

THE BEYOND BORDERS FAMILY GUIDE

THE BEYOND BORDERS FAMILY GUIDE contains activities, questions for viewing, and film overviews that are designed to help families explore the diverse issues highlighted in the Beyond Borders films in relation to individuals, local communities and the larger world.

Lift the Silence - Bogdana Aksyonov

Children's Voice (Kiev, Ukraine)

On April 26th, 1986, in the year I was born, the core reactor of the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant exploded and released thirty to forty times the radioactivity of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many of the families living in the "Chernobyl Zone" during the explosion were moved to the district where I live. While I spoke every day with these families, we never discussed Chernobyl. I didn't want to face what had happened and the fact that it could happen again. Now that I'm a first year Journalism student at Kyiv National University, I've realized that keeping the silence doesn't help my neighbors and that it puts all of us in danger. I want to help my fellow Ukrainians confront this tragedy and find ways to create a safer future.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the Chernobyl disaster was never discussed with Bogdana's neighbors?
- What emotion do you think Bogdana felt most strongly?
- What emotion do you think motivated Bogdana to make this film?
- What is Bogdana's greatest fear?
- How do you think her life choices helped her confront her fears?
- How did this film make you feel?
- What message do you think the filmmaker was trying to convey?

Activities

Learn More About Chernobyl

Chernobyl occurred before many of today's youth were born. Visit the Chernobyl.info website to learn more about what happened at Chernobyl. Learning about the Chernobyl disaster might bring some fears. Try to get family members to verbalize their fears. Encourage family members to listen without being critical, and to think through the realities of their fears.

Investigate Press Freedom Around the World

Filmmaker Bogdana discusses the issue of freedom of press in regards to the Chernobyl disaster. Visit Freedom House's [Map of Press Freedom](#) to learn about press freedom worldwide.

You might also be interested in Freedom House's [Freedom in the World Country Ratings](#). Since 1972, Freedom House has published an annual assessment of the state of freedom in all countries (and select territories), now known as Freedom in the World. Individual countries are evaluated based on a checklist of questions on political rights and civil liberties that are derived in large measure from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We Don't Want No War – Mohamed Sidibay

Learn Sierra Leone ([Freetown, Sierra Leone](#))

In Sierra Leone, Mohamed Sidibay was conscripted, or forced, to be a child soldier during his country's brutal, 10-year civil war. His confused mind still fills with fear for the people he cherished in life – his father, mother, brothers and sisters. Three years later and now 10 years old, Mohamed still trembles at the thought of heavy hands that lay over his shoulder; hands that killed his loved ones, hands that conscripted him. Today, he uses the power of the Internet to help design www.childsoldiers.org and let the world know about his experiences.

Discussion Questions

- How did war impact Mohamed's life?
- How does Mohamed's support structure help him build a level of security into his life?
- What is Mohamed doing to recover from a traumatic situation and move ahead with his life?
- Do you ever worry about war?
- How did this film make you feel?

Activities

Visit Mohamed's Website

Visit the website that filmmaker Mohamed helped design. The website provides you with an opportunity to read [child soldier's stories](#) and listen to [music](#) written by Sierra Leone's youth. The website can be found at www.childsoldiers.org.

Ideas for a Peaceful World

As a family, brainstorm a list of ideas for creating a more peaceful world. Share your list with family and friends. David Krieger from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has published a list of [100 Ideas for Creating a More Peaceful World](#). You may choose to visit the website and discuss David's ideas.

Sahar Before the Sun – Sahar Adish

Light House (Charlottesville, Virginia)

Sahar Adish is a senior at Charlottesville High School, applying to colleges, taking standardized tests and preparing for her future. Unlike all of her classmates in this affluent community, she grew up under the Taliban in Kabul, Afghanistan and was home schooled in secret by her mother. Through her experience, she gained a deep appreciation

for education coupled with a growing fear that she will not "make it" in America. She views herself as having both a wonderful and terrifying opportunity in America to do something important and meaningful with her life -- first and foremost for her parents and her country.

Discussion Questions

- What emotion do you think Sahar felt most strongly?
- How has a lack of tolerance impacted Sahar's life?
- What are some of the things that Sahar and her family did to help build a level of security into their lives?
- Sahar talked about how she feels a responsibility to gain knowledge. Do you share the same feeling? Explain.
- Would you "stay or leave" if you were faced with the same situation as Sahar's family?
- How did this film make you feel?

