." Each person will have an equal amount of time to respond to the question. If you have questions for people, write them down, you'll be able to ask those directly to each other later.*

*Then we will open the floor for you to have the opportunity to **ask each other questions** to increase your understanding of those whose views differ from yours.*

*Then we'll close by asking each of you to **reflect on your experience here together** and say something that will help you bring this to a meaningful conclusion.*

So that's the structure of how we'll spend this time together. Let's get started now with the Agreements.

Conversation Agreements

In order to have a constructive conversation, where people speak thoughtfully and listen respectfully, we have proposed the following agreements.

Could we go around the circle and read them out loud? You have them in your handout.

We will keep confidentiality. People may want to express sensitive opinions. We agree not to share what we hear from others in a way that they can be identified, without permission.

We will participate voluntarily. If we don't feel comfortable answering a question at any point, we may feel free to "pass" or "pass for now."

We will use respectful language. Productive discussion requires that we not disparage others' opinions or beliefs. We will refrain from attacking or criticizing others, and ask questions instead to deepen our understanding of how they came to their views.

We will be open. We will attempt to recognize and set aside assumptions we may have about the experiences, beliefs, and motives of others. We will do our best to be open to learning from one another.

We will listen attentively. We will give speakers our full attention and listen without interrupting.

We will speak for ourselves. We will avoid using generalizations like "we all" and "nobody." We don't want to assume where everyone is coming from or isolate anyone from the conversation. Let's use language like "I believe" or "I think."

We will stay on topic. Staying on topic allows us to explore the many viewpoints and beliefs that stem from this issue.

Does anyone have any questions about these or suggestions to make?

Does everyone agree to follow these agreements? (Get nods or yeses)

Introductions

We are going to take a moment for you to introduce yourselves.

Say your name, and share a few initial thoughts or feelings in response to the film.

We would like to keep this brief so we can speak at more length about some of the issues brought up in the film. So we ask that you respond in two sentences. Take a minute to think of an answer, write it down if it helps and then I will ask the person on my right to start and we will go around in a circle. Could we go around the circle and read them out loud? You have them in your handout.

Questions

The Opening Question is designed to open a fresh conversation about your experiences with guns and how they have shaped your beliefs. I'm going to ask the question, make sure that it's clear, and then give you 2 minutes in silence to reflect on what you want to say. Then I will ask one of you to begin and we will go around the circle again.

The film shows various ways that the life experiences of Reverend Schenck, Lucy McBath, and attorney John Phillips have influenced their perspectives on gun violence and safety. What experiences in your life have shaped your beliefs or feelings about guns? (Repeat the question)

Take 2 minutes to think and make some notes about what you're going to say, so that you'll be able to give full attention to each other when others are speaking.

After 2 minutes:

As you listen to each other, listen to understand, not to judge or find fault. You also may hear things that you want to ask about. Write your questions down as you think about them; you'll have time to ask each other later. Don't interrupt at this point—unless you are having a hard time hearing.

I am going to keep time for you. So when you're ready to speak, I am going to start the 2 minutes. When the 2 minutes are up, I will let you know and then you can find a quick way to finish your thought with another sentence. We'll pause for a beat between speakers.

(Turning to a person next to you) *Would you like to start?*

Do a go-around.

Before we go on to the next question, reflect back on what you heard. Is there a question that you would like to ask later that you are curious about—something you heard just now that you wish you could hear more about? Jot that question down so you will have it when we get to the section meant for questions.

Sample Additional Discussion Questions

(2 min. each)

State a question, repeat, ask if it is clear, and then tell people they will have a minute to reflect. After a minute, ask someone to begin. Go around the group.

- What scene from the movie most affected you, and why?
- The film illustrates that people have strong emotions about protecting their families. For some, this responsibility is a reason to have a gun on hand; for others, like Lucy McBath, the desire to protect our children is motivation to regulate guns in some way. Does this desire inform your beliefs around guns, and if yes, how so? How do you think Lucy's perspective as a parent informs her views on guns? Can you empathize from the point of view of someone who is approaching this differently from you?

