

# THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON

*Available on Digital November 5, 2019.*

*On Blu-ray and DVD November 12.*



## FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE

**LIONSGATE**



# THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON

## Discussion Guide

### A POWERFUL STORY

*The Peanut Butter Falcon* is an adventure story set in the world of a modern Mark Twain. The film begins when Zak (Zack Gottsagen), a young man with Down syndrome, runs away from a nursing home to chase his dream of attending the wrestling school of The Salt Water Redneck and becoming a professional wrestler. Through circumstances beyond their control, Tyler (Shia LaBeouf), a small-time outlaw on the run, becomes Zak's unlikely coach and ally. Together they wind through deltas, elude capture, drink whisky, find God, catch fish, and convince Eleanor (Dakota Johnson), a kind nursing home employee with a story of her own, to join them on their journey.

Writer/directors Michael Schwartz and Tyler Nilson wrote *The Peanut Butter Falcon* specifically for Zack Gottsagen, an actor with Down syndrome, after they met him at a camp for actors with disabilities and were inspired by his fierce determination to become a leading man in Hollywood.



### AN IMPORTANT DISCUSSION

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate viewers' conversations about *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, reflecting on the themes explored in the film and their relevance for those with an interest in the topics of Down syndrome, other developmental differences, disability rights, representation of people with disabilities in media and entertainment, and more.

To organize a conversation with your community, we suggest the following steps:

#### 1. Coordinate a group to watch the film together.

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#### 2. After viewing the film, plan a conversation to discuss the relevant issues explored in the film.

#### Who will participate?

The more, the merrier! We encourage you to invite your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, and community members. Consider reaching out to local Down syndrome

groups, networks, or nonprofits, and any experts or people in your area who work in the disability community.

### **Where will your discussion take place?**

You can host a post-screening discussion at your home, a friend's home, or at an office, school, or community venue. This discussion can be as formal or informal as you would like.

### **Who will facilitate the discussion?**

You may choose a community member or local expert to facilitate the discussion, or volunteer yourself! The role of the facilitator is to keep the discussion on track and spur an interesting dialogue. Another option, particularly in larger discussion groups, is to have a small group of people co-lead the conversation.

## **3. Spread the word about your discussion!**

Get the word out through social media, email, phone, or word-of-mouth. Consider posting about the discussion in local listservs, Facebook groups, or Nextdoor networks.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to questions in this guide. Encourage participants to share their perspectives, even if they differ from the majority. The questions below are ideas to begin your discussion, and you can add and adjust questions based on the direction of your conversation and the interests of your group.

- What moment in the film did you find the most powerful or inspiring? Why?
- What do you hope viewers will take away from the film? How might seeing characters like Zak (and actors like Zack Gottsagen) contribute to public awareness about issues related to Down syndrome?
- There is a powerful scene on the raft where Tyler (played by Shia LeBeouf) scolds Eleanor (played by Dakota Johnson) for the way she treats Zak, highlighting the limitations that people have projected on to him. How does Tyler help him break free of those limitations throughout their friendship? Does his belief in Zak change the way others view him?
- There is a line towards the beginning of the film: "Friends are the family you choose." This is a theme throughout the film, as Zak eventually refers to Tyler and Eleanor as his family. What are the elements of family the film portrays, whether biological or chosen?
- The character of Eleanor struggles as a mentor to, and advocate for, someone with Down syndrome. Based on your own experience or that of others you may know, what are the most helpful things for personal advocates to do or avoid when communicating with others?
- What else do you feel is important to note about this story?

## RESOURCE LIST

Trailer:

<https://youtu.be/fS1shvZ2ly0>

Website:

<https://www.lionsgate.com/movies/the-peanut-butter-falcon>

## SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to share your experience on social media!

Join the conversation online:  
#ThePeanutButterFalcon

Facebook:

@ThePeanutButterFalconMovie

Twitter:

@tpbfalcon

Instagram:

@PeanutButterFalcon

### Sample Social Media Posts

- **Twitter:** Join us on [day of week, time, and location], for a special viewing and discussion of @tpbfalcon—a story of adventure, friendship, and acceptance written for its star, an actor with Down syndrome!
- **Instagram:** Join us on [day of week, time, and location], for a special viewing and discussion of @PeanutButterFalcon—a story of adventure, friendship, and acceptance written for its star, an actor with Down syndrome!
- **Facebook:** We're hosting a special viewing and discussion of @ThePeanutButterFalconMovie—a story of adventure, friendship, and acceptance written for its star, an actor with Down syndrome! Join us, or consider hosting your own watch party!