



THE SHORT FILM EVANGELISM STRATEGY



The most powerful way to insert an idea into the world is through story. — Robert McKee

Everyone loves a good story, and today's master storytellers share their narratives through film. Global Short Film Network provides 24 powerful stories you can share through film--short stories that allow you to enter and explore the lives of people around you. When you watch a film, you connect with the characters and you identify with their lives. You find yourself drawn in because you've had similar hopes and dreams, disappointments and hurts, relationships and experiences.

Everyone is on a journey, living out their own life story. After showing a film, you can come alongside someone in their journey by hearing their responses to the film's story, and by exploring their story. Asking questions and genuinely listening can open a door to significant spiritual conversations. As a result of hearing their responses, God may just open a door for you to share a bit of your story, and even His story.

The Global Short Film Network provides you with hand selected films and quality training as a platform to springboard into spiritual conversations with your friends, family, classmates, coworkers, etc. These films will motivate, inspire and challenge you.

The Global Short Film Network partners with filmmakers to produce quality short films and teach the elements of story and filmmaking. The films are packaged in an easily accessible, readily available form that you can use to stir up great conversation with those around you. Students, teachers, professionals and churches in 76 countries are using the films.

Each DVD contains 8 short films, as well as interviews with the filmmakers, behind-the-scenes features and interactive questions. The DVD can be used in small- or large-group settings.

Attached is an overview of the Short Film evangelism strategy. To find out more about the Short Film Network go to www.globalshortfilmnetwork.com. The first two volumes of Short Films (entitled Vantage) can be purchased at www.crupress.com

SHORT FILM USER'S GUIDE



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-- Robert McKee

Intro to Short Films

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The typical high school or college student watches an average of 120 films per year.
-- Barna Research Group

Experiencing a Short Film for Yourself

1. Before using a Short Film with others, watch it with a friend, and discuss the following questions:
 - What was your initial reaction or first impression? What did you think? How did the film make you feel?
 - What was your favorite scene?
 - What was the main character trying to accomplish?
 - What was getting in his or her way?
 - What was at stake if the main character didn't succeed?
2. Discuss with your friend specific questions found in the i-Pod Short Film Sample Questions Guide.
3. Write down the questions you would like to ask when discussing this film with others or create your own.
4. Think about stories and parables from the Gospels. What story or parable from the life of Jesus connects well with this film?
5. Pray for God to open doors for significant conversations.
6. Ask a friend to go with you. (They can pray and provide moral support as you approach people, show the film, and engage in dialogue afterwards.)

Inviting Someone to Watch with You

When you're approaching someone you know, be yourself. You might say:

"Hey, I just watched a great short film. I'd love to see what you think about it."

"Wanna watch a cool vid?"

With someone you don't know you might say:

"Wanna watch a short film and tell me what you think of the story?"

"I'm part of CRU here on campus, and we're getting people's responses to some short films from Global Short Film Network. Could you watch one of them and tell me what you think of it?"

If they ask, "Why are you doing this?" or "Who is this with?" reply by saying:

"I've gotten connected with Global Short Film Network through my involvement with CRU here on campus. Global Short Film Network is a group of people around the world who love short films and like talking about them."

"Through my involvement with CRU here on campus I've gotten connected with Global Short Film Network. We've found that short films provide a great way for people to talk about their life desires and spiritual interests."

Watching a Film Together

1. Queue the film and hand them your i-Pod and earphone(s). (You can use a splitter to make use of 2 sets of earphones.)
2. As the film is queuing, introduce yourself and find out their names.
3. Watch the film with them, and pray silently for them and yourself as you watch.
4. Let the credits roll until they look up at you. This gives them some time to process. Remember, it's their first time seeing the film.

Talking Together After a Film

Don't worry about whether you ask the "right" questions in the "right" order. The big idea is to gently move the discussion toward deeper, spiritual conversations by exploring the film's story, their story, your story, and making connections to God's story.

