

# LOOSING LAZZARUS LEADERS

## LEADER GUIDE

SEVEN WAYS TO DECONSTRUCT PERSONAL AND STRUCTURAL RACISM FROM JOHN 11

# LOOSING LAZARUS LEADERS

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT CAN I DO?

The Loosing Lazarus Leader Guide offers group exercises, additional questions, definitions of key terms, and a number of resources to help those who lead teams or small groups interested in discussing matters of race from a Christian perspective. The Guide is to be used in conjunction with the reflection and discussion questions that conclude each lesson.

**Group Assignment:** Watch the [video](#) on Race in America from VeggieTales creator Phil Vischer. Take personal notes and discuss the questions below.

01. Did you learn anything new (Or were you reminded of something you already knew) from this video?
02. What information in this video shocked you?
03. Does it matter more or less that a white person shared this information?
04. What do you now see clearer in regard to institutional racism?
05. What can you do with this information?

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**LESSON 1:**  
JESUS WENT, SO I  
MUST GO!

- ➔ **Exercise One:** *Go Ride with a Police Officer.* Most police precincts offer local citizens the opportunity to take rides with them through the communities they serve. This is a great opportunity to be exposed to other socio-economic realities while asking questions about neighborhood crime tendencies, police procedures, legal processes, and community relationships. Have discussions about the things you saw, learned, and felt.
- ➔ **Exercise Two:** *Go and Visit the Local Jail or Prison.* Many communities allow civilians to tour the local jail or correctional facilities for the purposes of learning and advocacy. Take note of the racial make-up of the population and ask questions regarding sentencing fairness, the cash-bail system, and the parole system. Have discussions about the things you saw, learned, and felt.
- ➔ **Exercise Three:** *Go and Visit the Historic Sites in Your Area.* Go to the historically black colleges and universities near you and take a tour. Visit lynching sites and the local African American museum. Visit sites that call attention to the black struggle for human decency and civil rights in your community. Have discussions about the things you saw, learned, and felt.
- ➔ **Exercise Four:** *Go and Visit a Historically Black Church.* On a Sunday morning, go and worship with a black church or a multiracial church led by a black pastor. Discuss your observations and the things you saw, learned, and felt.

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**LESSON 2:**  
JESUS WEPT, SO I  
MUST FEEL!

01. Discuss the following statements from people who believed in, enforced, and fought for the subjugation of Africans in America as slaves:

*"The new Constitution has put at rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution—African slavery as it exists among us—the proper status of the Negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution... Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition." Vice President of the Confederate States of America, Alexander Stephens from "The Cornerstone Speech," March 21, 1861.*

*"Servitude is the only agency through which Christianity has reached that degraded race, the only means by which they have been civilized and elevated." Politician and President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis, October 11, 1858*

*"As a people we are fighting to maintain the Heaven-ordained supremacy of the white man over the inferior or colored race." William Tappan Thompson, Editorial, April 1863 Savannah Morning News*

How do these statements make you feel? Which ones stand out to you the most and why?

02. Discuss the following statements from former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass:

*"Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave."*

*"The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery."*

*“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”*

*“I love the pure, peaceable and impartial Christianity of Christ; I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity.”*

*“What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloodier, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.”*

**How do these statements make you feel? Which ones stand out to you the most and why?**

03. Discuss the following statements from Martin Luther King, Jr.:

*“It was argued that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah’s curse upon the children of Ham... The blasphemy of the whole ugly process was that the white man ended up making God his partner in the exploitation of the Negro.”*

*“White America must see that no other ethnic group has been a slave on American soil. That is one thing that other immigrant groups haven’t had to face. The other thing is that the color became a stigma. American society made the Negroes’ color a stigma.”*

To see the rest of Dr. King’s 2-minute interview with NBC News, click [here](#).

**How do these statements make you feel? Which one stands out to you the most and why?**

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**LESSON 3:**  
JESUS LED, SO I  
MUST LEAD!

Jesus led His disciples into Bethany in order to minister to the family of Lazarus. As servant leaders, Jesus and His disciples used their power to encourage those who had less power in that moment. Leaders are people who do more giving than receiving. Leaders lift up others by redistributing some of their resources to the benefit of others. Leaders use their God-given privilege to serve those who are less privileged.

