

Five Years North

A Discussion Guide

Movie Summary: *Five Years North* follows 15-year-old Luis from Guatemala to New York City as he attempts to forge a new life as an undocumented immigrant in the U.S. Juxtaposed with a portrait of Judy, a Cuban American ICE agent patrolling the neighborhood where Luis now lives, the film captures two sides of one of America's most heated and complicated issues.

Film Notes: Documentary - Directors Zach Ingrasci & Chris Temple | US 2020 | 85 min | Grades 7–12 | *In English, Spanish, and Kaqchikel with English subtitles*



Guiding Questions (before you watch):

- What do you know about the ways ICE works? How do you know it?
- When you learn about immigrants or “new-comers” to the United States, do you have any assumptions built into your thinking?
- What do you wish people knew about the United States on the topic of immigration? What do you want to know?
- As you watch the film, think about the different perspectives that Luis and Officer Almodovar have. Are they consistent with each other?
- Listen for the ways Officer Almodovar talks about her job and the work she does. How does it or does it not conflict with the refugee work that her mother does?
- As you watch the film, think about the filmmaker trying to tell a story from two different perspectives. What techniques do the directors use? In your view, what would make a documentary that shares two perspectives successful?

Reflection Questions (after you watch):

- Luis is forced to make many difficult choices - choosing between school and work. What difficult choices have you had to make in your own life? What criteria did you use in making those choices? What do you think were Luis's criteria?
- This movie captures two sides of immigration - did it change any of your views?
- Both Luis and Officer Almodovar prioritize their families. How do they do this in similar ways? In different ways?
- Consider reading *Enrique's Journey* by Pulitzer Prize winning author Sonia Nazario.
- Officer Almodovar indicates that she would like to see immigration laws change. Are there laws that you know about that you would like to see change?
- How did the movie portray two different sides to the same story? Were you curious about the way the filmmakers had access to Luis and Officer Almodovar?
- The filmmakers followed Luis and his family for 10 years. What can you imagine the biggest changes were in their lives? How would it feel to be a filmmaker following Luis's family, and over such a long period of time?
- Do you feel as though the filmmakers fairly portrayed two sides of the issue? If so, why?