



Beyond Inspiration

On many college campuses, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become a hot-button topic, with a wide range of opinions and perspectives vying for attention. In this program, watch the 38-minute film *Beyond Inspiration*, which takes a critical look at the events at Rutgers University during the Second Intifada. Then discuss: How can we prevent such polarization from occurring on our campus? How can we express our views and work towards change in a more constructive way?

NOTE: Film is available online or by DVD. To request the DVD, please email programs@jstreetu.org one month in advance of the event.

Suggested Audience

5-40 participants. You can use this program in three ways:

1. Recruiting students who may be interested in getting involved with J Street U, and getting people excited about creating a middle ground on campus. Great as an opening program of the semester.
2. Bringing together leaders of existing pro-Israel and pro-Palestine groups for a proactive chat about civil discourse on campus.
3. Holding an informal strategy session amongst the leadership team of your J Street U group.

Suggested Format

This event starts with a short introduction by the moderator(s), preferably one or more student leaders who are active with J Street U. The discussion should focus on advancing J Street U's mission of creating a middle ground on campus – a "pro" without an "anti." *Beyond Inspiration* will serve as an example of what could happen when communication breaks down between supporters on opposing sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Participants can sit in chairs in a semi-circle, or for a larger audience, in several smaller circles. (Theater style is less ideal since it's not conducive to discussion.)

Time

1.5 hours. If you only have an hour, get started promptly and shorten the discussion at the end.

Materials

- Laptop/*Beyond Inspiration* DVD or internet/screen to show film
- Sign-in sheet
- J Street U buttons, stickers, and one-pager

Before the Program

Test the DVD or link www.vimeo.com/14930898 to make sure everything's functioning smoothly.

Introduction (10 min)

Go around:

- Introduce yourself
- How you heard about the program
- Fun fact about yourself (or use your favorite icebreaker)

Optional go around, if you have time to go deeper:

- What brings you to engage in this issue? When you think about Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, what's at the core of the matter for you?

Moderator says:

- Thank you for being here
- On campus, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a hot-button issue
- Wide range of views and ways to take action
- The film *Beyond Inspiration* shows the events at Rutgers University during the Second Intifada
- After the film, we'll discuss what happened at Rutgers and the issues this raises for our campus
- Big question: How can we get past polarization and actually be productive in promoting peace, security, and social justice in Israel, the future Palestinian state, and the Middle East?

Thank any co-sponsors. Plug J Street U:

- J Street U is a student-driven network of activists organizing on campuses across North America for peace, security and social justice in Israel, the future state of Palestine and across the Middle East.
- J Street U is an alternative to extremist voices from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide.
- Join J Street U's email list (the sign-up sheet is being passed around), become a fan on Facebook, and visit www.jstreetu.org!

TALK HERE ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED WITH J STREET U ON CAMPUS.

INVITE PEOPLE TO TALK WITH YOU AFTERWARDS.

Film Screening (40 min)

Moderator says:

- *Beyond Inspiration* is a 38-minute film by David Aslan, who was a Rutgers student at the time of the filming in 2003.¹
- The film shows how a local campus conflict turned into a statewide debate over the question of Israel and Palestine.
- Afterwards, we'll have a discussion about what this means for our campus.
- To make sure this is an open, honest, and respectful conversation, here are a few guidelines:
 - Be honest with your thoughts and opinions – difference and disagreement are okay
 - Be respectful and open to listening to other people's opinions
 - Share airtime so everyone gets a chance to participate (e.g. wait to be recognized by the moderator before speaking)
 - Anonymity: after the event, you can talk about the ideas that were discussed, but not the people or groups that said them

Show the film. (Link: www.vimeo.com/14930898)

Discussion (30 min)

Remind everyone of the guidelines (be honest, be respectful, share airtime, keep anonymous).

The following questions are just a guide—do not ask all of them. Feel free to let the conversation flow naturally, but keep it focused on “what does constructive activism look like?” (and gently steer it away from playing the blame game – whether about the Second Intifada, Rutgers, or your own campus).

Questions about the film:

1. What's one moment from the film that stands out in your mind? Why did this moment strike you?
2. What challenges did the student activists at Rutgers face? How did they respond to these challenges? How did the polarization become so extreme?
3. Do you believe that the protests were effective? Why or why not?
4. At the end of the film, one of the students said that whatever side of the issue they were on, on the ride home they would sit together on the bus. What is your reaction to this?

¹ For more information, see <http://www.aslanderproductions.com/films/beyond.html>

Questions about our role on campus:

1. Does this film resonate – have you experienced something like this on our campus or elsewhere? In what ways is our campus like Rutgers, and in what ways is it different?
2. When there are strong differences of opinion, how can we come together for an open and respectful conversation?
3. J Street U seeks to create a middle ground where you can be “pro” without an “anti.” What can we do on our campus to create this middle ground?
4. Could protests and demonstrations be an effective tool? If you could plan any type of public action during a time of crisis, what would it look like?
5. What other tools could we use? Open brainstorm... (e.g. dialogues, advocacy campaigns, education events, one-on-one meetings, meetings of group leaders, op-eds and media outreach, online and social media, etc. etc.)
6. Everyone comes to this issue with different perspectives, experiences, and narratives. As part of a primarily but not exclusively Jewish movement, J Street U is deeply supportive of Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic homeland. How can our group work with other Jewish and pro-Israel groups on campus? Muslim, Arab, or other pro-Palestinian student groups on campus? Other progressive groups on campus?
7. How can we take a stand for the principles and values we believe in and help bring a two-state resolution closer?

Closing

- Thank everyone for coming
- Thank co-sponsors
- Talk again about getting involved with J Street U (e.g. mention the time and date of your next meeting or event, or an upcoming campaign)
- Make sure everyone has had a chance to sign in

The Next Day

After the event, follow up and thank attendees and co-organizers. Again mention the time and date of your next meeting or event, or plug a campaign.

Within 3 days after the event, fill out the Activity Feedback Form at <http://www.jstreetu.org/activity-feedback-form>. This will help J Street U continue to improve our programming!