## Group Exercise: *The Privilege Line*

Everyone has some level of privilege (i.e. power, advantages, rights, opportunities, and benefits) in this country. The possession of privilege is a gift from God (*see 1 Corinthians 4:7*). Therefore, the possessor of privilege should not feel guilty for being blessed by God, but should intentionally and actively seek ways to uplift and empower others who are less advantaged. This is what Jesus Christ did with His power, and we are to follow in His steps. The truth is, some people have more privilege than others based on the racist caste system upon which America was built and still operates.

The Privilege Line is a group activity designed to visibly expose the differential realities of privilege in America for the purposes of balancing the scales, leveling the playing field, and assuring equal access to opportunity for all, regardless of race. This exercise will remind the participants that they can use their privileges individually and collectively to make our communities and country a more just society.

**Instructions:** *Gather a racially diverse group of people together, preferably more than ten and less than twenty-five, and have them form a straight line across the room. Have the participants stand an arm's length apart with space behind them and in front of them for stepping forward and backward. The participants are to remain silent throughout the exercise, while stepping backward or forward based on an immediate answer to each question.*

The leader reads the following statements out loud to the group:

- » If either of your parents graduated from college, take one step forward.
- » If you have been divorced or impacted by divorce, take one step backward.
- » If there have been times in your life when you went without a meal because there was no food in the house, take one step backward.
- » If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step forward.
- » If you grew up in an urban setting, take one step backward.
- » If you or a family member ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.
- » If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because you looked suspicious, take one step backward.
- » If you were taught your people's history in elementary school, take one step forward.
- » If your ancestors were forced to come to the United States against their will, take one step backward.
- » If your family took regular vacations growing up, take one step forward.
- » If someone in your immediate family has ever gone to jail or prison, take one step backward.
- » If you are a white male, take one step forward.
- » If your family was never evicted from a home, take one step forward.
- » If you ever felt unsafe walking alone at night in your neighborhood, take one step backward.
- » If your parents bought you a car, take one step forward.
- » If you feel anxiety when followed by the police in your car or in a store, take one step backward.
- » If you ever received "the talk" or had to give "the talk" to your children about how to behave when the police stop you, take one step backward.
- » If your parents worked multiple jobs at the same time to provide for the family, take one step backward.
- » If your childhood home had over fifty books in it, take one step forward.
- » If your parents read to you as a child, take one step forward.

- » If you have ever been called racial slurs by people outside of your racial group, take one step backward.
- » If you traveled out of the country before your 18th birthday, take one step forward.
- » If your parents rented their homes while you were growing up, take one step backward.
- » If your family had health insurance while you were growing up, take one step forward.
- » If you ever felt inferior because of your race, take one step backward.
- » If you ever received a job because of a family connection, take one step forward.

*While everyone is still standing in various places across the room, tell them to silently look around and make mental observations. Gather together in a group and ask the participants to discuss how they felt about the exercise and what it taught them about privilege. Finally, ask the participants what they each can do to lead others and provide access to opportunities for those who are less privileged.*

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**LESSON 4:**  
JESUS TAUGHT, SO I  
MUST TEACH!

Group Assignment: Read Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail."

Answer the following questions:

01. What did you learn from this historic letter?
02. In terms of race relations, how much has changed since 1963 to the present?
03. You may have to research this, but who did Dr. King write this letter to originally? What does that say to you?
04. The white moderates and local ministers in Birmingham questioned Dr. King's non-violent methodology of resisting injustice through organized, peaceful protest.
05. It's obvious that when Colin Kaepernick and other black athletes started kneeling in 2016 during the National Anthem to protest police brutality, many white people had a problem with that method, including President Trump. When black people march with Black Lives Matter in the streets to protest police brutality, many white people have had a problem with that method of resistance. Is there a method of resisting or protesting police brutality and social injustice that black people can utilize that white people in general will agree with? Why has understanding and accepting black people protesting been generally difficult for many white people?
06. In this letter, Dr. King said that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." There are some people who believe that systemic injustice is a thing of the past and that it no longer exists. If that is truly the case, when did institutional racism end? How did it end? Who made it end? How do we know it ended? What if people say it has ended? Should we believe them even if we don't experience it?

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**LESSON 5:**  
JESUS PRAYED, SO I  
MUST PRAY!