With the big picture in mind, here are some suggestions for the flow of your post-film discussion:

1. First talk about the **film's story** and **their story**.

You can ask universal questions that apply to almost every film:

- What was your initial reaction or first impression? What did you think? How did the film make you feel?
- What was your favorite scene?
- What was the main character trying to accomplish? What was getting in his or her way?
- What was at stake if the main character didn't succeed?
- Describe a time when you have had a similar experience.

You can also ask film-specific questions. Take a look at the i-Pod Short Film Sample Questions Guide to get sample questions for each film.

Remember to ask questions and listen well. Don't think in terms of using their responses as a "quick way to get to the gospel," but, rather, follow up their responses by seeking to learn more. If you don't know what to ask, you can always say, "Wow, that's interesting! Tell me more about that."

2. Talk briefly about **your story**.

You can start by connecting something they've shared with a similar thought, emotion, or experience of your own.

- Thanks for talking about your experience of _____. I had a similar experience when _____, and as a result I felt _____.

As you share about your own life, here are a couple things to keep in mind:

- Be authentic. Talk about your own hopes, dreams, hurt, and pain. The more genuine you are, the more likely others are to be honest.
- Be brief. Better to share a 30 second snippet about your own experience than trying to communicate your entire faith story.

3. You may also be able to talk about **God's story**.

You might say something like:

"The story of this film is based in part upon an ancient story. Jesus told a story like this 2000 years ago. Do you know the story I'm referring to?"

Then, simply ask permission to tell this ancient story:

"Would you mind if I told you this story?"

Tell the story in your own words, wrapping it up by connecting the ancient story back to the story of the film.

4. Finally, they might also give you permission to share **your own faith story**.

You might say something like:

“Would you mind if I told you how the story of this film relates to my own faith journey?”

If they give you permission, share briefly how you came to know Jesus personally.

If you don't get this far in the discussion, don't worry. Your objective is to use the film to engage in meaningful dialogue and see where God takes you. Perhaps in the discussion of one film, or over the course of several discussions of various films, you'll unpack more and more of your relationship with God and how He makes a difference along certain themes brought out in the films (forgiveness, trust, truth, brokenness, rescue). Regardless of how far your discussion goes, you can consider your efforts a success whenever you trust God to take the initiative with those around you.

5. Next Steps

- Thank them for taking the time to watch and discuss the film.
- If they have expressed a desire to know God, ask if they'd allow you to explain how they can begin a relationship with Him.
- If the answer is “yes,” then of course, take the time to clearly articulate the gospel using ***Knowing God Personally*** or some similar resource.

Live Episode . . . Taking it to the Streets

In this final episode, watch Marcus & Sarah use the short film strategy in a live situation. Once you've watched them, you're ready to go!

SHORT FILM SAMPLE QUESTIONS GUIDE



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Overview

Many short-film users have found it helpful to have sample questions to choose from as they craft questions of their own. This document is a compilation of user questions that have been developed during our initial testing phase. The questions are organized under two headings:

1. Sample Detailed Discussion for the Film *LaBusqueda*.
2. Sample Questions for Other Films.

Whether you will follow the “script” more closely, or refer to it simply as a brainstorming tool, use this document as a guide to help you develop your own questions for discussing the films.

Sample Detailed Discussion for the Film *LaBusqueda* (6:29 length)

1. **The Film’s Story and Their Story** (First ask questions related to the film.)
 - What are your first impressions or initial reactions? In a word or two, what did you think of the story? How did it make you feel?
 - What was your favorite scene? What did you like about it?
 - If the father in the story was your dad, would you get off the bus?
 - If they tell you about their own positive or negative experiences, respond with thankfulness or compassion, and see if they desire to talk more. You might say:
 - a. *“I’m really glad to hear that you have that kind of relationship with your dad,” or*
 - b. *“I’m really sorry to hear that. That must have been very difficult.”*
2. **Your Story** (Relate their responses back to a personal story.)
 - *“Yeah, I wouldn’t get off the bus either. My dad left us when I was 6 years old, and I haven’t seen him a few years. We only talk on the phone a few times a year.” Or “I’d get off the bus. I’d love to see my mom again. I miss her a lot sometimes.”*
3. **God’s Story** (Introduce a story from the Bible or another spiritual illustration.)
 - *“This film is based on an ancient story that Jesus told over 2000 years ago. Perhaps you’ve heard it before.”*
 - *“A super wealthy guy had two sons. The younger son said he wanted his inheritance early. The dad gave him half of all that he owned. The son left for far away lands and fabulous parties. He had a great time, and great friends until his money ran out, and then his friends ran out.*
 - *He found himself so desperate for a job that he took one feeding pigs. When he became so hungry that the pig slop was looking mighty tasty, it occurred to him that even his father’s hired hands were eating better than he was.*
 - *Finally, he decided to go home, ask his dad to forgive him, and ask for a job as one of his farm workers.*
 - *Well, his dad saw him from a long way off, and ran to him, hugged and kissed him, gave him a new robe, new shoes, and a new ring.*

