



Community Screening & Discussion Guide

CITIZEN GEORGE

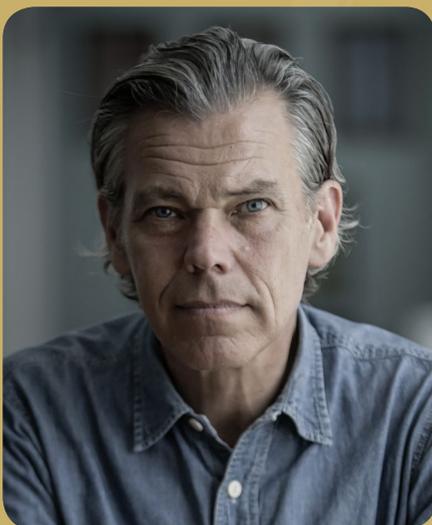
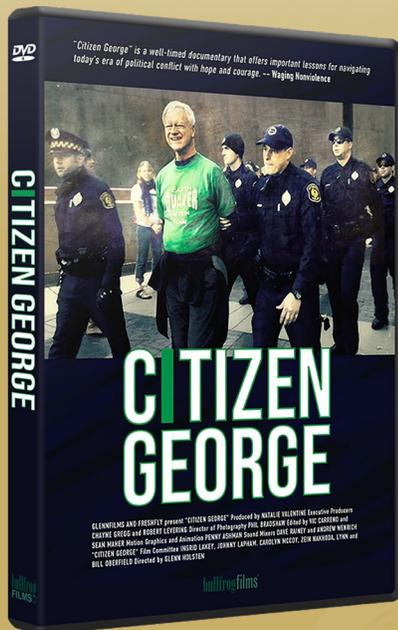
Use your screening of **CITIZEN GEORGE** as a tool for educating your community about the life and work of Quaker activist George Lakey. This guide offers some background information, helpful tips & discussion questions for an informative, rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

what you'll find inside!

- about the film & filmmaker
- ready to watch! screening guide
- ready to talk! discussion guide
- ready to act! handout

About the film

CITIZEN GEORGE presents the life and work of Philadelphia-based Quaker activist George Lakey, a non-violent revolutionary who has worked his entire life for justice and peace, guided by his ideal of societal transformation. The film moves back and forth in time, highlighting specific events of George's activist life—fighting for civil rights, anti-Vietnam War activism, LGBTQ rights, human rights in Sri Lanka and climate justice. In addition to detailing his activism, the film tells George's personal journey as a husband, father and out gay man. His story provides life-giving lessons to those struggling to make sense of the current troubling political climate, illuminate a path forward, and inspire those willing to work for change.



About the filmmakers

Glenn Holsten is a documentary storyteller who creates human-driven films, from the arts to the sciences. Long-form documentary directing credits include **WYETH; HELL OR HIGH SEAS; FLOWING WATER; THE BAREFOOT ARTIST; OC87; SEDUCTIVE SUBVERSION: Women Pop Artists, 1958-1968; and SAINT OF 9/11**. Glenn has been honored with sixteen Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards. A collection of his work was exhibited in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's 20th Century Video Gallery. Glenn has directed films in China, Argentina, Portugal, Kenya, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Poland, Bosnia and the Republic of Georgia.

ready to watch!

Ideas and best practices to help make your community screening a success!

1. Publicize Your Event! This is the most important step because it not only tells the world what you're up to, but it lets the Bullfrog Community team know what your plans are so we can help you publicize your event. Visit <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/citizengeorge> to register and get the word out about your upcoming screening. You can also email us at info@bullfrogcommunities.com if you need help getting started!

2. Visualize Your Goal! What do you hope to achieve with your screening? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion about issues raised in the film, gain support or recruit volunteers for a local grassroots campaign, or raise funds for a group on your campus or in your community. Or, you can simply use the screening to provide an opportunity for your audience to watch and learn together.

3. Where To Host? Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating an in-person community film screening of the size you anticipate: downtown movie theaters, churches and synagogues, town halls, community centers, public libraries, school auditoriums, university and college venues, warehouse spaces, a local business, outdoor screenings at parks and playgrounds, and even private homes have been venues for many successful community screenings. Virtual screenings can be hosted on <https://streaming.bullfrogcommunities.com>, or by using a customized screening room on Vimeo.