- ➔ **Exercise One:** Have a time of prayer for the families of the latest victims of police brutality in your community and across the country. Take time to speak the names of the victims, and ask God to cause rivers of righteousness to flow in the streets instead of the blood of black men and women in particular.
- ➔ **Exercise Two:** Host or attend a public Prayer Vigil in your community for the families of black victims who were killed by the police, both locally and nationally. Invite members of the clergy, community leaders, law enforcement, and the local media to attend and take part from the platform. You can have people pray, light candles, and read the names of the victims.
- ➔ **Exercise Three:** Write and send letters to the people in your community and abroad who lost family members due to police brutality. Let them know you are praying for them.
- ➔ **Exercise Four:** Since most police departments have chaplains, reach out to the chaplain and ask how you can pray for him or her. Many of these people are volunteers and they are often overwhelmed with the things they see and hear, especially after they accompany the police on death notice visits. In other words, pray for the people who care for hurting police officers and local citizens.

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**LESSON 6:**  
JESUS SPOKE, SO I  
MUST SPEAK!

- ➔ **Exercise One:** Publicly denounce racism.
- ➔ **Exercise Two:** Gather a group of family members and friends at your kitchen table and share some of the things that you are learning thus far from the Loosing Lazarus series.
- ➔ **Exercise Three:** Prepare a Biblical message to teach on racial justice. What would your text and talking points be? What recourse or push back would you expect to receive? How would you answer those questions?
- ➔ **Exercise Four:** Find a local racial justice issue that you can speak up about in your community and call attention to on your social media pages.

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**LESSON 7:**  
JESUS EMPOWERED, SO I  
MUST EMPOWER!



**Exercise One:** Look at the leadership team, governing body, board, or primary stakeholders of your business, organization, or church, and determine if it is homogeneous, diverse, inclusive, and empowering.

- » 0 = Homogeneity is when the same ethnic group comprises the make-up of the leadership team.
- » 1 = Diversity is when multiple ethnic groups comprise the make-up of the leadership team.
- » 2 = Inclusion is when representatives from multiple ethnic groups serve in legitimate places of power on the leadership team.
- » 3 = Empowerment is when a representative from a different ethnic group has the ability to hold the highest position on the team or the access and opportunity to own the organization.

What number is your business' leadership team? What number is your church's leadership team? What number is your organization's leadership team?

What would it take to move to the next level of either diversity, inclusion, or empowerment?



**Exercise Two:** After the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead, he was able to sit down at the table with Jesus. This was an intentional act of inclusion and empowerment on the Lord's part. Unless you believe that minorities aren't qualified enough to do what you do or what needs to be done, what are some practical and intentional things you can do in order to seat someone who is black or of another ethnic group at the decision-making table in your company, organization, or church? What would be some of the advantages of doing this?



**Exercise Three:** It's been said that we have been blessed to be a blessing. Is there someone the Lord has brought across your path from the minority community in whom you can personally invest some of your time, wisdom, and resources?

- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can mentor?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can hire?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can promote?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can give more responsibility to?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can send to school or pay for their schooling?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can help get a business off the ground?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can send to a conference?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can help get housing or transportation for?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can get out of jail or keep from going there?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can offer to publish?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can make a phone call for or endorse in some way?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can write a letter for that will go a long way?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can introduce to one of your clients or connections?
- » Is there a black or minority led church that you can help plant, attend, or finance?
- » Is there someone black or of another ethnicity that you can share your God-given platform with?

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**WRAP-UP:**  
**GET YOUR CHAINSAWS!**

## Group Discussion:

01. What matter of racial injustice is right in front of your eyes that you can address right now and help overcome?
02. What unjust racial policy can you expose and vote against? What racial justice policy can you vote for (i.e. mass incarceration and criminal justice reform) in order to see a new day?
03. How can you participate in the modern day Civil Rights Movement?
04. Is there a monument in your community of a specific member of the Confederacy that you can assist in having removed?
05. Is there a Confederate flag in your community you can get taken down?
06. Is there a school board you can work on or work with to ensure that all of the students in the district are treated equally and fairly?
07. Is there a public official you can hold accountable for his or her actions when racism is detected in their actions, social media posts, and treatment of certain people?
08. Is there a colleague, co-worker, or family member you can confront who is saying or doing racist things?
09. Is there a black church or a multiracial church led by a black pastor that is committed to the Gospel expressing itself through racial justice that you can join?
10. Is there a black business you can regularly patronize and support so as to help channel money into the black community?

