

## Discussion Questions for *Gandhi*

**Some of the major characters to watch for:** Mohandas Gandhi (aka “Mahatma” or “Bapu”), Kasturba Gandhi (his wife), Charlie Andrews (clergyman), Mohammed Jinnah (leader of the Muslim faction), Pandit Nehru (leader of the Hindu faction—also called “Pandi-gi”), Sardar Patel (another Hindu leader), General Jan Smuts, General Reginald Dyer (the British commander who led the Massacre at Amritsar), Mirabehn (Miss Slade), Vince Walker (New York Times reporter)

1. Gandhi was a truly remarkable man and one of the most influential leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, no less an intellect than Albert Einstein said about him: “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.” Why him, this small, unassuming man? What qualities caused tens of millions to follow him in his mission to liberate India from the British?
2. Consider Gandhi’s speech (about 30 minutes into the film) to the crowd regarding General Smuts’s new law (fingerprinting Indians, only Christian marriage will be considered valid, police can enter any home without warrant, etc.). The crowd is outraged and cries out for revenge and violence as a response to the British. This is a pivotal moment in Gandhi’s leadership. What does he do to get them to agree to a non-violent response? Why do they follow him?
3. Consider Gandhi’s response to the other injustices depicted in the film (e.g., his burning of the passes in South Africa that symbolize second-class citizenship, his request that the British leave the country after the Massacre at Amritsar, his call for a general strike—a “day of prayer and fasting”—in response to an unjust law, his refusal to pay bail after an unjust arrest, his fasts to compel the Indian people to change, his call to burn and boycott British-made clothing, his decision to produce salt in defiance of the British monopoly on salt manufacturing). What common thread, if any, do we see in these responses that might be instructive for us as leaders?