4. Find A Partner! Give some thought to who is already working on this issue in your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Participate in a panel discussion or Zoom meeting after the screening? Some potential partners include: student groups at schools, universities and colleges; a local public or campus library; representatives from local religious congregations or faith-based community groups; local chapters of national/global activist or grassroots organizations; faculty members at nearby universities and colleges; reporters/journalists from local news publications such as newspapers and magazines; local nonprofits; and any community organizations that share goals or views with the film you are screening.

5. Invite A Guest Speaker! Guest speakers and panelists are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are engaged and thinking about the issues they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact representatives of local non-profits, faith groups, journalists and reporters from local media outlets, or teachers and professors who have expertise and/or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend your screening—in person, via Skype or Zoom, etc—and participate in a discussion or Q&A session with your audience.

6. Engage Your Audience! Use this discussion guide to engage your audience. Included in this guide is a section called Ready to Talk! with a few suggested discussion questions to get the conversation started, and a section called Ready to Act!— which can be used as a handout — listing additional resources for further investigation about key issues raised in the film.

7. Spread The Word! Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing your film screening to people in your community. Sending emails to a contact list, creating event notifications on Facebook, Instagram, Eventbrite or an online community calendar, using Twitter to announce your event, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. In addition to this guide, you can download a screening poster and press photos that can be used to help publicize your event: <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/citizengeorge>

8. Tell Us How It Went! Visit <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/citizengeorge> to tell us about your event. Contribute to the film's discussion page (if available) to help other student groups, universities, non-profits, congregations and community groups further the discussion and put on successful screening events of their own. Where was your screening held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? What did you discuss? Your feedback will help others to organize their own events, and will energize Bullfrog Communities as a whole.

ready to talk!

Your audience will be excited to discuss the issues raised by the film. Here are some discussion prompts that will get people talking.

What aspects of the film surprised you? What resonated with you? What challenged you?

“I think this moment is the biggest opportunity I have experienced in my lifetime to make major changes for justice,” George Lakey. **Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?**

George says, “We will make bigger and bigger and bigger changes because a change in one area inspires people.” **Name some times when you’ve seen one change inspire another. Think about in your family, school, or community, as well as in the world or throughout history.**

Over and over again, George’s story shows that determined (and sometimes stubborn) activists can take on forces much mightier than they ... and win. For example, efforts George was part of compelled President Lyndon Johnson to pass a civil rights bill and pushed President Nixon to end the Vietnam War. **What forces are we up against today? How are determined activists standing up to them?**

Each time George embarked on a new campaign - for desegregation, ending wars, LGBTQ rights, environment - there was no way to know if any given action would succeed - or if it would matter at all. **Why do you think he moved into action anyway? Where would you like to take action, even if you’re not sure it will make a difference?**

One of George’s first experiences of activism happened in the 1950s. Reflecting on this, he said, “I was barely out of my teenage years, when I was recruited into a long walk. The cause was that there was leukemia being caused in babies by nuclear testing in the atmosphere.” **What was the first time you took action for a social issue or change you wanted to see in your community or the world?**

The ‘call of spirit’ is a strongly motivating force for George. **Have you ever felt called by spirit to take action? What happened?**

In the beginning of the documentary, George stands on a milkcrate ‘soap box’ outside a bank and gives a speech to a crowd. **If you could say something to a group like this, what would you say?**

George says, “If we don’t risk, we don’t gain, really. And being outside our comfort zones, we grow in our power as people.” **What does this mean? Have you ever experienced this?**

Varshini Prakash with Sunrise Movement says, “George is an example of what it means to take action even if you’re scared. And to not let your fear hold you back from taking your place in history.” **How does fear hold you back from being part of movements for change? What can we do about it?**

When Peter gets in trouble for picketing at a grocery store in support of the farm workers’ boycott on lettuce, George was proud of him. **If you took nonviolent action, what would your family’s reaction be? Who would support you and why? Consider friends, community members, mentors, and others.**

After he came out as gay, George said, “The impact on my life was enormous in terms - personally - in feeling freer and feeling more powerful because I’d done this really hard thing.” **How does an individual act of telling the truth about who you are - like George did when he came out as gay - help make social change?**

“George is a movement and mentor grandfather to me - he has mentored my mentors.” - Varshini Prakash, Sunrise Movement. **Think about the people you admire or who mentor you. Who were their mentors and role models? In turn, who do you mentor or support?**

During George’s first arrest doing a sit-in to end segregation, how did he and other Black activists flex the power of nonviolent action? Think about the actions at city hall and in prison.