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## GLOSSARY OF RACE RELATED TERMS

**Advocate:** An advocate is a person who stands up, shows up, and speaks up for those who are underserved, disadvantaged, and marginalized in society.

**Black Codes:** Black Codes were restrictive laws that were put in place by local governments in the south as a way to limit the freedom of former slaves, and to ensure a cheap labor force once slavery was abolished after the Civil War in 1865. Black Codes determined where formerly enslaved blacks could work and for how much compensation. Black children could even be seized for cheap labor.

**Black Liberation Theology:** Black Liberation Theology views several aspects of the Orthodox Christian faith as the means by which to free and liberate black people from multiple forms of political, social, economic and religious oppression. By relying on the Biblical story of the children of Israel being freed from Egyptian slavery after 400 years, to observing the similarities between the mistreatment of Jesus by the government and religious systems of the day with the modern day struggle of Black Americans, Black Liberation Theology argues that God wants all of His children to be free.

**Black Lives Matter:** Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a decentralized political and social movement founded in 2013 after the murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman. BLM advocates for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality and all racially motivated violence against black people.

**Cash Bail System:** Cash bail is used as a guarantee that a defendant will return to court for hearings or trial. Judges have a broad discretion to raise, lower, or waive the bail. However, bail practices are frequently discriminatory against Black and Latino men who are given higher bail amounts on average than white men. If a defendant is unable to pay the bail amount, he or she will either be forced to remain in jail or acquire the services of a private bond company.

**Critical Race Theory:** Critical Race Theory (CRT) began in the 1970's as a way to critique, explain, and overcome racial inequities in society. A number of lawyers and activists realized the advances of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's were being stalled or downright denied and rolled back. CRT offers critiques on what is seen as oppressive abuses of power, and proposes that White Supremacy and racial difference are at the center of racial injustice. CRT seeks human liberation through a particular emphasis on race and racism. Although not a Christian based movement, CRT addresses many noteworthy subjects like morality and justice, themes that are consistent with the Christian faith.

**Convict Leasing:** Convict Leasing occurred when former slaves were found guilty of petty crimes and were arrested. The language of the 13th Amendment made it possible to lease out imprisoned blacks for labor. Convict leasing is the seminal unjust practice of targeting black men for prison that would lead to today's problems of racial profiling, unfair and harsh sentencing, mass incarceration, the school to prison pipeline, and the prison for profit industry.

**Gentrification:** Gentrification is the process of renovating and improving a district or neighborhood so that it conforms to middle-class home buyers and businesses. As a result of rising property taxes, rents, mortgages, the original members of the community are forced to undergo displacement. Gentrification is housing, economic, and health issues that affect a community's history and culture while reducing social capital.

**Gospel:** The Gospel is the good news for all people that out of love, God made a way to forgive and reconcile sinners to Himself through the substitutionary death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross and through His bodily resurrection. The Gospel deals with reconciling a sinful person's relationship with God, and it also plays out in reconciling Jews and Gentiles to live in harmony with one another through the cross of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is belief and action. It is a positioning and an orientation by which to live. The Gospel is spiritual and social. It is personal and communal. At the cross, justice is meted out to God, and righteousness is imputed out to believing sinners. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's message and means of bringing warring people together in the body of Christ.

**Implicit Bias:** Implicit Bias is an implied belief about other people, usually of another ethnicity or social status, that is usually based on false information, prejudice, and stereotyping. Every person alive must deal with social conditioning that creates implicit, mental biases. Implicit bias can be detrimental to human progress when not acknowledged and intentionally corrected.

**Jim Crow Laws:** Named after a black minstrel show character, Jim Crow Laws were a collection of local and state laws that legalized racial segregation for approximately 100 years. These laws marginalized black Americans by denying them the right to vote, equal access to public services, gainful employment opportunities, and a quality education.

**Justice:** Justice is the action of doing what is legally and morally right towards all people at all times. Injustice is the action of doing what is legally and morally wrong against certain people groups most of the time. Justice is love in action.

**Ku Klux Klan:** The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is a white supremacist group originally comprised of Confederate veterans. The KKK was founded in Pulaski, TN in 1865 for the purpose of violently terrorizing black people and their communities in order to hinder black advancement in the broader society. The first Grand Wizard of the KKK was Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The KKK is still in existence today, and those who hold to its philosophy of white supremacy operate with more sophistication than in the past.

