



# THE ARMOR<sup>*of*</sup> LIGHT

**FAITH-BASED FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

# TABLE OF *Contents*

Letter from the Director	3
Letter from Rev. Schenck	4
Letter from Lucy McBath	5
Biographies of the Cast	6
Using This Guide	7
Planning a Screening	8
Forming Discussion Groups	10
Best Practices for Facilitation	12
Sample Script: Welcome and Screening Introduction	15
Sample Script: Post-Screening Discussion	16
Guided Discussion	18
Appendix: Invitations, Flyers, Feedback Forms	21
Event Checklist	22
Conversation Agreements	23
Self-Help Tools for Participants	24

# 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.

# LETTER FROM *Reverend Schenck*



*"In talking with pastors, I often ask them, 'How do you deal with the challenge of armed discipleship? Do you train your people to pray before they shoot another person? Have you equipped them to make biblically responsible decisions when it comes to whom they may kill, how they may kill, and under what circumstances they may kill?'"*

**Rev. Rob Schenck**

Thank you for your interest in *The Armor of Light*, a documentary by Abigail Disney and Fork Films. I joined this project because I believe the question of Christians and guns is a relevant one for all of us. I think it is urgent for Christians to seek prayerful and biblical answers to the moral and ethical questions surrounding the use of lethal weapons.

My hope is that this film stimulates a desire to look at the issue of guns and gun violence from a different perspective—one of scriptural integrity and ethical reflection.

For me, this issue is not about "gun control," which is a government concern, but rather, "self control," which, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, is a church concern. Attempted legislative solutions, up to this point, have simply not worked. My goal is to explore this difficult challenge in the context of Christian morality; the will of God; and our personal disposition toward our neighbors.

Within a framework of Christian discipleship, I think we ought to be asking questions like:

1. When, how, and against whom may a Christian use lethal force?

2. Is it right for a Christian to live his/her life ready to shoot someone dead in a confrontation?

3. Are there non-lethal ways to protect ourselves and others; and is it better for Christians to choose non-lethal means over lethal means?

I also think it's important to ask whether it is right for Christians to look to non-Christian, secular sources for answers to these questions.

In my opinion, the most important questions around gun ownership and use are principally theological ones—not political or even legal. That's why I believe it's time for pastors and Christian leaders to boldly speak to this issue as they help form the consciences of the Christians under their care. In talking with pastors, I often ask them, "How do you deal with the challenge of armed discipleship? Do you train your people to pray before they shoot another person? Have you equipped them to make biblically responsible decisions when it comes to whom they may kill, how they may kill, and under what circumstances they may kill?" These are paramount questions for a violence-prone society awash in guns and ammunition.

My prayer is that we as believers will be guided in our approach to this sometimes-inflammatory issue by looking at the life and teaching of the greatest source we have, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The attached study guide has been developed with this objective in mind.

Yours in the name of the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life,

Rev. Rob Schenck

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**"In my opinion, the most important questions around gun ownership and use are principally theological ones—not political or even legal."**

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# LETTER FROM *Lucy McBath*



*"In the three years since the loss of my son, Jordan Davis, I have found a deeper and more guiding sense of faith, and in that I have felt a deeper responsibility to preserve human life."*

**Lucy McBath**

Faith Outreach Leader, Everytown for Gun Safety

Thank you for your support and interest in this most important film *The Armor of Light*. In the three years since the loss of my son, Jordan Davis, I have found a deeper and more guiding sense of faith, and in that I have felt a deeper responsibility to preserve human life.

Since Jordan died, God has been revealing to me a greater purpose for my tragedy. I am truly learning to walk by faith and not by sight. I continue to grow and move in greater revelation of the bigger plan that God has for the life and death of my son.

It's my earnest hope and prayer that *The Armor of Light* will spark a conversation that inspires you to participate in the growing gun violence prevention movement. It is our charge as Christians to love, care for, and serve our fellow man. I truly believe that this film is part of the move of God upon His people. I feel the film is inspired by God for us to move and act on protecting our children, our families, and our communities from senseless gun violence.

Be a peacemaker.

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"Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called  
sons of God."

—Matthew 5:9

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# BIOGRAPHIES *of the Cast*



## **Abigail E. Disney**

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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**

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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**

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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*

All of us are affected in one way or another by gun violence, whether through a family member, friend, colleague, community member, or through the news. It is important to discuss the issues that affect us all and to understand why people hold differing beliefs. Hosting a local screening to showcase *The Armor of Light* can offer your community a unique forum for education, discussion, self-reflection, and unity.

This guide has been designed to help you address this sensitive issue. It is difficult to have conversations about gun violence. It divides congregations and communities, yet it is an inescapable part of our lives. Discussion often turns to angry debate and highlights differences, not shared values. This guide is intended to catalyze productive conversations by creating a safe and open environment for sharing beliefs, values, and opinions and reflecting on the issues from a faith-based perspective.