- Some voices in the film assert that the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun. Rob Schenck seems to question the notion of good guys and bad guys, in part based on his conviction that all people are equal in the eyes of God. He says that some people perceive "a certain narrow category of good people whose lives should be preserved, and then there's all these other very bad creatures whose lives don't matter... That contradicts God's view of the world. Because his love is equal even for the menace, even for the enemy... God's love is immense." Do you feel there are good guys and bad guys—is this a helpful distinction?
- Rob Schenck also discusses the idea that good people are not infallible: "One of the great philosophical conundrums is can bad people do good things and can good people do bad things. So can good people come together and yet contribute to bad outcomes?" When reflecting on the killing of Dr. Barnett Slepian, he says, "Our own people are capable of this. People under my spiritual care are capable of this. That probably means I'm capable of it." He encourages people to accept that notion and explore it within themselves. How do you respond to his statement that even good people are imperfect and capable of harm?
- As you consider the rights of gun ownership and the desire for public safety, what do you want people in this conversation to know about what is most important to you?
- Can you see any shared values between different perspectives that have been expressed or implied?
- Rob Schenck raises concerns that a culture overrun by fear could lead to violence. He comments: "I sometimes wonder about the ethical dimensions of...having a constant defensive posture." What are some things we might be able to do in our community to help make it feel safer for all?
- Director Abigail Disney says a reason she made this film is she feels our country still needs to do its "moral homework" on this issue, approaching it from a moral standpoint before a political one. What ethical questions are lingering for you?
- How does terminology surrounding the issue, such as "gun control," "gun rights," and "pro-gun," affect the debate at large? How do the terms that people put on this debate accurately or inaccurately describe your positions? What would accurately describe them?
- There are a lot of different voices and disparate views on this topic. The unlikely alliance between Lucy and Rob illustrates the potential for people to come together across deep party lines to find common ground. What do you see as possible in bridging divides on this issue?

Questions of Genuine Interest and Connected Conversation

This is the time to learn more about what others have said and to make connections between what is on your mind and what you've heard. It is important to remember that you are not here to debate or persuade but to explore your curiosity, to better understand others.

Is there something someone said that you are curious about or would like to understand better? Ask your question of the group or of particular individual or individuals. Other members of the group are welcome to reflect and comment as well.

You will have 10 minutes and I will let you know when you have about 2 minutes left. Please take a moment now to think of the questions that you have for others. When someone has one—please begin.

Remember to track who has asked and who has answered so that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

After 10 minutes, tell people something like the following:

There's never a perfect time to end this section, but we want to be respectful of the time that you have committed to be here, and so we're going to move to the Closing section.

Feedback

Today you may have taken the risks of speaking what's true for you and listening deeply to others. It will help a great deal if you can share your experience by taking a few minutes this feedback form. Please take 5 minutes and then we'll wrap up.

(Distribute and collect copies of the Participant Feedback Form found at ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads.)

Confidentiality Review

We have a couple quick final pieces of business as we come to a close. First is to review the confidentiality agreement that you made at the beginning of this dialogue. You have all agreed to honor confidentiality (not sharing what you hear in a way in which the speaker could be identified without the speaker's permission). Will you all leave our time together here with that in mind? Thank you.

Appreciation

Though this dialogue experience is ending, our hope is that the speaking and listening will continue. Thank you for your participation.

INVITATIONS, *Flyers*, *Feedback Forms*

A customizable invitation and an informational flyer about the film are available to you among the downloadable resources at ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads

Note to Event Facilitators: After distributing copies of the Participant Feedback Form (available at ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads) to everyone at your event, **please scan and email your collected feedback forms to Outreach@ArmorOfLightFilm.com** (or email us to let us know if you need assistance). If you don't have access to a scanner or a scanner app for your phone or tablet, one of your event participants may be able to help.

In addition, as soon as possible after your event, **be sure to provide your own feedback using a special questionnaire for facilitators, available online at ArmorOfLightFilm.com**. On the home page, click on "Stay Involved," then "Share Event Feedback." The film's production team is trying to bring screenings and discussions to a wide range of audiences around the country, including many faith-based settings. Reporting back on how it went for you will help others!

