Leader’s Hints: The Film Description is for you, not to be read to the group because it will spoil the movie. The Discussion Focus should be presented to the group prior to watching the movie so they can know some of what to focus on. Allow the group immediately after the film to give their own casual assessment (“that was great” or “I didn’t think it would end that way”). When the personal assessments have died out begin with the discussion questions. The biggest mistake most discussion leaders make is that they do not allow enough silence. Give people time to think it through. Give encouraging words after someone shares but avoid comments that designate their statements as “right” or “wrong”. Encourage multiple answers to the same questions. Statements like, “That is really insightful, what does someone else think?” encourage others to expand on the answer. Be sure to read through the questions ahead of time and when personal examples are asked for think of one for yourself in case no one responds. When you are willing to share it really encourages others to open up. Be very careful to avoid sending the message to the group that you hold all the answers. The benefit of group discussion comes from the individual struggle to find truth for themselves not in the group landing on consensus. In other words, you may end up agreeing to disagree and that is fine. Keep the environment open and non-judgmental, we all come to truth in faith at our own speed. Allow some struggles to remain in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Please always end in a prayer.

McFarland USA—2015, PG, Runtime 129 min.

Film Description: A struggling coach and teacher who has had to move around for different incidents in his career, finally comes to one of the poorest cities in America-McFarland, California. There he discovers buried potential among several high school boys and slowly turns them into championship runners and brings them closer than even he could ever imagine.

Content Advisory: Rated PG for thematic material, some violence and language

Discussion Focus: Success

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Additional copies at www.wesleyumc.net at Quick Links Movie Nights
1. What do you think was Coach White’s understanding of success at the beginning of the movie?

2. How do you think the students at McFarland define success for themselves? What factors have shaped this understanding?

3. When he was first given the job in McFarland, do you think that Coach White felt that success would be found in escaping that situation or in changing that situation?

4. The Bible tells us that God is in the business of reconciliation, which is a big word that means he takes things that are broken and sets them right again. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). He invites us to be a part of this mission too. That can look like helping people who are in trouble, fixing broken relationships with people, or helping people who don’t have much hope in their hearts and giving them the hope that knowing God gives to us.

   Do you think it is usually easier to run away from a bad situation or to stay there and help to make it right?

5. Coach White stepped into a not so good situation and at first he just wanted to get away from it. Why did he want to move his family away from McFarland?

6. What happened to make him change his mind and decide to stay and try to make things better for the students on his team?

7. A smart person said “no matter what wrong thing has happened, there is a right next thing to do”. What does that mean to you?

   Can you think of a the right next thing you could do in a not so good situation right now?

   Prayer: Thank you God that you invite us to be a part of the reconciliation, the making things right that you are doing in this world. Please start by making things right inside my own heart. Help me to see how I can be a part of making things right in your world.