He exclaimed, "I thought you were dead but you're alive! I thought you were lost but now you are found!"

- *The son couldn't even get the words out to ask for a job because his dad was so happy he had his son back.*
- *And when Jesus told this story, he did it to tell people more about what God is like—how much He loves us and longs for us to come home.*
- *So the father in the film is really an analogy, not to your own father, but to your **Heavenly** Father, the one who **loves you** and **longs to be in relationship with you.***

4. **Your Story** (Share your personal story how you became a follower of Christ.)

- **Themed Testimony:** *"I know that I struggled with a lot of guilt and shame before I decided to get off the bus and start/renew my relationship with God. I thought I needed to be perfect before I got serious about God. Then I finally realized..."*
- **Verbal Explanation of the Gospel.** *"I found out that God loved me, and actually liked me too, but that I had a common human condition that prevented me from knowing Him: sin. I learned that sin isn't just the bad things I do, but it's an independent or rebellious attitude that says, 'God you go your way and I'll go mine.' This independent streak causes a barrier between God and I that cannot be overcome by religion, morality, or kind deeds. Like a man convicted of a crime, I've been found guilty of rebellion, and the sentence is death or separation from the God who created me. I have two choices: face the sentence myself by being separated from my creator forever, or let someone else pay my debt. God Himself came to earth in the person of Jesus, lived a sinless life, and died as a 'sacrificial lamb' to cover my death sentence. I learned that I faced a simple choice: pay my own debt, or accept the gift of Jesus' death on my behalf."*

5. **Invitation:**

"Is this decision to accept God's gift of forgiveness (sort of getting off the bus to connect with God) a decision you've already made, or something you're considering?"

"Would you like to get off the bus now?"

Sample Prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

Sample Questions for Other Films

Cntl-Z (4:01 length)

- What would you do over? Tell them what you'd do over.
- What are things you wish you had control over?
- How do you deal with stuff you don't have control over?
- To which of the characters do you most relate?
- What characteristics do you notice in the lives of those who work in the office?

Dollface (4:00 length)

- What are some one word answers about how you feel after viewing this film?
- What would it take to have people accept themselves? Others?
- How does a person act when they accept who they are and how they are made? Why?
- Where does this film hit home the most for you? Tell them where it hits home for you:
 1. "For me, it's my mom. It's like I'm always 10 pounds too heavy in her eyes."
 2. "For me, it was the transition from high school to college. In high school I thought I was pretty smart, athletic, etc. Then I got to college and realized I wasn't all the great."

La Liberte (4:48 length)

- What is this film about?
- How did this man find freedom?
- What kinds of things keep people in a trapped state of mind?
- What lies keep people from reaching their full potential?
- Where do you feel trapped?
- What would you do if you were set free?

Venia (4:14 length)

- How was the son able to forgive his father?
- What would motivate him to do it?
- Why does forgiving someone make such a difference in our own lives?
- Why does being forgiven make such a difference in our lives?
- How easy is it to forgive those who have hurt us deeply?
- How does a lack of forgiveness affect a person's life?
- What is the first step in forgiving someone?
- How will the father be affected by his son's forgiveness?
- How will the son's life be changed because he took the initiative to forgive?

