



The Crusades in Popular Culture | Video Discussion Curriculum

Audience and Format

This video is appropriate for use in the following learning situations:

- Middle or High School Social Studies classrooms (7th or 10th grade, particularly)
- College, University or Seminary classrooms
- Congregational adult or high school education programs
- Adult learning groups (e.g., senior centers)

Plan for a 30 to 60 minute class period. The video is 12.5 minutes long; you can adjust the conversation and activities to fit your time frame and audience.

Learning Goals

- Recognize the current use of Crusader imagery
- Understand the deep influence of history on current thinking and practices
- Consider how (or if) current use of Crusader imagery contributes to a culture of violence
- Consider how we (individually and collectively) can counter the “Crusader Mentality”

Suggested Program

WARM UP ACTIVITY (5 TO 10 MINUTES)

With your full group or in pairs, ask your group to consider either of the following questions:

- What do you think of when you hear the word “Crusades”? What images and emotions come to mind?
- Do a quick Google search of “Crusades.” What do you see? Do you find historical or cultural uses?

INTRODUCE VIDEO (2 MINUTES)

Share with your audience the following information:

This video was produced by ICJS, the Institute for Islamic, Christian and Jewish Studies, to help us consider the impact of the Crusades on our current culture. There are four parts to the video:

- Crusades in Popular Culture
- The History
- The Crusader Mentality
- Modern World Examples

Following the video, we’ll discuss what we heard.

VIEW VIDEO (12.5 MINUTES)

Available on the [ICJS web site](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 to 20 minutes):

1. What, if anything, surprised you about this video and its message?
2. Do you think the use of Crusader imagery and/or language today is offensive? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the notion of sacred violence. What is so sacred to you that you would defend it with violence? Do you think violence is necessary to support or justify a greater good? What happens when we value ideas or culture more than people?
4. Why is it problematic to describe the War on Terrorism as a crusade?
5. How would you define a “Crusader mentality?” What are some possible negative results of such an attitude?
6. How can dialogue and/or encounters with other people different than us help to counter the Crusader mentality? Do you have an example where your perspective has changed because of study or encounter with people of a different religion?
7. Matt Taylor suggests that multiethnic, multiracial “pluralistic democracies” can be a way forward to counter the Crusader mentality? Do you agree?

CLOSING ACTIVITY (5 minutes):

- ❖ Think about your own life and how you use or see Crusader language or the Crusader mentality. How, if at all, might you approach these situations differently in the future?
- ❖ Choose one of these possible actions to address the Crusader mentality and discuss how you could use it in your own life or community:
 - In conversation with a friend or colleague, question the deeply-embedded use of violence in our culture and speech. Ask questions when you hear comments based in the Crusader Mentality.
 - Participate in interreligious, interfaith, or multiracial/multiethnic conversations or advocacy groups. Consider how/if your community could start (or join) such a group.
 - Continue learning about how the history of violence influences current culture.
 - Study the “Debate vs. Dialogue” video or PDF highlighted below and consider where you can apply these skills now.

Extend the Conversation

Consider the 10 tips for conversation based on dialogue, not debate. See the short video or PDF at icjs.org/debate-vs-dialogue

View 3-part ICJS Course: [The Crusades: Are we prisoners of our interreligious history?](#)