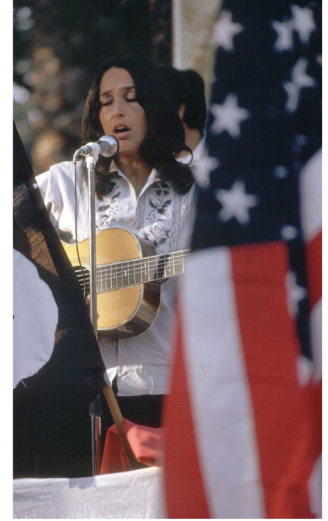




**MVFF
EDUCATION**



**PEOPLE CAN LEARN
THE TRUTH FROM A SONG**



A Song for Cesar

Beware of a Movement That Sings



**YOU CANNOT OPPRESS THE PEOPLE
WHO ARE NOT AFRAID ANYMORE**

**CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 6-12**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instructor Resources

A Letter to Educators	ii
Discussion Questions	iii
Interpretive Essay Prompts	iii
Additional Resources	iv
Standards	iv
About CFI	iv

Student Handouts

About the Film	1
Contextual Information	2
Viewing Activities	3
About Film Festivals	7



Dear educators,

Thank you for attending the 44th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's virtual screening of *Song for Cesar*. This year, our film selections for school screenings continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom.

We know that this year is likely one of the most challenging of your professional career, and we hope that this film and study guide can support the incredible work you're already doing. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using one of the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before, during, and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your in-class screening.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CFI Education Team



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the central issues addressed in this documentary? What has changed between the start and the end?
2. What are the primary emotions you felt during this film? What are some secondary emotions?
3. What are some surprising facts you learned from this film? How do these facts shape your understanding of the central issue of the film?
4. Does this documentary feel objective and/or balanced in its presentation of the issues? Why or why not?
5. What do you see in this film that reminds you of other stories from your life or other stories you know?
6. What are some background details you noticed in this film? How do these details provide information about the time or place in which this film was made?
7. Consider other films you've seen. What makes this film unique or important? What are some connections between this film and other films?
8. What was the filmmaker's relationship with the subject? How were they personally connected? How do you think this relationship impacted the style or message of the film?
9. What issues were most central to the United Farm Workers?
10. Why did Cesar Chavez place such an emphasis on including musicians, artists, and performers in the farm workers movement?
11. What contemporary artists have a similar relationship with social change as the artists featured in the film?

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. What role does music play in a social movement?
2. How has the relationship between social justice and music changed or stayed the same between the 1960s/1970s and today?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Song For Cesar Film Website
<https://songforcesar.com/>

The Cesar Chavez Foundation
<https://chavezfoundation.org/>

United Farm Workers
<https://ufw.org/>

Farmworker Movement Documentation Project
<https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/>

National Farm Worker Ministry: Songs of the Farm Worker Movement
<http://nfwm.org/resource-center/worshipresources/farm-worker-songs/>



STANDARDS

TEACHING TOLERANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS-DIVERSITY 10: DI.9-12.10

I understand that diversity includes the impact of unequal power relations on the development of group identities and cultures.

TEACHING TOLERANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS-JUSTICE 15: JU.9-12.15

I can identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

ABOUT CFI

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education programs.

Follow the Mill Valley Film Festival on social media

 @millvalleyfilmfest  @MillValleyFilmFestival
 @mvfilmfest  californiafilminstitute #MVFF44

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Beware of a Movement That Sings



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ABOUT THE FILM

History will remember the blood, sweat, and tears shed by late civil-rights activist and labor leader Cesar Chavez while standing up for American farm workers. In *Song for Cesar*, co-writers and co-directors Andres Alegria and Abel Sanchez build on that legacy and pride through the music of Chavez's era. Daniel Valdez's "Brown Eyed Children of the Sun," Joel Rafael's "El Bracero," Little Joe y La Familia's "Viva la Huelga," and other songs became the powerful soundtrack for Latino farm workers who otherwise felt invisible and unheard. Through stunning archival photographs and footage and interviews with icons that include Carlos Santana, Joan Baez, Cheech Marin, Edward James Olmos, Maya Angelou, and Chavez's United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta, this affectionate documentary hits many inspiring notes, expressing the emotion that flourished artistically during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s. As filmmaker and playwright Luis Valdez (*Zoot Suit*) says in the film, "Beware of a movement that sings."

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS



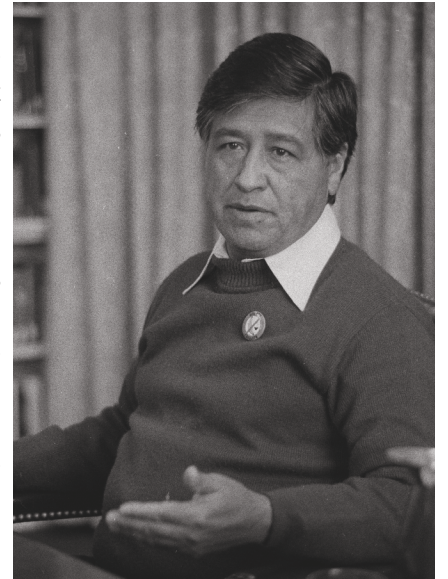
The filmmakers are musician Abel Sanchez and editor/producer Andres Alegria. Both have backgrounds in their fields going back to the early 1970's. Sanchez has worked with many of the musicians in the film over the years and worked with the Chavez family to create the Cesar Chavez stamp for the U.S. Postal Service. Alegria worked for many years in radio covering social, political and cultural aspects of the Chicano Movement.

