Discussion Guide: *McFarland USA*

*McFarland USA* is the story of cross-country coach Jim White who transforms a team of athletes in a small California town into championship contenders. Themes presented in this film include teamwork, hard work, and respect.

Take advantage of the teachable moments presented in *McFarland USA* by using these questions to help guide a discussion with your team or children.

1.) *McFarland USA* begins with Jim chastising his football team for a bad first half. One of his player’s mouths off to which Jim chucks a cleat at him and injures him. How should Jim have behaved differently? What’s a better way to motivate a poorly performing team during halftime?

2.) Why do you think Jim is so interested in starting a cross-country team? Are his intentions only with the athletes in mind?

3.) Why does Jim choose to work in the field with the boys? What does it teach him?

4.) What advantages do the McFarland boys have when running, despite their many disadvantages?

5.) Consider Jim’s journey as a coach throughout the film and name 3 ways in which he changes.

6.) What role does teamwork play in McFarland’s success?

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