

SHORT FILM SAMPLE QUESTIONS GUIDE



Overview

Many short-film users have found it helpful to have sample questions to choose from as they craft questions of their own. This document is a compilation of user questions that have been developed during our initial testing phase. The questions are organized under two headings:

1. Sample Detailed Discussion for the Film *LaBusqueda*.
2. Sample Questions for Other Films.

Whether you will follow the “script” more closely, or refer to it simply as a brainstorming tool, use this document as a guide to help you develop your own questions for discussing the films.

Sample Detailed Discussion for the Film *LaBusqueda* (6:29 length)

1. **The Film’s Story and Their Story** (First ask questions related to the film.)
 - What are your first impressions or initial reactions? In a word or two, what did you think of the story? How did it make you feel?
 - What was your favorite scene? What did you like about it?
 - If the father in the story was your dad, would you get off the bus?
 - If they tell you about their own positive or negative experiences, respond with thankfulness or compassion, and see if they desire to talk more. You might say:
 - a. *“I’m really glad to hear that you have that kind of relationship with your dad,” or*
 - b. *“I’m really sorry to hear that. That must have been very difficult.”*
2. **Your Story** (Relate their responses back to a personal story.)
 - *“Yeah, I wouldn’t get off the bus either. My dad left us when I was 6 years old, and I haven’t seen him a few years. We only talk on the phone a few times a year.” Or “I’d get off the bus. I’d love to see my mom again. I miss her a lot sometimes.”*
3. **God’s Story** (Introduce a story from the Bible or another spiritual illustration.)
 - *“This film is based on an ancient story that Jesus told over 2000 years ago. Perhaps you’ve heard it before.”*
 - *“A super wealthy guy had two sons. The younger son said he wanted his inheritance early. The dad gave him half of all that he owned. The son left for far away lands and fabulous parties. He had a great time, and great friends until his money ran out, and then his friends ran out.*
 - *He found himself so desperate for a job that he took one feeding pigs. When he became so hungry that the pig slop was looking mighty tasty, it occurred to him that even his father’s hired hands were eating better than he was.*
 - *Finally, he decided to go home, ask his dad to forgive him, and ask for a job as one of his farm workers.*
 - *Well, his dad saw him from a long way off, and ran to him, hugged and kissed him, gave him a new robe, new shoes, and a new ring.*

He exclaimed, "I thought you were dead but you're alive! I thought you were lost but now you are found!"

- *The son couldn't even get the words out to ask for a job because his dad was so happy he had his son back.*
- *And when Jesus told this story, he did it to tell people more about what God is like—how much He loves us and longs for us to come home.*
- *So the father in the film is really an analogy, not to your own father, but to your **Heavenly** Father, the one who **loves you** and **longs to be in relationship with you.***

4. **Your Story** (Share your personal story how you became a follower of Christ.)

- **Themed Testimony:** *"I know that I struggled with a lot of guilt and shame before I decided to get off the bus and start/renew my relationship with God. I thought I needed to be perfect before I got serious about God. Then I finally realized..."*
- **Verbal Explanation of the Gospel.** *"I found out that God loved me, and actually liked me too, but that I had a common human condition that prevented me from knowing Him: sin. I learned that sin isn't just the bad things I do, but it's an independent or rebellious attitude that says, 'God you go your way and I'll go mine.' This independent streak causes a barrier between God and I that cannot be overcome by religion, morality, or kind deeds. Like a man convicted of a crime, I've been found guilty of rebellion, and the sentence is death or separation from the God who created me. I have two choices: face the sentence myself by being separated from my creator forever, or let someone else pay my debt. God Himself came to earth in the person of Jesus, lived a sinless life, and died as a 'sacrificial lamb' to cover my death sentence. I learned that I faced a simple choice: pay my own debt, or accept the gift of Jesus' death on my behalf."*

5. **Invitation:**

"Is this decision to accept God's gift of forgiveness (sort of getting off the bus to connect with God) a decision you've already made, or something you're considering?"

"Would you like to get off the bus now?"

Sample Prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

Sample Questions for Other Films

Cntl-Z (4:01 length)

- What would you do over? Tell them what you'd do over.
- What are things you wish you had control over?
- How do you deal with stuff you don't have control over?
- To which of the characters do you most relate?
- What characteristics do you notice in the lives of those who work in the office?

Dollface (4:00 length)

- What are some one word answers about how you feel after viewing this film?
- What would it take to have people accept themselves? Others?
- How does a person act when they accept who they are and how they are made? Why?
- Where does this film hit home the most for you? Tell them where it hits home for you:
 1. "For me, it's my mom. It's like I'm always 10 pounds too heavy in her eyes."
 2. "For me, it was the transition from high school to college. In high school I thought I was pretty smart, athletic, etc. Then I got to college and realized I wasn't all the great."