Activities

Family Oral History

" Oral history is an ideal process for understanding the past and unfolding present and for preserving voices that would not otherwise be heard." *Capturing the Historical Moment, Regional Oral History Office, University of California Berkeley Library.*

Conduct oral history interviews with family members. The [Oral History Society](#) web site contains information on how to conduct an oral history interview.

Make a point to include topics discussed in the film such as:

- How your family came to live in your county.
- How the role of education has changed/not changed between generations.

Record the interviews and save them for future generations.

You might also find it interesting to interview friends and neighbors to learn their stories.

Family Discussion

Sahara's family left most of their possessions when they fled Afghanistan. Discuss, as a family, what you would miss the most if you had to leave your home tomorrow. Share what three things you would bring with you when you left.

Women in Afghanistan

Women's lives have been greatly impacted by political situations in Afghanistan. Learn more about women in Afghanistan on the Independent Lens website [Afghanistan Unveiled](#).

Divided City - Ghayda Nawrus

Sawtona "Our Voice" (Amman, Jordan)

16 year-old Ghayda looks around the streets of Jordan and sees a divided society with two faces - modern and traditional. The differences are striking, from the way people dress and how leisure time is spent, to relationships between family members and personal views of the world. Ghayda prefers non-traditional western clothing, and music and culture looked down upon by traditional Jordanians. She also believes strongly in her Muslim faith, choosing to pray five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and choosing not to have a boyfriend. Ghaya is part of a new Jordanian generation - a complex mix of old values and new ideas. Misunderstandings about her generation's beliefs and values are driving a wedge into a small but fragile society. She finds solidarity in friends who share similar dreams of a community that can balance the traditional and non-traditional, and is determined to continue working hard at school.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think is most important to Ghayda?
- What is Ghayda's greatest fear?
- How can people who are different learn to accept each other?

- Ghayda worries about the divisions in her country. What is your greatest concern regarding your country?
- How does Ghayda balance her faith and traditions in a changing world?
- Can you share an example in your own life where you were caught between two ways of thinking?
- How did this film make you feel?
- What message do you think the filmmaker was trying to convey?

Activities

Family Traditions Book

Family traditions are an important part of family life. Make a family traditions book to record and commemorate your family's traditions.

Culture Collage

The world is a place where different cultures mingle. Explore your own neighborhood to see what you find. Use photographs and/or images from your local newspaper to create a collage celebrating the different cultures in your community.

Learn More About Islam

There are many misconceptions about the Muslim faith. It is important to learn about Islam as we try to understand the complex issues facing us in today's world. Visit the Islam.com website to learn more about the Muslim faith.

Rapping at Fear - Andres Tabares

Polimorfo (Bogota, Colombia)

Twelve year-old Andres lives in the Cazuca slum on the outskirts of Bogota, Colombia, where his family sought refuge from a brutal civil war in the countryside. Like many in Colombia who were threatened and fearful for their lives, Andres and his family escaped seeking safe ground in Cazuca. But safety is the last comfort they found.

Paramilitary, or "social cleansing" groups, police the dirt streets and paths of Cazuca, placing seeds of fear among inhabitants. These groups inhibit youth from expressing themselves - saying what they want to say and wearing what they want to wear. Afraid of being silenced, Andres writes and performs rap music to speak out about his life, his barrio and his country.

- What are Andres' fears?
- How did Andres use music to help him deal with his fears?
- Have you ever used music to help you express your feelings?
- Describe Andres' emotions.
- How did this film make you feel?
- How does rapping connect Andres to his community?

Activities

Attend a Spoken Word Festival

Spoken word festivals provide a forum where people can share their words with others. "I have come to believe over and over again, that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.... My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you...and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us. The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken."..Audre Lorde

For a more detailed explanation of a spoken word festival, visit this website. http://www.fva.ca/doc.e/fva.2005.textes.spoken_wor.html

You may wish to attend a spoken word festival with your family. As a family share your reactions.

Write Your Own Rap

Inspired by Andres' music? Write a rap of your own. Feeling intimidated? Go to the BBC's [Listen and Write Your Rap](#) website for some assistance.

