

“Excuse My Gangsta Ways” directed by Corinne Manabat
Discussion Guide

The documentary *Excuse My Gangsta Ways* is intended to educate audiences about issues of ethnic diversity and gang culture. This discussion guide utilizes a workshop model to assist facilitators in initiating and conducting a productive discussion of the film’s themes. This discussion guide is designed as a template to be used for all age groups.

Materials

White board, chalkboard or SmartBoard

Worksheet

Pens/Pencils

Step One: Whole Group Discussion

This section of the discussion should last approximately 15-20 minutes. Have all participants gather in a group. The facilitator will begin the discussion by explaining that the goal of the session is to promote understanding and empathy in order to combat gang violence and racial stereotypes, and that participants’ responses should be honest while maintaining respectful speech. Divide the white board into three vertical sections. Label the first section “Asian American.” See Figure 1.

Figure 1

Asian American		

Ask participants for words that come to mind in relation to Asian Americans. If there are Asian Americans in the audience, ask them for words that describe their experience. Write responses in the first section of the board.

Next, write “Teenagers” in the second column of the board. Ask participants for words to describe their past or current experience as adolescents. See Figure 2.

Figure 2

Asian American	Teenagers	
Response 1	Response 1	
Response 2	Response 2	
Response 3	Response 3	
Response 4	Response 4	
Etc.	Etc.	

In the last column on the board, write “Gang Member.” Once again, ask participants what for words that describe gang members and gang culture, based on news reports and personal experience. Write responses on the board. See Figure 3.

Figure 3

Asian American	Teenagers	Gang Members
Response 1	Response 1	Response 1
Response 2	Response 2	Response 2
Response 3	Response 3	Response 3
Response 4	Response 4	Response 4
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

Step 2: View the Film

This should occupy approximately 25 minutes. Ask participants to keep the following questions in mind as they view the film:

What makes gang culture attractive to teenagers?

What are the dangers of stereotypes?

Step 3: Small Group Session

This should take approximately 30-45 minutes. After the film is over, divide participants into groups of 2-5 people, depending on the total number of participants. Hand out worksheets to all participants and ask each group to come up with joint responses for the questions labeled “Group Discussion.” Give participants 20-25 minutes to write their responses. Then each group will elect one person from their group to share their responses. Return to a whole group setting and share responses, discussing similarities and differences among each groups’ responses.

Step 4: Personal Reflections

This should take approximately 15 minutes. Ask participants to review the words written on the board. Using these responses from the beginning of the session as their starting point, participants will write answers to the questions on the worksheet titled “Personal Reflections.” After giving participants 15 minutes to respond to these questions, the facilitator will ask for volunteers to share their personal reflections. Participants can choose to share their answers or keep them to themselves.

Excuse My Gangsta Ways
Discussion Worksheet

Group Discussion:

1. What problems did the family in the film face?
2. How did these problems lead Davina to join a gang?
3. What needs do teenagers attempt to fulfill by joining a gang?
4. What are more productive, positive alternatives for meeting these needs?

Personal Reflections

1. How did the film challenge my perceptions of Asian Americans?
2. How did the film challenge my perceptions of teenagers/my peers?
3. What did I learn about gang members and gang culture?
4. What are some of the dangers of ethnic stereotypes in relation to gangs?