EVENT *Checklist*

Supplies & Materials

- ☐ Your plan/script
- ☐ Your provided Audience Guide to hand out to those in attendance
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ Conversation Agreements handout (included in this Appendix and in the Audience Guide) or a flipchart to list them
- ☐ Index cards and pens for all
- ☐ Time-keeping mechanism: watch, phone, etc.
- ☐ Bell, chime, or other means to signal time shifts in large group
- ☐ Copies of feedback forms to distribute at the end

Preparing Yourself

- ☐ If you have a co-facilitator, meet to divide responsibilities; support
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the agenda
- ☐ Decide who you want to acknowledge/thank; include in opening
- ☐ Write your opening/framing remarks; practice delivery
- ☐ Read the dialogue script several times so that it will sound more natural
- ☐ Time out the plan to make sure you can fit everything in and still have room
- ☐ Prepare for the unexpected, e.g. more people showing up than planned

Venue

IN ADVANCE:

- ☐ Visit and ensure there's enough space for your group
- ☐ Enough moveable chairs of equal height
- ☐ Public transportation available? If so, convey to participants
- ☐ Ensure accessibility
- ☐ Inquire about any restrictions on animals (e.g. therapy dogs)
- ☐ Have contact person's cell phone number in case of a problem
- ☐ Arrange for refreshments: caterer, helper, you
- ☐ Determine who is providing A/V: you or site
- ☐ If you are showing the film on a big screen from your Mac laptop, pack a dongle (an adaptor to connect the laptop to the projector)
- ☐ Prepare feedback forms

ON-SITE:

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with heating/cooling/lighting controls, location of rest rooms
- ☐ Test projection equipment and sound
- ☐ Table at entry for name tags, handouts, etc.
- ☐ Table for refreshments
- ☐ Arrange seating: pro/con, pro/con if you know
- ☐ Plan for shifting from large to small groups if needed: break-out rooms, all in one space, etc.

NOTES: _____

CONVERSATION *Agreements*

In order to have a constructive conversation, where people speak thoughtfully and listen respectfully, we have proposed the following agreements.

WE WILL KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY.

People may want to express sensitive opinions. We agree not to share what we hear from others in a way that they can be identified, without permission.

WE WILL PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY.

If we don't feel comfortable answering a question at any point, we may feel free to "pass" or "pass for now."

WE WILL USE RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE.

Productive discussion requires that we not disparage others' opinions or beliefs. We will refrain from attacking or criticizing others, and ask questions instead to deepen our understanding of how they came to their views.

WE WILL BE OPEN.

We will attempt to recognize and set aside assumptions we may have about the experiences, beliefs, and motives of others. We will do our best to be open to learning from one another.

WE WILL LISTEN ATTENTIVELY.

We will give speakers our full attention and listen without interrupting.

WE WILL SPEAK FOR OURSELVES.

We will avoid using generalizations like "we all" and "nobody." We don't want to assume where everyone is coming from or isolate anyone from the conversation. Let's use language like "I believe" or "I think."

WE WILL STAY ON TOPIC.

Staying on topic allows us to explore the many viewpoints and beliefs that stem from this issue.

SELF-HELP TOOLS *for Participants*

Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. But by their very nature, those same topics can also give rise to deep emotions and the expression of strongly held beliefs. These strategies are helpful in working through any challenges that may arise.

IF YOU FEEL CUT OFF, say so or override the interruption. ("I'd like to finish...")

IF YOU FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD, clarify what you mean. ("Let me put this another way...")

IF YOU FEEL MISHEARD, ask the listener to repeat what she heard you say and affirm or correct her statement.

IF YOU FEEL HURT OR DISRESPECTED, say so. If possible, describe exactly what you heard or saw that evoked hurt feelings in you. ("When you said x, I felt y..." where "x" refers to specific language.) If it is hard to think of what to say, just say, "OUCH" to flag your reaction.

IF YOU FEEL ANGRY, express the anger directly ("I felt angry when I heard you say x...") rather than expressing it or acting it out indirectly (by trashing another person's statement or asking a sarcastic or rhetorical question).

IF YOU FEEL CONFUSED, frame a question that seeks clarification or more information. You may prefer to paraphrase what you have heard. ("Are you saying that...?")

IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE PROCESS, state your discomfort and check in with the group to see how others are experiencing what is happening. ("I'm not comfortable with the tension I'm feeling in the room right now, and I'm wondering how others are feeling.") If others share your concerns and you have an idea about what would help, offer that idea. ("How about taking a one-minute Time Out to reflect on what we are trying to do together?")

IF YOU FEEL THE CONVERSATION IS GOING OFF TRACK, share your perception, and check in with others. ("I thought we were going to discuss x before moving to y, but it seems that we bypassed x and are focusing on y. Is that right?" [If so] "I'd like to get back to x and hear from more people about it.")

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