

WELCOME

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the two lead characters: Bilal and Simon. What qualities do these men have in common? How are they different?
2. The city of Calais plays an integral role in this story. Describe the way Calais is shot and depicted in **WELCOME**. How does director Philippe Lioret use the city as a character in this story?
3. Discuss Simon's character arc:
 - a. What motivates him to help Bilal in the beginning of the film?
 - b. What causes his motivation to change? At what point in the film does this change occur?
 - c. In a scene near the end of the film, by the port, Simon offers his jacket to Bilal – do you think this gesture is influenced by Marion's presence as a volunteer?
4. In an interview, Lioret commented on working with Vincent Lindon (Simon): "He is able to convey feelings with just a simple movement or posture. Often, thanks to him, you can do away with a word or a phrase." How else would you describe Lindon's acting? What does he bring to the role of Simon?
5. Compare the issues in **WELCOME** with the immigration issues currently being debated in the U.S. In what way is Bilal's story relevant here?
6. **WELCOME** is stirring significant controversy in France, where current law makes helping an illegal migrant a criminal offence. In an effort to reform this "code des étrangers" (Code for Foreigners), the Socialist Party organized a screening of the film at the National Assembly in March. Party leader Martine Aubry has stated: "Yes, we must punish those who make money out of [the refugee's] misery, but no, we must not punish solidarity. We should even try and develop it." Do you agree with this statement? Do you think this law should be reformed? If so, how would you alter it?