



## ***Allah Made Me Funny The Movie* Dialogue Guide**

### **Organizational Background:**

**Interfaith Youth Core** (IFYC) is an entrepreneurial, Chicago-based international organization that seeks to build a movement of young people creating religious pluralism through cooperative social action and dialogue. The impact of our work and innovation of our methodology has gained us a spotlight in major media and the attention of key world leaders: We've been profiled by Good Morning America, NPR, CNN and the BBC, as well as major media in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. We have partnered with such leaders and organizations as the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, the Office of Queen Rania of Jordan, President Bill Clinton, the Council on Foreign Relations, the East-West Institute, the U.S. State Department and the United States Institute of Peace. Learn more at [www.ifyc.org](http://www.ifyc.org).

*20,000 Dialogues* is a nationwide initiative that uses discussions about films to promote pluralism, dialogue, and civic engagement. It seeks to build greater understanding of Muslims through films and conversation. *20,000 Dialogues* uses [Unity Productions Foundation's](#) (UPF) award winning films and provides the materials people need to participate in dialogues that further the American ideals of inclusiveness and positive civic action.

### **Introduction:**

**IFYC** and **20,000 Dialogues** have partnered together to bring you the *Allah Made Me Funny The Movie* Dialogue Guide. This guide will help you frame the relevant issues before watching the movie, bring together a diverse group to discuss and reflect upon some of the themes the movie addresses, and inspire you to act towards bridging the perceived clash of civilizations.

It is our hope that you play a pivotal role in helping Americans build understanding towards Islam and Muslims through both dialogue and action. Dialogue is a new approach to an age-old challenge. It is the meeting of minds and hearts in candid discussion. Its goal is as simple as it is challenging; to enable participants to see the other in a new way and to learn and grow from the experience. Storytelling is an important part of dialogue—being able to articulate your own personal narrative allows others to see the issues from your experience. Dialogue is inherently risky, because it opens us up to the possibility of change and transformation. The Action Steps are equally important as they enable participants to create ongoing forums for taking action together. The entire process is designed to promote sustained interaction between the participants.


### **How to Organize a Film Screening:**

**Obtain a Copy of the Film:** The Allah Made Me Funny DVD is only being used for special interfaith dialogue events. To obtain a copy of the film, please contact 20,000 Dialogues Project Manager Daniel Tutt at [Daniel@upf.tv](mailto:Daniel@upf.tv), or (202) 298-8088 to obtain a copy of the DVD.

#### **Logistical Details:**

- Give yourself a minimum of three weeks to organize a film screening.
  - If you are a student, try to use the resources of a student group to book a space on your college campus or school. If you are not in school, see if any community centers would be willing to lend you their space (churches, mosques, local libraries, etc.).
  - Create a flyer that you can use to publicize—include information about the film, pictures, and the date and time of the screening. Also provide contact information should anyone have any questions.
  - Invite relevant groups (including other religious groups, cultural groups, service groups) to co-sponsor the screening.
  - Obtain funding to provide refreshments and snacks at the screening.
  - Have a master of ceremonies that can welcome everyone and introduce the film. This person would most likely also lead the discussions.
- Ensure that the venue has a projector, laptop/DVD, and sound

#### **Schedule an Orientation Webinar**

- **Contact the 20,000 Dialogues team** to receive an orientation webinar. To learn more about or schedule the webinar, contact Daniel Tutt, Outreach Coordinator, at [Daniel@upf.tv](mailto:Daniel@upf.tv). The orientation webinar can be customized for your staff and partners.
- **Download Resources**  Download resources to use *before* your community dialogue (icebreakers and an orientation presentation), *during* your dialogue (discussion guides and dialogue packets), and *after* your dialogue (evaluation forms).