History Lessons - Daniela Glusberg

Youth for Social Action: Evanston Township High School (Evanston, IL)

When the bell rings at 3:35pm each weekday, over 3,000 American teenagers stream out of the classrooms and into the hallways of Evanston Township High School. As this multicultural mass of mostly Latino, African-American, and White students slowly disperses, there's a group of students who choose to stay behind. Seeking refuge and community, the student-run group, "Youth for Social Action" joins together to share fears that have built-up since 9/11. They discuss their worries that Bush's war on terrorism has quickly become a war on immigrants, a war on many of their families. They fear that if their families speak up, they may be deported. This is a story about a group of youth who have joined together to help each other fight for and preserve the American dream of peace, prosperity, and freedom in a time of fear.

- How did the events in her parents' lives influence Daniela's view of the world?
- How do you think Daniela might define the American dream?
- What purpose do you think groups like Youth for Social Action serve in a high school? Do you see any value in them?
- How do you think the support of a group may help Daniela deal with her fears and emotions?
- How did this film make you feel?
- What message do you think the filmmaker was trying to convey?

Activities

Volunteer as a Family

Volunteering as a family can be a great way to spend time together and help your community. Gather information about local volunteer opportunities and volunteer together as a family. The [Youth Service](#)

America website may be a good place to begin. Go to the site and enter your zip code to find volunteer opportunities in your community.

I'm Not a Boy - Julie Joyce
House of Frame Frame Fierce (New York City, NY)

At the age of 16, Julie Joyce stopped answering to her male birth name and decided to publicly identify herself as a girl. Without support or understanding from her family, Julie turned to transgender girls on the streets of the Bronx for support. Although their support was important, she knew their lifestyle left them vulnerable to harassment, substance abuse, and prostitution. As she searched for safe and productive ways to express her identity, Julie found a peer education job teaching other youth about transgender rights and HIV/AIDS awareness. Today, she is part of a new family of friends who support her in developing her full potential as a human being.

- What does Julie fear?
- In what ways does Julie differ from her birth family?
- What do you do when/if your views differ from those of your family?
- What did Julie do to help create a secure community for herself?
- Julie fears people's ignorance. How has people's biases and intolerant behavior impacted Julie?
- Julie feared that she would never become the person she imagined she could be. Do you ever worry that you won't become the image that you have in your head? If so what do you do about it?
- How did this film make you feel?

Activities

Create a Community Youth Resource Bulletin

It is important to connect youths with available community youth resources. Work with members in your community to create a Community Youth Resources bulletin to provide information regarding youth organizations and services in your area.

Learn More About Transgender Youth

The *I'm Not a Boy* film might have raised a lot of unanswered questions regarding transgender youth. Learn more about transgender youth by visiting the [Youth Resources](#) website.

Family Discussion

Ask each family member to share his or her greatest fears. Discuss what you can do to feel more secure in your house, community and world. Using a large sheet of paper, have everyone draw his or her fears.

Diana's Story - Diana Guevara

La Camioneta (Guatemala City, Guatemala)

In my barrio in Guatemala City, it's hard not to be in a gang. My country was at war for 36 years and community structures and resources have been destroyed. While a gang is supposed to protect you, it's all too easy to get hurt. I know, because I was raped by one of the members of our gang. I told my mother about what happened, but she just blamed me. While I can't avoid the gang completely, I discovered and met a new group that makes me feel good about myself, the Iqui Balam Theatre Troupe. The members of the Troupe are helping develop my talents and learn the art of acting. I often choose the roles of girls that have been abused; it's my own way of healing and fighting back.

- Describe Diana's emotions.
- What emotion do you think Diana felt most strongly?
- How has Diana made a decision to confront her emotions?
- What do you imagine Diana has learned from her experiences?

- How did this film make you feel?
- What do you think Diana's theater group provided for her?

Activities

Family Skit

Lead a family discussion on how people respond to fear and traumatic events. Discuss how the arts can help people express their emotions in a positive way.

Write and perform a family skit.

Take Back the Night

Violence against women is an important issue that touches many families. Participate in a Take Back the Night Rally. Take Back the Night rallies are designed to bring awareness and empowerment to individuals and to inspire action that will bring an end to violence against women.

Leaving Still - Katy Thompson

Spy Hop Productions (Salt Lake City, UT)

Growing up poor in America often means growing up alone. My Dad was rarely home and Mom struggled to support ten children on a secretary's wage. To meet our basic needs, my Mom had to work eight-hour days and salvage food from grocery store dumpsters. She worked so hard to provide for us that I hardly got to spend time with her. Because this is the lifestyle I was born into, I was often afraid that my life would unfold in the same way and that I would pass this legacy onto my own children. I started running track my junior year of high school which has given me confidence and power to dictate my life's direction. As I continue to move forward with hard work and dedication, I'm learning to find the confidence that I'll be able to provide a happier and more successful future for my family.

