

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MONSTER'S BALL AND FINDING NEVERLAND

The Kite Runner

A MARIC FORSTER FILM

"There is a way to be good again."



Discussion guide developed by Heartland Truly Moving Pictures to accompany *The Kite Runner*, a Truly Moving Picture award winning film. A Truly Moving Picture award winner is a film that unlocks the vast potential of the human spirit and enables us to view stories that display courage, integrity and hope, taking entertainment to a higher level.

www.TrulyMovingPictures.org

One Film Can.

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit organization, recognizes and honors films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. We believe that one film can move us to laughter, to tears, or to make a difference. *The Kite Runner* is a movie that demonstrates One Film Can.

We encourage all who use this guide to not only engage in the discussion questions, but use the themes in *The Kite Runner* as a prompt to engage in his or her own community. Additionally, an in depth Kite Runner Companion Curriculum dealing with complex social and political issues in Afghanistan has been developed by the Amnesty International Human Rights Education Program with support from Participant Productions. We encourage you to further explore these global issues in this educational guide.

Find it at www.participate.net/thekiterunner.

DreamWorks Pictures, Sidney Kimmel Entertainment and Participant Productions present *The Kite Runner*, a Sidney Kimmel Entertainment Production and Parkes/MacDonald Production released by Paramount Classics.

Find out more about the movie at www.kiterunnermovie.com.

“There is a way to be good again.”

Based on one of the most acclaimed novels in recent memory, *The Kite Runner* is a profoundly emotional tale of friendship, family, devastating mistakes and redeeming love. In a divided country on the verge of war, two childhood friends, Amir and Hassan, are about to be torn apart forever. It's a glorious afternoon in Kabul and the skies are bursting with the exhilarating joy of a kite-fighting tournament. But in the aftermath of the day's victory, one boy's fearful act of betrayal will mark their lives forever and set in motion an epic quest for redemption. Now, after 20 years of living in America, Amir returns to a perilous Afghanistan under the Taliban's iron-fisted rule to face the secrets that still haunt him and take one last daring chance to set things right.



The Kite Runner has been aptly adapted to the screen by screenwriter David Benioff. As with any book that becomes a movie, portions of the story have been altered to capture the essence of the story in a reasonable time frame. However, many aspects are gained as images and characters are brought to life in film.

Consider the ways in which the movie may have enhanced the story of *The Kite Runner* for you and how the differences might have affected the way you viewed characters or events.

“ਮੈਂ ਖੈਦ ਕਾਲੇ ਕੋਹਾਤ ਮੈਂ ਕਾਲੇ ਟੋਰੇਕਾਯ ਆਠ ਠੇਏ ਕੁਝੇ ਠੀ ਟਕੋਰੇ, ਠਨ ਆ ਰਿਝੇਰੇ ਠਚਏਕਏਏ ਠੇਕਾਯ ਮੈਂ ਠੇਏ ਕੋਮਠੇਰ ਠੀ 1975.”

This opening quote of the book refers to a critical moment in time Amir feels defines him as a person. For Amir, like all of us, events and relationships in his life shape and define his character, his self image, his decisions and who he is.

Explore this concept through the following prompts and questions.

- Discuss Amir's relationships with Baba, Hassan, Amir Khan and even Soraya. How does his decision from the defining event in the alley affect each relationship and how he views himself and other in these relationships?
- Seek out and discuss other citations in the book that like the opening line demonstrate how that one day in 1975 affected other relationships and events to come.

Each of us have had events in our lives that helped define us. What dates and events in history have helped define our global community? Discuss those social, environmental and political events that have had a profound impact on our culture and society and have defined or altered the course of history.



“امير and hassan, the sultans of kabul.” p. 27

Amir carved these words into the trunk of a pomegranate tree one day when he and Hassan were young.

- What is the significance of this tree in their childhood and later on? What is the irony of these words?
- How does Hassan’s illiteracy play a role in his friendship with Amir?
- What is the significance of Hassan later learning to read and write?
- Discuss the differences in the book between the way Soraya describes her memories of teaching her illiterate servant to read compared to Amir's memories of the way he treated Hassan for his inability to read.
- Later in the novel when Amir returns to Afghanistan he visits the pomegranate tree and remembers that Hassan wrote in a letter that the "tree hadn't borne fruit in years (p. 264)." What is meaningful about this? Discuss other instances in *The Kite Runner* to which this quote refers.

Reach Out



For Amir and Hassan, the pomegranate tree was a sanctuary. Planting trees in your community not only beautifies the community, but also can provide a sanctuary for people to gather for years to come. Consider visiting the National Arbor Day Foundation to discover ideas to get involved in planting trees in your community. www.arborday.org

Another way to strengthen your community is to participate in youth and peer mentoring opportunities that work to combat illiteracy. For more information about literacy volunteering visit www.proliteracy.org.