Consider the many campaigns and actions depicted in this film: the long walks for climate justice, the sit-ins for desegregation, the small group on the Phoenix sailing ship confronting the US Naval Fleet during the Vietnam War, the unarmed protective accompaniment in Sri Lanka, and others. **How did George and other activists offer support to one another? Across the country and around the world, how did other people take action solidarity with these campaigns? How does solidarity - among activists and amidst the broader public - help us as we take risks for social change?**

Earth Quaker Action Team (the activists that begin and end the film) was asked by an international coalition to help get Vanguard to stop financing fossil fuels. This invitation came after EQAT had successfully forced PNC Bank - the 7th largest bank in the United States - to quit funding mountaintop removal coal-mining even though it was the biggest financier of that practice in the nation. **How do (relatively) smaller wins help us take on even bigger goals?**

Cynics said there was “no way” EQAT could succeed in stopping PNC Bank from financing mountaintop removal for coal mining. **What do you think gave them the ability to persevere despite the critics?**

Ingrid Lakey says, “Being an activist, a big part is about your heart - it’s about your yearning for justice - but there are real skills involved, too.” **What do you think these skills are? Where are they being shared in your community ... or where could they be shared more?**

George says, “Without the training, it’s very hard to get a lot of people to do the right thing when the pressure is on.” **Why do you think this is? What is the ‘right thing’ that George is referring to? How might training and preparation help us do it? How do role plays help activists prepare for nonviolent direct action?**

Song and music play an important role in George’s life and activism. **What lifts you up as you work for change?**

While in Sri Lanka, George would often duck into a religious temple to pray, center, and calm his fear. **What do you do to re-center yourself in tough situations?**

Movement for a New Society helped activists like George have the time and social support to take action. It also offered a community through which they learned new skills and unlearned biases around gender, race, sexuality, etc. **Would you want to live in a community like this? Why or why not?**

“Change does happen in fits and starts, but it’s the kind of steady year-in and year-out work that has an impact on the world,” George points out. **What does this steady work entail? How do you participate in it?**

Bishop Dwayne Royster says, “Far too many people think the world happens to them, as opposed to them happening to the world. And training helps them to understand that they can flip the script on that and be able to own their own agency and create the change that they need.” **Do you think the world happens to you? Or that you happen to the world?**

“It is important to me to allow the feelings of sadness and of anger to be experienced by me. And I found that it’s easy for me to get shaky, unless I go to the source of love,” George Lakey shares with us in the film. **How do you connect to your source of love for people, planet, community, family, etc.?**

“George is knocking on nine decades on planet earth ... his legacy will be how much he loved and how well he loved. Love in struggle. Love in connection. Love in celebration. Love in grief. I think we’ll look back and say that he really loved,” says Dwight Dunston. Imagine yourself at 90 years old. **What do you hope to have seen change in that time? What might it feel like to have lived such an adventurous, courageous life working for change in our world?**

ready to act!

handout

American Friends Service Committee — <https://afsc.org>

AFSC works for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world free of violence, inequality, and oppression, joining with people and partners worldwide to meet urgent community needs, challenge injustice, and build peace.

Canadian Friends Service Committee — <https://quakerservice.ca>

CFSC envisions a world in which dignity, justice, peace, human rights, and harmonious relationships with creation are fostered and upheld.

Quakers in the World — <https://www.quakersintheworld.org/>

Quakers have a long tradition of being active in, and seeking to make a difference to, the world in which they find themselves. In their actions they seek to put Quaker testimonies such as equality, peace and integrity into practice, as best they can. This website aims to bring together the many different ways in which they have done this, all over the world.

Friends Center Philadelphia— <https://www.friendscentercorp.org>

Friends Center is a hub for Quaker activity in Philadelphia and around the world. The Friends Center campus houses an active Quaker meeting; local, regional, and international Quaker organizations; and like minded groups working for peace and justice.

Friends Journal — <https://www.friendsjournal.org>

Friends Publishing Corporation was founded in 1955 “for the purpose of promoting religious concerns of the Religious Society of Friends and the education and information of its members and others by means of the written or spoken word, including the publication of a magazine or magazines, pamphlets or other writings.” It’s mission is to communicate Quaker experience in order to connect and deepen spiritual lives.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting — <https://www.pym.org>

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is a faith community comprised of over 100 local Meeting communities in Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, all of Delaware and Eastern Maryland.

Friends General Conference — <https://www.fgcquaker.org/>

Founded in 1900, Friends General Conference is an association of local and regional Quaker organizations primarily in the United States and Canada. FGC is a volunteer led association; focus areas and related projects are determined by volunteers representing their affiliates and consistent with FGC’s organizational Minute of Purpose and Vision Statement.