- What was Katy afraid of?
- Why do you think it was difficult for Katy to become close to people?

- How did Katy feel about her mother?
- How did Katy deal with the differences between her values and her family values?
- What did the track team provide for Katy?
- How did this film make you feel?
- What message do you think the filmmaker was trying to convey?

Activities

Lessons for Youth

Growing up and creating a sense of self in the world is often very challenging for today's youth. David Krieger created and posted a list of twelve Lessons for Youth on the Waging Peace Website. Discuss the lessons together as a family. Adults can share how they addressed these issues when they were growing up.

1. Learn from others, but think for yourself. (Use your mind and judgment.)
2. Decide for yourself what is right or wrong. (Use your conscience.)
3. Speak out for what you believe in. (Use your voice.)
4. Stand up for what is right. (Use your power as an individual.)
5. Set goals and be persistent in working for them. (Use your vision and determination.)
6. Live by the Golden Rule. (Use your feelings as a point of reference.)
7. Recognize the miracle that you are. (Be spiritually aware.)
8. Never harm another miracle. (Be nonviolent.)

9. Believe in yourself. (Be trustworthy, even to yourself.)
10. Help others. (Be giving.)
11. Be a citizen of the world. (Be inclusive and embrace all life.)
12. Be a force for peace and justice. (Be courageous and committed.)

Fires Over England - Daisy Badger

Rose's Theatre (Tewkesbury, U.K.)

When the Foot and Mouth epidemic hit Britain in 2001 it seemed like nothing could stop it. The government slaughtered millions of animals and we could even smell the smoke from burning pyres in our classrooms. Friends were stuck on their farms, the countryside was closed and the tourism industry was badly hit. Scared and angry, we were determined to find out all we could about Foot and Mouth disease. We learned precautions and produced information for markets, traveling farmers, politicians, and anyone else who would listen to us. We used this knowledge to produce a play for our small, rural community of Tewkesbury. The play became more than just a way to describe the thoughtlessness and greed that caused such devastation. It was an opportunity for us to use our voices, connect and teach the community, and do our part in preventing a recurrence of this terrible disease.

- How did Daisy feel about what happened to her?
- How did destroying the animals impact Daisy personally?
- How did destroying the animals affect the community?
- Describe Daisy's emotions.
- How did this film make you feel?

Activities

Family Discussion

Katy's community overreacted to a threat, and, as a result, livestock were destroyed. Select something that the members of your family are afraid of, and learn more about it. Discuss misconceptions, how to get accurate facts, and ask each family member to model how they make decisions.

Ji-hee Candlelight – Ji-hee Hun

Daejeon Independent Media Center (Daejeon, South Korea)

(in collaboration with the MNN Youth Channel – NYC)

Ji-Hee, a 16 year-old high school student in South Korea, let very little come between herself and her studies. But in June 2002 her world changed forever when two 13 year-old schoolgirls were run over by a U.S. Military armed vehicle. The deaths shook Ji-Hee, and like many students across the Korean Peninsula, she wanted answers to why the U.S. Military is stationed in South Korea. She also started worrying about the real possibility of war with North Korea. As Hyang-Soon's future became less certain, she began to play an active role in the anti-war movement. She uses her knowledge to help end the threat of violence, and create a secure future for people across Korea.

- What was Ji-hee afraid of?
- What sparked her decision to protest?
- How did Ji-hee's family react to her actions?
- How did the support of others affect Ji-hee?
- Describe Ji-hee's emotions.
- How did this film make you feel?
- How did Jihee's actions help her confront her fears?
- What message do you think the filmmaker was trying to convey?

Activities

Attend a Demonstration

The world is becoming a more connected place as people have opportunities to make themselves heard through Internet-based cyber demonstrations. As a family, explore how to participate in a cyber-demonstration for a cause that you value.

Listen to Peace Music

Listen to a peace compact disc.

The [Peace Jukebox](#) plays hours of anti-war music for free.

Read a Book Together

Spending time reading together as a family is a great way to connect as a family, build memories, and enhance relationships. Some suggestions for family reading books include the following:

Out of War: True Stories from the Front Lines of the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia By Sara Cameron

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl By Anne Frank

Number the Stars By Lois Lowry

The Journal of Ben Uchida by Barry Derenberg

Zalata's Diary by Zalta Filipovic