La Liberte (4:48 length)

- What is this film about?
- How did this man find freedom?
- What kinds of things keep people in a trapped state of mind?
- What lies keep people from reaching their full potential?
- Where do you feel trapped?
- What would you do if you were set free?

Venia (4:14 length)

- How was the son able to forgive his father?
- What would motivate him to do it?
- Why does forgiving someone make such a difference in our own lives?
- Why does being forgiven make such a difference in our lives?
- How easy is it to forgive those who have hurt us deeply?
- How does a lack of forgiveness affect a person's life?
- What is the first step in forgiving someone?
- How will the father be affected by his son's forgiveness?
- How will the son's life be changed because he took the initiative to forgive?

Amazing (3:59 length)

- Responding with one word answers, what emotions did you see experienced by those in the film?
- What do you think was going on in the life of the man as he sat on the bench?
- What changed after the tear rolled into his eye?
- What might this action symbolize real life?
- How can we become more aware of the needs of those around us?

Bricks (4:37 length)

- Knowing that each brick symbolizes an experience that causes a reaction, what could have given the girl “SHAME” in her life?
- Why would “SHAME” weigh a person down?
- What are some typical reactions in peoples’ lives when they experience loneliness, hatred, rejection, and so on?
- What must we do to keep the heavy “Bricks” of life from weighing us down?
- When we give our bricks to someone else to carry, how does that make us feel free?

Foreshadowing (4:15 length)

- What events in life could cause despair?
- Where do we look for help when life isn’t fair?
- What does “hope” mean to you?
- Have you ever been to the brink of giving up? Tell your story.
- What helped you overcome your problem?

Going Up (12:33 length)

- In the beginning, what attitudes do the four main characters show towards each other?
- When each character really took the time to see how their fellow workers’ lives were challenging them, how did they change?
- Do you work in an environment where people treat you with understanding, or is it a difficult working situation? Would you be willing to describe it?
- What are some ways we can show understanding towards our coworkers? Friends? Neighbors? Family members?

In Time (1:28 length)

- Do you have control of your schedule?
- Are you able to say, I love my life and all that is required of me with the time I have?
- Do you feel it is important to have a purpose in your life?
- What changes would you make to see that your schedule reflects your passions in life?
- Do you feel like your life is making a difference in your sphere of influence?

The Light of Darkness (7:48 length)

- How important are first impressions in your culture? Why or why not?
- What are the factors that kept the young lady from listening to the young man?
- In light of impending danger, how forward would you be in giving a warning to someone?
- How tolerant should our world be of people who appear different? Why?

The Limited (10:50 length)

- What keeps us from reaching out to those who are destitute?
- How should we respond to the weak, the hungry, and the lame?
- If you were asked the question, “Where are you going when you die?,” how would you answer? Why?

- Do you think people are prepared for their last day on earth? Why or why not?
- What changes could you make in order to be prepared for your last breath?

Loneliness of One (0:52 length)

- What measures do some people take when they are lonely?
- How does loneliness affect a person's outlook on life?
- What are some ideas of activities a person can do to help themselves during times of loneliness?
- How could people overcome their shyness?
- Is the roommate aware of his fellow roommates' loneliness? What could he do to help his friend?

Machine (1:47 length)

- What are some words describing the kinds of messages the young man attempts to make?
- Should we care about what kind of message is on our answering machines? Why or why not?
- How can answering machines keep us from really communicating with our family and friends?
- How have machines and technology helped our society?
- How have machines and technology hindered our society?

Pillow Talk (1:25 length)

- It appears the young man is easily swayed to believe one way in the beginning, but he believes differently in the end. How did that happen?
- Do you find the practice of talking to inanimate objects offensive? Or OK?
- Is there a difference between talking out loud while driving and talking to a pillow? Why or why not?
- Are you easily swayed to believe something that you did not previously believe?
- How important is it to have personal convictions?

Select Fit (3:15 length)

- How have drugs affected this young man's life?
- What characteristics of the young man are revealed in the story?
- If not drugs, what other things become number one and take over people's lives?
- What would it take for the young man to get out of his cycle of drug addiction?
- How do drugs affect whole societies or cultures?

The Knight's Tour (5:08 length)

- What does it take to recognize we have a dark side to our personality?
- What causes a person to let the dark side of their personality take control?
- What must be done to keep our imaginations from fooling us?
- What caused the man to give up the chase?
- What do you think happened in the man's life after he stopped running from his dark side?

W[rec]k (5:13 length)

- Why do occurrences in our past life trigger bad memories that affect our life in the present?
- Why did the waitress want to keep hiding in the bathroom?
- What is the symbolic meaning of the new tape replacement?
- What might we do so that our current emotional state is healthy in spite of pain we feel or have experienced as a result of the past?
- What happens to a person when the bad memories in life are reprogrammed?