La Mission
Movie & Discussion
Small Group 101 60+ mins Race Sexuality

Materials & Media:
- The movie La Mission - http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1200272/
- A projector
- Laptop or DVD player
- Speakers
- Note/scrap paper for participants

Set Up:
- Have the movie loaded and do a soundcheck before facilitating the activity

Goals & Learning Outcomes:
- To examine the intersection of race and sexuality, age and sexuality, culture and sexuality, inter-family dynamics and expectations, homophobia and racism, and other emergent tensions from the film
- To actively engage participants and help them find what they feel is impactful or meaningful from the film, to allow them a way to talk about themes that struck them without having to talk about their personal experiences or lives
- To provide a frameworks to examine intersections of different identities and oppressions

Priming:
“We are going to be digging into a movie for the next while and after the movie finishes we are going to be spending some time debriefing and discussing the film. The movie is called La Mission and we wanted to give a quick warning that there are scenes that contain homophobic/transphobic language, as well as scenes containing physical violence. If you at any point need to take a break from the movie, please feel free. We hope the movie sparks some discussion around the intersections of race, sexuality, culture, age, and family. Please feel free to take notes during the movie about things that you want to explore more in our discussion groups.”
**Process Steps & Talking Points:**

1. Watch the movie - check in about whether people would appreciate subtitles (in Spanish or English).
2. After the movie finishes, ask people to journal for a few minutes about what thoughts or feelings came up for them while watching the movie.
3. Break into discussion groups
4. Facilitate discussion around the themes you had previously identified as relevant or important for your participant group.
5. Wrap up the activity.

**Process Questions:**

There are a lot of different themes you can focus on from this film, these are just suggested themes and suggested questions to spark discussion.

**Theme 1: Generational differences and expectations - intersection with race and sexuality**

Why did you choose to dialogue around this issue? What was particularly striking to you about this topic?

How is Jes impacted by his father’s disapproval of his sexual orientation? Why do you think he processes this the way he does? Does the way he processes relate to his identity?

When Che finds out about Jes’s sexual orientation, he interrogates Jes and accuses him of allowing himself to be “manhandled”. Based on the way that Jes was interrogated, what do you think about Che’s feelings around being gay?

What are some generational differences or disconnects that you experience that relate to race or sexuality? How have you processed and made sense of these?

**Theme 2: Race and sexual orientation and the intersection**

Why did you choose to dialogue around this issue? What was particularly striking to you about this topic?

How does Jes’s identity as a gay, Latino man impact how others view him? How he views himself? How would this be different if he were White?

How does Che’s discovery of Jes’s sexual orientation challenge his notion of masculinity? What about the challenges to Che’s ideas around race?

In what ways did the movie talk about or deal with the intersection of identities? How would things have been different if Jes were a more feminine man?

How do you see the intersection of race and sexual orientation come up in your own life?

**Theme 3: Context and the influences of gentrification and cultural expectations on sexual orientation**

Why did you choose to dialogue around this issue? What was particularly striking to you about this topic?

What cultural expectations where Che and Jes shaped by?
What role did the context of the film being set in the mission district play in the film? Benjamin Bratt (actor who plays Che) explains in an interview that his brother, Peter Bratt (the director of the film) had been confronted verbally by people from the [Latino] community saying, “Why do you want to have this gay element in our story? We’re already facing enough in the community. Why do you want to open this up?” …What do you make of these questions? Can you understand where they are coming from?

What other elements of our lives, in terms of the context or locations that we live, influence how we interact or understand our race and sexuality? What influences your understanding?

**Wrap Up:**

Close out the discussion groups intentionally by summarizing something you learned during the discussion or asking folks what questions they are going to keep considering in light of the discussion. You can also bring the large group back together to talk about what was discussed in smaller groups.

**Co-Facilitator Notes:**

If you’re working with a co-facilitator, consider together what your levels of participation are going to be in the cluster conversations groups. If you’re not working with a co-facilitator, consider whether you want to break down the large groups into smaller conversation pods, and appoint someone as the facilitator for the group, or if you want to simply do the activity as a large group.

**Challenges & Tips:**

You can structure this activity in small groups around the themes outlined in the process questions section, or you can simply have one large discussion group. It is best to consider the size of the group and how much participation you would like in the discussion, and then decide on the group size.