Before you decide to organize your own screening and discussion, we invite you to review the tips here to help the event be welcoming, engaging, and filled with curiosity and insights. If you have questions, contact us at [Outreach@ArmorOfLightFilm.com](mailto:Outreach@ArmorOfLightFilm.com)—we want to help you have the best event possible.

# PLANNING *a Screening*

## *Before Your Screening*

### **Step 1: Clarify the nature of the event.**

- Plan to promote a dialogue for deeper exploration and understanding, not to debate, persuade, or change minds.
- View the film before the event and reflect on your own values and emotions around 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 you will want to emphasize and put to use.
- Determine a target audience and how large you want your audience to be. If you have a larger group, you can divide into smaller groups for discussion, or you can hold a panel discussion as described in Step 3.

### **Step 2: Decide on a date, time and location.**

- Plan the event at least one month in advance and reserve the location for the duration of the film and a follow-up discussion.
- Find a quiet, yet central location in your school/church that has enough space to host your audience, and one where participants will feel safe to discuss personal opinions. Provide accommodations for the young, the old, the disabled, and people with special needs. Ensure proper A/V equipment and access to a screen that all of the audience can view with ease.
- A space with chairs that can be arranged in circles is preferable for group discussion after the screening.
- If bringing together different constituencies, the event space should be in neutral territory.
- 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 hours if people will have seen the film independently and are simply coming to dialogue.

### **Step 3: Choose a facilitator, moderator, and/or speakers.**

- If you would like to select someone else to act as facilitator, you may consider clergy, youth leaders, or university professors. These individuals may be viewed as neutral conveners in the community.
- Should you anticipate a large audience, you may consider a panel discussion comprised of individuals with differing opinions. These panelists may then speak to the questions offered in this discussion guide and grant time for audience members to consider their own beliefs.



#### Step 4: Create materials and promote your event.

- Feel free to use the customized downloadable invitation and informational flyer about the film available among the resources provided to you at [ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads](http://ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads).
- Include promotions in weekly bulletin or newsletters as well as reaching out to your personal network.
- Any communication you may have with prospective participants should illuminate the value of this screening in encouraging dialogue and convey that the goal is not to change participants' opinions but rather to have productive discussions around complex issues.
- Use social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr) to engage your target audience before and after the event.

### *At Your Screening*

- Arrive an hour in advance to review the facilities, making sure all A/V equipment is working properly and the sound levels are good.
- Greet participants, and determine for small audiences whether participants are present.
- Distribute copies of the provided Participant Guide.
- Explain that the film is intended to start a conversation about the difficult issue of gun violence and faith and to help us find common ground and new perspectives.

### *After Your Screening*

- Thank everyone for coming, encourage attendance at the discussion that will follow after a short break, and remind everyone that all viewpoints and responses to the film are welcome.
- If you are hosting a large number of participants, divide the group into smaller groups of a maximum of eight people.
- Review conversation goals and guidelines as outlined in this guide.
- Conduct the discussion based on the prompts in this guide.
- Distribute and collect the provided participant feedback forms.

# FORMING *Discussion Groups*

The guided discussion outlined here is best suited to small group discussion, but you can also adapt it for the needs of a large gathering.

## 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

In general, discussion time may vary depending on the number of suggested discussion questions chosen. Breaking into small groups of 4 people allows everyone to respond to a question in 10 minutes. When people are grouped in a circle for discussion, a potential time-saving technique is asking participants to pair up with a neighbor to take 2 minutes each to address a particular question, rather than going around the circle to each person, though the circle allows everyone to hear a broader range of perspectives. Review the possible questions in this guide 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 the Appendix.



# BEST PRACTICES *for Facilitation*

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.



## *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.

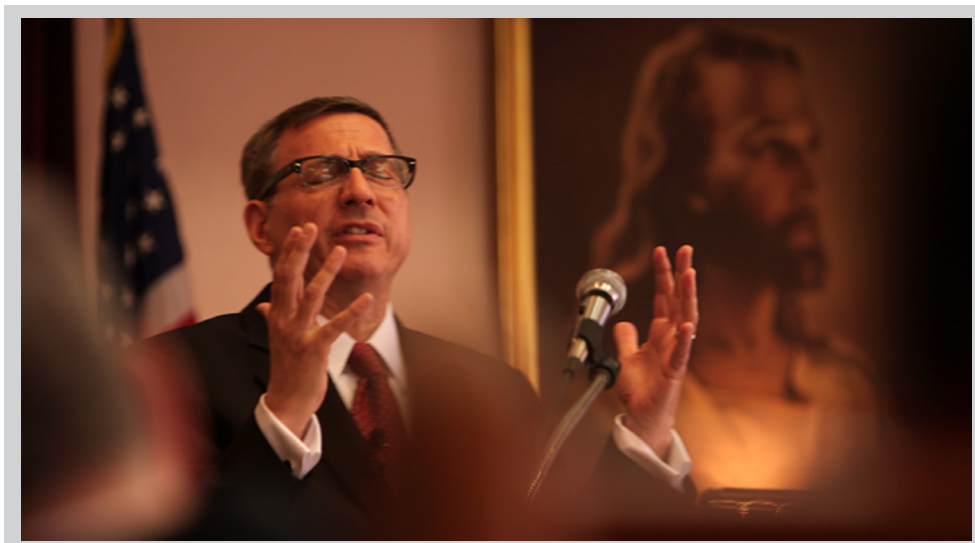
## *During the Session: What to Avoid*

- **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...o



## *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" framework (Purpose, Slip, Alternative): 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: *Welcome & Screening Introduction*