Amazing (3:59 length)

- Responding with one word answers, what emotions did you see experienced by those in the film?
- What do you think was going on in the life of the man as he sat on the bench?
- What changed after the tear rolled into his eye?
- What might this action symbolize real life?
- How can we become more aware of the needs of those around us?

Bricks (4:37 length)

- Knowing that each brick symbolizes an experience that causes a reaction, what could have given the girl “SHAME” in her life?
- Why would “SHAME” weigh a person down?
- What are some typical reactions in peoples’ lives when they experience loneliness, hatred, rejection, and so on?
- What must we do to keep the heavy “Bricks” of life from weighing us down?
- When we give our bricks to someone else to carry, how does that make us feel free?

Foreshadowing (4:15 length)

- What events in life could cause despair?
- Where do we look for help when life isn’t fair?
- What does “hope” mean to you?
- Have you ever been to the brink of giving up? Tell your story.
- What helped you overcome your problem?

Going Up (12:33 length)

- In the beginning, what attitudes do the four main characters show towards each other?
- When each character really took the time to see how their fellow workers’ lives were challenging them, how did they change?
- Do you work in an environment where people treat you with understanding, or is it a difficult working situation? Would you be willing to describe it?
- What are some ways we can show understanding towards our coworkers? Friends? Neighbors? Family members?

In Time (1:28 length)

- Do you have control of your schedule?
- Are you able to say, I love my life and all that is required of me with the time I have?
- Do you feel it is important to have a purpose in your life?
- What changes would you make to see that your schedule reflects your passions in life?
- Do you feel like your life is making a difference in your sphere of influence?

The Light of Darkness (7:48 length)

- How important are first impressions in your culture? Why or why not?
- What are the factors that kept the young lady from listening to the young man?
- In light of impending danger, how forward would you be in giving a warning to someone?
- How tolerant should our world be of people who appear different? Why?

The Limited (10:50 length)

- What keeps us from reaching out to those who are destitute?
- How should we respond to the weak, the hungry, and the lame?
- If you were asked the question, “Where are you going when you die?,” how would you answer? Why?

- Do you think people are prepared for their last day on earth? Why or why not?
- What changes could you make in order to be prepared for your last breath?

Loneliness of One (0:52 length)

- What measures do some people take when they are lonely?
- How does loneliness affect a person's outlook on life?
- What are some ideas of activities a person can do to help themselves during times of loneliness?
- How could people overcome their shyness?
- Is the roommate aware of his fellow roommates' loneliness? What could he do to help his friend?

Machine (1:47 length)

- What are some words describing the kinds of messages the young man attempts to make?
- Should we care about what kind of message is on our answering machines? Why or why not?
- How can answering machines keep us from really communicating with our family and friends?
- How have machines and technology helped our society?
- How have machines and technology hindered our society?

Pillow Talk (1:25 length)

- It appears the young man is easily swayed to believe one way in the beginning, but he believes differently in the end. How did that happen?
- Do you find the practice of talking to inanimate objects offensive? Or OK?
- Is there a difference between talking out loud while driving and talking to a pillow? Why or why not?
- Are you easily swayed to believe something that you did not previously believe?
- How important is it to have personal convictions?

Select Fit (3:15 length)

- How have drugs affected this young man's life?
- What characteristics of the young man are revealed in the story?
- If not drugs, what other things become number one and take over people's lives?
- What would it take for the young man to get out of his cycle of drug addiction?
- How do drugs affect whole societies or cultures?

The Knight's Tour (5:08 length)

- What does it take to recognize we have a dark side to our personality?
- What causes a person to let the dark side of their personality take control?
- What must be done to keep our imaginations from fooling us?
- What caused the man to give up the chase?
- What do you think happened in the man's life after he stopped running from his dark side?

W[rec]k (5:13 length)

- Why do occurrences in our past life trigger bad memories that affect our life in the present?
- Why did the waitress want to keep hiding in the bathroom?
- What is the symbolic meaning of the new tape replacement?
- What might we do so that our current emotional state is healthy in spite of pain we feel or have experienced as a result of the past?
- What happens to a person when the bad memories in life are reprogrammed?