
Circle of Sisterhood 101

Documentary Viewing Guide

Half The Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

One World. One Sisterhood. ®



Please use this document as a discussion guide for viewing all or parts of the Half The Sky four hour documentary or for viewing the Salon Toolkit, which is the 45 minutes condensed version of the documentary distributed by Half the Sky.

Advanced Prep: Become familiar with the Circle of Sisterhood by visiting our website. There you will find resource material to use at your event and be able to familiarize yourself with the impact CoS is having around the world. Go to impact area of the website for info: <https://circleofsisterhood.org/our-reach/>

As you will see, the end of the video fades away from a girl and simply ends. Use this opportunity to introduce your efforts to be part of the solution. Here is an example of a statement to make immediately following the documentary:

Script:

As you can see, girls and women in the developing world face significant brutality and oppression and often have limited access to education of any kind, and education is the answer to many of the problems these women face. What we would additionally learn from the full documentary or after reading the book “Half the Sky” is:

- That a mother would have to resort to selling her 10-year-old daughter for \$300 to feed the rest of the family. Often, in a matter of days, that young girl could become a sex slave in another country, held prisoner in a locked room, forced to remain naked to discourage her escape, and drugged into submission so she could be raped 10 to 15 times a day ... for the rest of her life.
- That in some countries a man can set his wife on fire because she has “dishonored” the family or because he simply wants a new wife — with little repercussion.
- That a male child soldier in the Congo is trained to believe it’s his right to rape any woman he chooses.
- That barely literate parents could believe that educating a daughter is pointless; therefore, a girl who wants to learn to read and write is sentenced to poverty by her own culture.

A quote from the book states: “One study after another has shown that educating girls is one of the most effective ways to fight poverty. Schooling is often a precondition for girls and women to stand up against injustice, and for women to be integrated into the economy. Until women are numerate and literate, it is difficult for them to start businesses or contribute meaningfully to their economies.” Half the Sky, pg. 168



When 70 percent of out-of-school youth in the world are girls, don't we as educated women have a responsibility to help our less fortunate sisters? What better way to do that than by removing barriers to education. And a little bit of our money goes a long way in the developing world. For example:

- \$0.24 can buy a notebook and a pencil.
- \$3.30 can buy a noon meal for one student for an entire school year.
- \$7 can buy a set of textbooks.
- \$13 can pay a full year's tuition.
- \$29 can buy a school uniform.
- \$53 can equate to giving a girl a full year of schooling with everything she needs: tuition, books, uniform, and school lunch every day.

As a sorority community, we have chosen to support the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation, a U.S. charity that works "to leverage the influence of sorority women to financially support entities around the world that remove educational barriers for girls and women, uplifting them from poverty and oppression."

Share some information about what the Circle of Sisterhood has been able to accomplish since its inception in September 2010. For example, CofS has had an impact in 28 countries and has funded school builds in 7 countries.

Group Discussion:

Divide into smaller groups, if necessary, to ensure that people can hear one another and share their perspectives. Go through some of the discussion questions. Remember not to rush the conversation or push your own ideas/reactions. Allow as many people to speak as would like to.

General Discussion Questions:

- What do you think the message is of the documentary? How will you convey this message of "Half the Sky" to family and friends?
- What is the most valuable thing you learned from viewing the documentary?
- Of the women and girls featured in the documentary, is there one whose story affected you the most? Why?
- How are gender discrimination and poverty different in the other countries featured in the documentary from these issues in the United States? How are they the same?
- How are women and girls disproportionately affected by poverty?
- Why is the empowerment of women and girls an effective way to address global poverty?
- Are there women in your life who exemplify women's empowerment? What makes them powerful?
- What's one thing an individual can do to turn oppression into opportunity to move the world toward gender equality?



Undergraduate discussion questions:

- How do these issues affect you as a sorority woman?
- How can raising awareness of these issues complement your chapter or community's current service/philanthropic initiatives?
- What can you do to keep the conversation going in your own chapter or community?
- Do you believe the founders of sororities could relate to the message of Half the Sky? How?

Alumnae discussion questions:

- How do these issues affect you as a sorority alumna?
- If you are a mother, what were your reactions as you watched the stories?
- What can alumnae do to role model service to others and raise awareness?
- How could supporting the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation complement the good philanthropic work you are already doing as an organization?
- How could a connection to the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation be included in your alumnae group activities?
- What can you do to keep the conversation going in your alumnae association? How can you partner with undergraduate chapters in your area that are involved in this important work?

After some discussion, ask the small groups (or large group) to brainstorm ideas for how to (1) create awareness and (2) raise funds to remove barriers to education. You may want to take notes:

How can we create awareness...

- Within the sorority community
- Within the campus community
- Within the local community

Either return to the large group for final messages or dismiss the participants from their small groups. If there is a Circle of Sisterhood team/committee on campus, be sure to talk about the next events so that the entire group is aware and can add that event to their calendars.

Be sure to encourage your audience to spread the word and invite others to participate in your efforts to help remove barriers to education for girls around the world.

Program conclusion:

Each individual sorority raises tremendous amounts of money and provides thousands of service hours to domestic charities. The Circle of Sisterhood is a way for ALL sororities to stand together, across affiliation, to have a global impact for women that desperately need our help. Letters don't matter, the fact that we are college-educated sorority women does.

Won't you help? Here's how... (share what your organization plans to do to support the Circle of Sisterhood and tell your audience how they can get involved).