“There was a brotherhood between people who had
 दिव रिबल the इबल ब्रदर, a किंडशिप थत नॉट एवन
 तिले टुगेथे ब्रदर.”

The playfulness, innocence, loyalty and even jealousy and resentment demonstrate Amir and Hassan's brotherly love. All the while, one gives and one takes.

- Prior to the discovery that Amir and Hassan are truly brothers, how does their relationship already demonstrate those qualities?
- What aspects of this “brotherhood” make it so interesting and intriguing? Why does Amir taunt Hassan from time to time?
- Why does Amir have feelings of resentment towards Hassan despite Hassan's undying loyalty to him, and what prevents Amir from being true friends with Hassan?
- Why would Amir not come to Hassan's rescue in the alley, and then turn against him in his time of greatest need?

An element of Amir's resentment of Hassan comes from Hassan's relationship with Baba since Amir's relationship with his father is one of longing, distance and fear.

- Why did Amir feel like such an outsider with his own father? What did his father do to cause these feelings?
- Why and how does Amir and Baba's relationship change?
- Throughout *The Kite Runner* there are several instances that provide insight to Amir and Babas' relationship as well as Hassan and Alis'. Discuss similarities and differences are there in each of them.

Reach Out



While both Amir and Hassan grew up with strong fathers, Sohrab's opportunity to be raised by his father, Hassan, was taken away. Many youth lack a sibling or parental dynamic that provides human connection. Youth serving agencies exist nationwide to fill this void in children's lives and these organizations need mentors to volunteer. Consider how you might become involved in the life of someone who lacks this family dynamic. More information can be found at www.mentoring.org, or contact an organization in your own community.

“and when the last kite was cut, all hell broke loose.” p. 52

The kite serves as a diverse symbol throughout *The Kite Runner*. It symbolizes freedom and innocence, custom and tradition, and also marks a life-altering event. Consider each instance and path the kite took in the telling of the story.

“I don't know why I watch this yearly ritual in our backyard...I watch because of that look of acceptance in the animal's eyes. Absurdly, I imagine the animal understands. I imagine the animal sees that its imminent demise is for a higher purpose.”

Sacrifice is a consistent theme throughout *The Kite Runner*.

- How are Hassan, Baba, Sohrab and Soraya each a lamb in his or her own way?
- Do you consider Amir to be a “lamb?” Do you believe he considers himself as one?

“There is only one sin, and that is theft...when you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth.” p. 225

When Amir learns of the secret Baba kept from both him and Hassan all of their lives, he remembers this quote from Baba about the one sin in life.

Examples of theft in the story play out for Hassan and Amir in different ways - the physical theft, the theft of different truths, the theft of country, community and home.

Discuss the different types of theft the boys experienced throughout their lives.

- What “theft” did Baba, Ali, Amir Khan, Soraya and Sorab experience?
- The consequence of silence in *The Kite Runner* is profound. Friendships are ended, and lives are changed because truths are hidden. Think about each instance of silence and discuss the consequences. Was there any good that came of the silence?
- As individuals we have the right to silence, but using *The Kite Runner* as an example, what can be the consequence of silence?
- In a community or global sense, what things in your own life do you feel compelled to speak out about? Are there issues to which you can bring attention by advocating?

Reach Out Many organizations exist to give a voice to a cause. Here are just a few:



Amnesty International
www.amnestyUSA.org

Human Rights First
www.humanrightsfirst.org

National Human Services Assembly
www.nasassembly.org

UNICEF
www.unicef.org

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
www.peta.org

While global issues are important, the strength of your own community is essential. Use examples provided in this guide or seek out organizations in your own community that focus on the issues that you feel strongly about and become involved.

“There is a way to be good again.”

The Kite Runner, a story of love and redemption, begins with this quote of promise.

- Do you think Amir believes that in the end he is redeemed? Do you think he is? If so, in what ways did Amir redeem himself?
- Soraya struggled with the shame she had brought to her family when she ran away with an Afghani man when she was young. How did Soraya become good again? In whose eyes did she redeem herself?
- How did Hassan become good again? What does “good” mean for Hassan?
- What do you think would have happened if Amir and Hassan had the opportunity to see each other again, many years later?
- Amir gains respect from Baba when he returns home from the kite competition possessing the blue kite, but at the expense of his friendship with Hassan. Knowing the characters as you know them now, how could the story unfold differently had Amir made a different decision about what he witnessed?

