

Holding a post-film discussion can be a wonderful addition to your film programme, enriching and expanding on your programmed film selection, as well as opening up a wide range of topics and issues for your audience to get engaged with. It can also add a welcoming social aspect to your screening, which is often cited as being very important to community cinema audiences. This help sheet offers a step-by-step guide to putting on post-film discussions, and features valuable top-tips gathered from both the Cinema For All team and the community cinemas we proudly represent.

Before you get started

MARKETING

Think carefully about how you tell your audience about the upcoming post-film discussion. Don't just spring it on them after the film - make sure they know well in advance. It's a good idea to make an announcement before any earlier screenings, as well as using social media to notify anyone who is a less regular attendee. Always use images, give as much info as you can and make it fun!

LOCATION

Spend some time thinking about where you will hold the discussion. Will it be in your normal screening venue? If so, how will you adapt it to facilitate discussion? Will you relocate to a smaller room? If you move to a local cafe or a pub, will there be enough room for everyone? Is it quiet enough (especially consider that some attendees may have hearing loss)?

ACCESSIBILITY

Make sure you consider the accessibility needs of anyone who may have a disability.

REFRESHMENTS

It's a commonly held belief that it's not a community cinema screening without cake! Whilst this may or may not be true, there's nothing wrong with bribing your audience to stay a little longer after the film with the lure of some snacks and drinks.

On the day of the post-film discussion

- Do some final social media posts to help remind people to stay after the film.
- If you are screening a film from the Film Discovery 101 Menu, print off the fact sheet that accompanies your film. Having a shared reference point will help get the discussion flowing.
- Make sure you have assigned a key facilitator from your committee/ group of organisers. This may be you, or you may have selected someone else from your committee. Either way, it's important to have someone to direct the conversation, keep things running to time, and be able to comfortably deal with any silences or awkward moments.
- Make sure that you/ the session leader feels prepared to lead the discussion – again, you can refer to the fact-sheet to accompany your film to help you feel familiar with the surrounding issues. The fact-sheets also offer some suggestions of where to point your audience to next, if they are interested to explore further.
- Be prepared that not everyone will want to stay for the film discussion - you may only get a few people for your first time - don't be discouraged! Once other people see what is happening, they are more likely to give it a go another time.

Getting started

- Once you've gathered together the group for your discussion (and everyone has a drink or a sweet treat) distribute the Film Discovery 101 fact-sheets or any other print-outs you've prepared, and warm up your attendees by asking them to quickly introduce themselves the group.

- You'll then need to get the ball moving yourself by asking for a few opinions. Try out some of the following questions:
 - How does everyone feel about the film we've just watched?
 - How did you feel about the ending?
 - What do you think the director was trying to say?

Recommended questions/ provocations

You'll find that once the group gets chatting and sharing their opinions, you might find it hard to interject. However, it's good to continue to lead and steer the discussion.

Some recommended questions:

- What do you think is the meaning of a certain scene?
- Do you think the film is important/ significant?
- Would you recommend this film to others? Why/ why not?

What to do if things start to slow down:

- Don't panic! Sometimes a silence can be a good thing. Your group could be thinking of the next thing they want to say, or a more shy person might be getting the courage to speak up. Don't rush to fill the moment - sometimes it's good to take a breath.
- Offer your own thoughts/ opinions.
- Ask someone else in the group to expand on an interesting point they have already made.
- Below are a few questions to get the flow back up and running:
 - Has anyone seen another film from [the country of origin]?
 - How do you feel about the main performance?
 - Does this style of filmmaking remind you of any other films you've seen?

Other top tips:

- Ask someone to note-take. It's great to have a record of what interesting points may have been made during your post-film discussion, but it's also a handy marketing tool to share on your social media. If people who didn't attend see what a great and interesting time everyone had, they are more likely to come along to the next event (likewise - don't forget to post a photo of your group in action!)
- Give your attendees some recommendations to go away with/ suggestions of other avenues to explore if they enjoy talking about the film. If you have selected a film from the Film Discovery 101 menu, print off and share the relevant fact sheets. If you've screened a different film, feel free to use the fact-sheets as a template to create your own resources, or explore our range of programme notes at <http://cinemaforall.org.uk/advice/film-discovery-101>

Good luck!

We wish you all the best of luck with your new film discovery activities, but with preparation, an injection of confidence and the passion that community cinema volunteers are known for, we are sure your new activities will be a success. To let us know how your film activity went, please head to our online form: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YZGVPBM> which should only take a few minutes to complete.

What's next?

Do check out the other help-sheets in this series:

Helpsheet #2: inviting a guest speaker/ conducting a Q&A

Helpsheet #3: creating a film discovery presentation (coming soon)

As well as the 6 fact sheets expanding on films from the Film Discovery 101 Film Menu:

Neruda

*Hidden Figures**

The Olive Tree

The Red Balloon

Alice in the Cities
The Passion of Joan of Arc

Film Discovery 101 is supported by the BFI Audience Award. Its writers and contributors are: Jaq Chell, Gemma Bird, Linnea Pettersson, Abi Standish and Deborah Parker.

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