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Black Panther

The first Marvel movie to have a black director, a black lead actor and a majority black supporting cast, "Black Panther" made history for more than just its record-breaking box office numbers. The complex characters and strong storyline marks the first time many demographics were able to see themselves on the big screen in a big way. Use this powerful film to discuss race, power and gender roles with your audiences.

Plot Summary: "Black Panther" follows T'Challa who, after the events of "Captain America: Civil War," returns home to the isolated, technologically advanced African nation of Wakanda to take his place as King. However, when an old enemy reappears on the radar, T'Challa's mettle as King and Black Panther is tested when he is drawn into a conflict that puts the entire fate of Wakanda and the world at risk.

Programming Suggestions

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate educational programs after viewing the film "Black Panther." Its purpose is to generate discussion based on social issues found within the movie and for program participants to reflect on themes that might be pertinent to them. Therefore, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to questions in this guide.

The discussion facilitator may choose to utilize one of the following activities as a means of developing discussion:

- Teach patrons about the "real" Wakanda – Africa. Invite an International Studies professor to come provide a mini refresher course on Africa's history and current affairs before the film, including the lasting effects of colonialism in Africa, the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and more.
- Conduct a writing competition asking patrons to share what "Black Panther" means to them. Have a panel of judges, made up of members of your staff or professors from local colleges, select the winner.
- Partner with local minority organizations to host this impactful showing. Consider combining resources to invite a prominent speaker to share his or her thoughts before the film, or lead the discussion afterward.

Issues

Black History

Gender Roles

Diversity/ Multiculturalism

Leadership & Teamwork

Cultural Representation

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of diverse superheroes? How is "Black Panther" a prime example of the value of diversity in major films?

2. How does the film dive-in to race relations?

3. How do Eric Killmonger and T'Challa each view the world? How do their perspectives differ? Is one right? Why or why not?

4. Do you see similar representations of Killmonger in your community or in society as a whole?

5. How do T'Challa and Killmonger approach leadership? Are their styles effective?

6. Why did Killmonger want to take over Wakanda and its resources? Do you think his reasoning was valid? Why or why not?

7. Taking into account Killmonger's motivations, do you consider him to be a true villain?

8. Is there any way Killmonger could have ultimately become a hero if his vision came to fruition?

9. What is unique about the female characters in the film? (Dora Milaje, Shuri, Nakia)

10. What did you think of the way the movie portrays women in usually "male" roles -- i.e. tech expert, warrior general, spy, etc.? What message does that convey to viewers?

11. How can societies and communities replicate this portrayal of women in our everyday lives? How do we ensure no gender or race is limited by identity?

12. What is the message this film conveys about global responsibility? What is your opinion on Wakanda's role? Should they remain safe at all costs or help less-stable nations? Elaborate on your opinion.

13. Using your understanding of world history, what are the possible outcomes of Wakanda developing into a likely super power?

14. Based on the history of wealthy, industrialized nations' takeover of smaller, poorer nations, was Killmonger's approach to carrying out his vision any different? Why or why not?

15. Who are the main role models in the film? What character strengths do they possess and exhibit to make them a prime example?

16. How do – or should – communities ensure that everyone has what they need to survive and live healthy lives?

17. Like Ethiopia, Wakanda has never been colonized. How does the film demonstrate this idea through images and script?

18. The most precious resource in the Marvel universe – vibranium – is found in Wakanda. How is this similar to Africa's current relationship with Europe?

19. How does Wakanda preserve its own unique culture while still having access to advanced technology and westernized culture? Share specific examples.

20. How can one honor their unique culture while living within a larger community that has a different culture?