



# BELIEF IN FILM

## EDUCATORS' NOTES

### AIMS

Welcome to *UK Jewish Film's*, *3FF's* and *Radical Middle Way's* BELIEF IN FILM educational resource which has been designed to:

1. Highlight specific films that generate conversations about faith, belief and identity.
2. Provide a framework of questions to stimulate critical thinking and reflection about film.
3. Promote confidence within communities to use film to open up challenging conversations with people across different backgrounds and beliefs.

### PREPARATION

The PERSPECTIVES section of the resource offers tutorial videos and downloadable PDFs to support you organising a film-based event in an intercultural, interfaith setting. It is highly recommended that educators and community workers familiarise themselves with this content which is also suitable for CPD for teachers of Religious Studies, Citizenship, English and Media Studies. There is a strong focus here on ways to facilitate conversations sensitively and inclusively.

### WATCHING FILMS

The FILMS curated for this resource have been carefully chosen to encompass a range of experiences of people from different faith and belief backgrounds. They are all short films (the longest is less than 15 minutes) which can be viewed in a classroom or community setting. It is hoped that they will provide a starting point for further intercultural film-based activities, and there are suggestions below of other films that could also work in this context.

### TALKING ABOUT FILM

The material in the GET TALKING section provides focus questions suitable for both formal and informal settings. It is assumed that films are watched together as a shared experience. As well as the stimulus questions available, we recommend experimenting with viewing the films in different ways to analyse the impact of different features. For example, how does a sequence differ if you turn off the sound? What is the impact of closing your eyes to block out the images and hearing only the soundtrack?

In addition to the general questions in the GET TALKING section, the following film-specific questions might stimulate further ideas:



# BELIEF IN FILM

## EDUCATORS' NOTES

### *DRAW THE PROPHET*

- How much context of contemporary events in France do you think is needed to make sense of this film?
- What are the faith perspectives on this conversation?

### *HANNAH COHEN'S HOLY COMMUNION*

- How could you re-write the screenplay for this film transforming the central Jewish character from a different minority community and changing the majority community something other than Irish Catholic?
- What do you think would be the impact of your changes?

### *INSPIRE*

The start of this film references four inspirational figures:

Malcolm X    Gandhi    Socrates    Jesus

- Why do you think the filmmaker chose these people?
- Who would you choose and why?

### *MAN*

- How do you think ideology drives culture?
- What is the impact on culture at a local and a global level?

### *MY LAD*

- Why do you think there are only male characters in this film?
- To what extent do you think the film could work if all the characters were re-written as female?



# BELIEF IN FILM

## EDUCATORS' NOTES

### CURRICULUM FOCUS

The resource is suitable for use with young people ages 13+ in Religious Studies, Citizenship, English and Media Studies.

In addition to the questions in the GET TALKING section, it is worth encouraging audiences to consider where filmmakers and storytellers get their ideas from. For teachers of English this is particularly relevant.

Screenwriter of *Hannah Cohen's Holy Communion*, Lana Citron, explains in the tutorial video PERSONAL STORIES the story behind her film which you can read about in more detail [here](#)

### OTHER FILM IDEAS

The films recommended below are simply a suggested starting place. They are included because of their representations of particular narratives. Some specifically portray stories where the lives of Jewish and Muslim people intersect, whilst others represent refugee stories or experiences of immigration.

**ARRANGED** | Director Diane Crespo & Stephen Schaefer | USA | 2007 | 90 mins | Cert 12  
This film looks at the parallel lives of two young women who meet and become friends whilst teaching at a college in Brooklyn, New York. One is Orthodox Jewish and the other is traditional Muslim. As their friendship develops, they begin to realise they have more in common with each other than with their worldlier colleagues.

**BESA** | Director Rachel Goslins | USA | 2012 | 86 mins | Cert 12  
This compelling documentary reveals the little known history of Albanians, mostly Muslims, who risked their lives sheltering Jews during WWII, following the ancient moral code of besa (a promise).

**DAVID** | Director Joel Fendelman | USA | 2011 | 80 mins | Cert 12  
Eleven year-old Daud, the son of a religious imam in Brooklyn, is mistaken for a Jewish boy, David – the children think he is a classmate at their Orthodox school. Genuine friendships develop, and David is unable to resist the joy of camaraderie. But the longer he plays out his double life, the more he risks driving a wedge in his family, and being found out by his friends.

**DANCING IN JAFFA** | Director Hilla Medalia | Israel / USA | 2013 | 88 mins | Cert PG  
The renowned dancer and teacher Pierre Dulaine, returns to his native Jaffa for the first time since he left with his Palestinian-French mother and his Irish father, as a child. He is determined to teach the 'two step' to 11 year-old Palestinian and Israeli children in his own bid to overcome political and cultural differences.



# BELIEF IN FILM

## EDUCATORS' NOTES

**FREE MEN** | Director Ismael Ferroukhi | France | 2011 | 99 mins | Cert 12

Set in 1942 in German-occupied Paris, Younes, a young unemployed Algerian, earns his living as a black marketeer. Arrested by the French police but given a chance to avoid jail, Younes agrees to spy on the Paris Mosque. The police suspect the Mosque authorities of aiding Muslim Resistance agents, as well as helping North African Jews, by giving them false certificates.

**PADDINGTON** | Director Paul King | UK | 2014 | 95 mins | Cert PG

A young Peruvian bear travels to London in search of a home. Finding himself lost and alone at Paddington Station, he meets the kindly Brown family, who offer him a temporary refuge.

## CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the following contributors for granting permission to include their films in this resource.

*Draw the Prophet* | 2015 | Dir. mokhtarawards.com | 5 mins

*Hannah Cohen's Holy Communion* | 2012 | Dir. Shimmy Marcus | 10 mins

*Inspire* | 2015 | Dir. Awais Ali & Sheroze Khan | 5 mins

*Man* | 2012 | Dir. Steve Cutts | 4 mins – awaiting permission

*My Lad* | 2010 | Dir. Sami Khan | 14 mins

Thanks also to the interviewees who contributed their expertise including:

Rachel Burns  
Lana Citron  
Joe Duggan  
Anne Holm Petersen  
Sheroze Khan  
Eli Tamir  
Andrea Tuijten

Thank you to Insight Film for support in curating the choice of films and advising on the resource content.

Website developed by [Vanishing Point Creative](#).