The producers knew that the history of Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers Union had been told before, but they also knew that it had never been told from the perspective of artists, people who not only had lived the history, but had internalized it and then given it expression.

CESAR CHAVEZ AND THE UFW

Cesar Chavez was a Mexican-American activist and labor organizer whose work helped to improve working conditions for farmworkers in America. Inspired by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., Chavez used non-violent tactics such as strikes, fasts, boycotts and demonstrations to win support for the United Farm Workers, the union he helped found in 1962.

Through their efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, the United Farm Workers (or UFW) transformed the struggles of marginalized farm workers' into an issue of national attention, first gaining widespread support through a boycott on grapes in the 1960s. While initially founded as a coalition of both Filipino-American and Mexican-American labor unions, the UFW became increasingly central to the formation of a Chicano/Mexican-American cultural identity in the 1960s and 70s, with music and art playing a major role in establishing a sense of unity. The UFW continues to represent agricultural laborers in America to this day, still through the use of nonviolent activism.



KEY EVENTS

March 31, 1927: Cesar Chavez is born near Yuma, Arizona.

1938: Chavez's family moves to California to become migrant farm workers, working fields throughout the state.

1953: Chavez begins working for the Community Service Organization of San Jose, where he organizes voter registration drives, fundraisers, and starts new CSO chapters through California.

1962: Chavez resigns from the CSO and founds the National Farm Workers Association to unionize laborers.

September 8, 1965: Under the leadership of Larry Itliong, Filipino American grape workers go on strike in Delano. Eight days later, the National Farm Workers Association, led by Chavez, joins the strike.

July 20, 1970: The Delano grape strike ends when the union successfully negotiates a new contract. The contract includes increased wages and a health plan for farm laborers.

April 23, 1993: While staying in San Luis, Arizona, near his birthplace of Yuma, Chavez dies in his sleep.

BEFORE VIEWING: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Directions:

The film *Song for Cesar* explores the power of music and art to motivate, inspire and unify. Before watching, think about the role that art plays in *your* life by responding to the following prompts.

1. What is a favorite song or artist you listen to when you want to feel motivated to get something done? What is it about that song or their music that appeals to you?

2. What is your favorite song or artist to listen to when you are feeling sad? What is it about their music that helps you in those times?

3. What artist, musician, song, book, or film do you think best represents the values and/or opinions of your generation? Why?



DURING VIEWING: NOTE CATCHER

Directions:

As you watch the film, take notes on the various artists who contributed to the farm workers movement. In each row, identify a significant artist, their artistic medium (e.g., music, painting, theater), and their relationship to the movement.

Artist	Medium	How did they get involved in the farm workers movement?	How did they support the movement? What did they contribute?

DURING VIEWING: NOTE CATCHER

Artist	Medium	How did they get involved in the farm workers movement?	How did they support the movement? What did they contribute?



AFTER VIEWING: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Directions:

Respond to each question, referring to specific scenes, events, and interviews from the film as evidence.

1. What issues were most important to Cesar Chavez and the farm workers movement? What were some specific ways that artists and musicians supported this struggle?

2. Early in the film, actor/comedian Cheech Marin says that “artists are naturally drawn to those causes that are pure.” What do you think he means by this, and how does it relate to the farm workers movement?

3. The filmmakers used a combination of archival footage as well as modern recordings of new performances. Why do you think they made the film this way? What effect do you think this had on you as a viewer?

4. The artists featured in this film are mostly men and are mostly musicians. What cultural voices, identities, or styles of artistic expression are left out, and why do you think this is? How do you think the farm workers movement might have been different if those voices had been included?

5. What is the relationship between artists and social/political movements in modern America? Describe some similarities and differences in how your generation uses (or does not use) art and music to create cultural identity and/or inspire social change.

ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

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What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

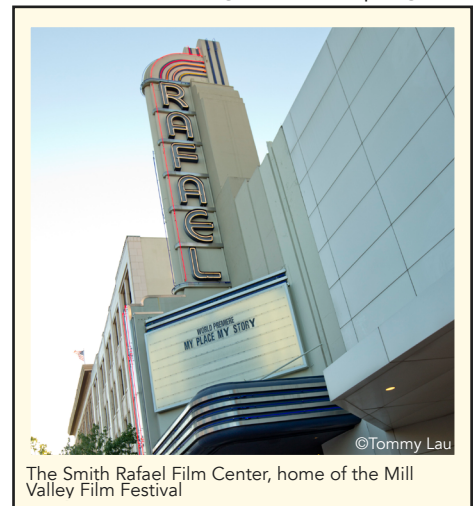
History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

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Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.