#### **Publicize:**

- Use online social media, including Facebook to create an event and publicize it to your friends and classmates
- Urge cosponsors to publicize it to their groups
- Reach out specifically to other student groups or community groups

#### **Pre-Screening of Film:**

##### **Icebreakers:**

- Break everyone into groups of five or if there are less than ten people, stay in one group. With larger audiences, encourage participants to make groups with people they do not know.
- Have everyone in the group introduce themselves and play Two Truths and a Lie: People write down two truths about themselves and a lie. Then introduce the three "facts" to the rest of the group who tries to guess which one is a lie.
- Have everyone in the group share their favorite (appropriate) joke with the rest of the group.

##### **Setting a Safe Space:**

It is important, before all else, to set a “safe space” for dialogue, a space where people from all backgrounds can feel comfortable sharing personal parts of who they are with others. This conversation, unlike the dominant conversation about religion in our society, will require a willingness to listen to those whose traditions are different from our own. Regardless of the size of the group, this is an important step one must take to encourage honest and open reflection.

To set a safe space:

- Brainstorm about the guidelines participants will need in order to feel comfortable for this unique kind of conversation.
- Ask the group: What do you need from yourself and others in order to feel safe having this conversation? Examples of possible guidelines are: everyone has the right to pass, everything that is said is confidential, seek clarification, use ‘I’ states, etc.
- Someone in the group should take notes on the group’s responses and then read the responses aloud to conclude setting the safe space.
- The guidelines should be ones with which the entire group feels comfortable abiding by.

#### **Pre-Screening Discussion Questions:**

- Why did you come to this film screening and dialogue?
- What role do you see culture playing in bridging the perceived gap between Islam and the West?
- What are some benefits of using comedy to bridge gaps of misunderstanding? What are some challenges?

### ***Show Allah Made me Funny: The Movie***

**Length:** 1 hour, 23 minutes

#### **Discussion Questions Post-Screening of Film:**

- What was your favorite joke? What was your least favorite? Did any of the jokes make you uncomfortable?
- What issues or themes did all three comedians address? Can you relate to their stories or experiences?
- Do you think it makes a difference that the comedians are from South Asia, the Middle East and America? Does this kind of ethnic and racial diversity matter to what they are trying to do? Why?
- Is it appropriate to play up stereotypes to try to dispel them? How did the comedians do this?
- What are some common “jokes” or stereotypes made about your community?
- Do you ever share stories from your faith or culture that make you laugh? Share a story from your faith or culture that you have used to lessen tension or explain yourself to others?
- Religion doesn’t always facilitate making people laugh. Why do you think religious issues are always the most serious?
- Were you at all surprised that the comedians were able to be self critical of their own community?
- In what ways are members of your community self critical? Can you share an example of how humor is used in your community?

- Have you or someone you know ever had an experience with being racially profiled? How did you respond to it?
- Did the film challenge your ideas about Islam and/or Muslims?

## **Taking Dialogue to Action**

It is important to follow-up your dialogue with concrete action steps. Here are some suggestions:

- Host a film-screening of other 20,000 Dialogues films. Please visit <http://www.20000dialogues.org/>.
- Write out to your school or community newspaper concerning the need for understanding of Islam and Muslims.
- Write out to your school or community newspaper about the role of humor if different religious traditions.
- Host a lecture or panel for your school or community featuring prominent and active American Muslims. Use the Islamic Networks Group to find a speaker: <http://www.ing.org/>.
- Bring together diverse faith communities to do a service project under the IFYC's Days of Interfaith Youth Service Campaign. For more information, please visit <http://www.ifyc.org/events>.
- Host an Interfaith Comedy event on campus or in your community, reach out to the Coexistence Comedy Tour: <http://www.coexistcomedy.com>

What are some additional action steps you can take? What are some projects that you could think of where humor could play a role? How can you include comedy into different events and dialogues?

## **Conclusion:**

Thank everyone for their time and participation. Go around the group and ask for closing reflections, reactions and comments from each person. If you would like, share some ideas or comments that you think are particularly beneficial for the group to remember as your discussion comes to a close. Emphasize the need for action and start making plans for actual service projects, additional dialogues, etc.