*Thank you for coming, and welcome. Firearms are a part of our lives in this country. It can be difficult to have conversations about firearms and their place in our communities. Discussion often turns to angry debate, highlighting differences, not shared values.*

*We have convened to hold an open and honest discussion about the value of human life and the role of guns in our society.*

*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 using a Christian lens to have a respectful conversation about firearms, community safety, our shared responsibility to protect our children and families, and the value of human life. We will seek listen with the intention of understanding others. The goal is not to debate with one another, but rather to use the film as a springboard for conversation that deepens our reflection.*

*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.]*

*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)

## **Divide into small groups**

## **Agreements**

## **Discussion**

## **Closing**

# 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.

## Welcome and Orientation

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*Now that we have seen the film, the purpose of the conversation is to explore The Armor of Light and the question of how we in the faith community engage with the question of gun violence individually and collectively. The discussion will help us do our moral homework around guns and violence, allowing us to identify common values around human life.*

## Opening Prayer (or one of your choosing)

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*Oh Lord of life and all that is, Help us join together in examining our own differences and what unites us. Help us see a path for ourselves and our community to work to build a more peaceful place to live. Help us to feel your presence with us and be open to you have to teach us tonight.*

## Conversation Agreements

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*We will begin by reviewing the Conversation Agreements, then we'll give you an opportunity to introduce yourselves, and then we'll explore questions for discussion.*

*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)*

*OK, so these are the Agreements that you're all committing to doing your best to follow. Your commitment also serves to authorize us as facilitators to remind you if need be.*

**Break into small groups** of 4. Request that people join a group with others they don't know well, if possible.



# GUIDED *Discussion*

## Introductions

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Ask individuals to introduce themselves to other group members and share: Very briefly, in just a couple sentences or less, what are some initial feelings or thoughts in response to the film?

## Opening Question

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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 a minute 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?*

## Discussion Questions

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These sample questions may be used based on considerations such as the event format, amount of time allocated for the discussion, and the number of participants.

1. What scene from the movie most affected you, and why?
2. Reverend Rob Schenck comments that "fear should not be a controlling element in the life of a Christian"—what does this mean to you? In what ways does fear impact your life, and how do you respond to it? Does your faith inform or change your response?



3. Lucy McBath emphasizes the value of looking to God as our protector. When you feel physically threatened, to whom or what do you look for protection? How do you understand God's teachings on this?
4. How do possession and usage of weapons promote or diminish the sanctity of life?
5. What role, if any, should firearms play in protecting us and our communities? What part of Scripture most guides you as you form that belief? What part of Scripture do you struggle with as you hold that belief?
6. Reverend Schenck preaches, "Brothers and sisters, Fox News and the NRA are not spiritual authorities." How can we balance our worldly information-gathering with living according to the word of God?
7. What can we as a community of faith do collectively or personally to reduce the unjust taking of human life after birth?
8. How do you interpret Reverend Schenck's statement, "We must be very careful that in respecting the 2nd Amendment, we don't violate the 2nd Commandment"?
9. Lucy McBath says that she can work toward change without yet seeing it, the same way she can have faith in God without seeing Him. Putting aside Lucy's mission, which you may or may not share, what is your own personal hope for your community on this issue? Your prayer to God for your community?
10. Can you identify any shared values between different perspectives that have been expressed or implied?

## 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.*

## Closing Question

The purpose of this section is to bring your dialogue to a conclusion. You can take up to one minute to respond to the following question:

**What was meaningful or valuable to you in this conversation?**

## Feedback

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*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](http://ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads).)

## Confidentiality Review

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*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.*

## Closing Prayer (or another of your choosing)

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*Though this time here together is ending, our hope is that the dialogue and listening will continue.*

*Lord, we thank you for the richness of our time together. We thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit, which has informed us and held us together. As we leave this space and conclude these conversations, grant us the grace to fearlessly contend against evil and make no peace with oppression, and help us to reverently use our freedom to pursue justice and love among all people.*

# 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](http://ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads)

**Note to Event Facilitators:** After distributing copies of the Participant Feedback Form (available at [ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads](http://ArmorOfLightFilm.com/Downloads)) to everyone at your event, **please scan and email your collected feedback forms to [Outreach@ArmorOfLightFilm.com](mailto: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](http://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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