**Race:** In America and in many parts of the world, race is a social construct that groups people together based on shared physical traits, with skin color being the primary determining factor.

**Racialization:** Racialization is the realization that everything in American culture and society is based upon race. Where we live, work, shop, worship, and go to school are all affected and infected by race. Who we marry and how we raise our children are impacted by race. A racialized society is one where we are never unaware of the race of the people we interact with, and that knowledge conditions us to either deal positively or negatively with others of different ethnicities.

**Racism:** Racism is a system of advantages and disadvantages based on skin color or ethnicity. Racism is when prejudice is combined with the abuse and misuse of institutional power. Racism has been a part of the American culture ever since the first European colonists arrived in 1619. Racism is usually accompanied with threats, violence, and murder. To be a racist, a person must have access to institutional or structural power so as to intentionally use it against people of other ethnic groups for the purposes of hindering their social progress and empowerment.

**Social Justice:** Social Justice is the proper distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Proponents of social justice are quick to call out and combat the improper acquisition and holding of political, judicial, and economic power.

**Structural, Systemic, or Institutional Racism:** Structural, Systemic or Institutional Racism is when racist practices against non-white people are intentionally and legally embedded within all institutions of American life, and these discrepancies based on race are often invisible to most white people. Whereas individual racism is usually overt and obvious to most, institutional racism is usually covert and harder to identify, especially to the beneficiaries of the systems. Structural racism can be detected through unjust policies, practices, attitudes, and behaviors that amount to discrimination through prejudice, biases, thoughtlessness, ignorance, and stereotyping which undercut the advancement of racial minorities within the system. Since America's inception, racism against ethnic minorities has existed in every institution, those being the government, military, health, education, law enforcement, legal, religion, banking, real estate, business, politics, communications, media, athletics, and entertainment.

**The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution:** The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution says, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” (Ratified in 1865)

**White Privilege:** White Privilege is the societal advantages that white people possess strictly on face value due to the color of their skin. White privilege gives white people presumed societal advantages, and the inherent freedom to speak, work, move, buy, live, and interact with law enforcement and legal proceedings with very little fear, if any. White privilege is when white people and the white experience are centered as the normal standard for American life. White privilege also expresses itself as the ability for white people to walk away from racial discomfort whenever they want to.

**White Supremacy:** White Supremacy is the false belief that white people are a superior race and should therefore dominate society to exclusion and detriment of other racial groups. White supremacy was used to justify the enslavement, discrimination, and segregation of Africans in America for 400 years. Through the perversion of the Christian religion, the myth of white supremacy was fueled and it became deeply embedded in hearts and systems in America.

### Race and Racial Justice Book List

- » *Be The Bridge* by Latasha Morrison
- » *Narrative of the Life* of Frederick Douglass
- » *The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As told to Alex Haley*
- » *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Dubois
- » *Divided By Faith* by Michael Emerson
- » *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby
- » *White Awake* by Daniel Hill
- » *Oneness Embraced* by Tony Evans
- » *White Too Long* by Robert Jones
- » *One But Not the Same* by Chris Williamson
- » *Woke Church* by Eric Mason
- » *Free Cyntoia* by Cyntoia Brown-Long
- » *Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King
- » *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
- » *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson
- » *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James Cone
- » *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo
- » *Compassion & Conviction* by Justin Giboney, Michael Wear, and Chris Butler
- » *Rediscipling the White Church* by David Swanson
- » *Gracism* by David Anderson
- » *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
- » *Stride Toward Freedom* by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- » *Right Color, Wrong Culture* by Brian Loritts
- » *Reconciliation Blues* by Edward Gilbreath
- » *Makes Me Wanna Holler* by Nathan McCall
- » *Free At Last?* By Carl Ellis
- » *America's Original Sin* by Jim Wallis
- » *For God So Loved the World* by Walter Strickland and Daniel Hartman

**Race Related Movie and Documentary List**

- » *13th Documentary*
- » *Malcolm X*
- » *Selma*
- » *I Am Not Your Negro Documentary*
- » *Roots*
- » *When They See Us*
- » *A Time To Kill*
- » *Mississippi Burning*
- » *Eyes on the Prize Documentary*
- » *Amistad*
- » *Glory*
- » *Harriet*
- » *Remember the Titans*
- » *Twelve Years a Slave*
- » *Men of Honor*
- » *The Color Purple*
- » *When We Were Kings Documentary*