



Cinema/Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival
Education Outreach Program Screening: *The Way He Looks*
Director: Daniel Ribeiro
95 minutes

Please use this guide to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. Essays must be sent to Cinema/Chicago in order to be invited to subsequent film screenings.

Synopsis

The Way He Looks details the trials and tribulations of growing up for three teenagers as they struggle to navigate the awkwardness of adolescence. Leonardo and Giovanna have been best friends since they were very young. Now, in the midst of their teen years, they are both confronted with the challenges of budding sexuality, the struggle for independence, and defining themselves as adults. When they befriend the new kid in school, Gabriel, their seemingly static world is turned upside down as they question their relationships with one another. If being a teenager isn't hard enough, their situation is further complicated by Leonardo's blindness.

Despite the challenge of Leonardo being blind, he and Giovanna have developed a comfortable, daily routine. When Gabriel moves to town, their routine is turned upside down as they face challenges in their own friendship, as well as their relationships with Gabriel. As Gabriel and Leonardo grow closer, their friendship begins to have romantic implications, and Giovanna begins to feel as if she is being forced out of the group.

LGBT Issues Around the World

In the US, LGBTQ rights activists have made great strides in the past few years to acquire rights and legal protections for members of the LGBTQ community. Despite this progress, many countries, including the US still lag far behind in providing certain rights for their LGBT citizens. In fact, Brazil, the country in which the film takes place, accounted for 44% of the world's anti-LGBTQ violence in 2013. The country currently has no nation-wide federal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the United States, crimes targeting people or a group of people based on race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation are considered hate crimes, and are subject to more severe punishment than random crime. The US has recently cracked down on these types of crimes to discourage individuals from committing them. However, only 32 states in the US have laws protecting individuals victimized because of their sexuality. Although Brazil does not provide legal protections to

LGBTQ citizens, same-sex marriage was legalized nation-wide in May of 2013, and the country's city of Sao Paulo is the site of the world's largest gay pride celebration.

Latin America happens to be one of the most progressive areas in the world for LGBTQ rights. Argentina passed a law in 2012 allowing transgender people to change the gender on their birth certificates, and many other countries recognize same-sex marriages/civil unions, and provide the same rights to same-sex couples as opposite sex-couples, including the right to adopt children. While Latin America paves the way for LGBTQ rights, other countries harshly respond to the growing acceptance of the LGBTQ population. Russia, for example, has some of the worst conditions for the LGBTQ population, including the punishment for groups and individuals who distribute/advocate rights for the LGBTQ community.

Study Ideas/Questions

1. Which character do you most identify with in the film, Leonardo, Giovanna, or Gabriel? Why?
2. When Leonardo first tells Giovanna that he is in love with Gabriel, why do you think she reacts the way she does?
3. The title of the film, *The Way He Looks*, could reference not only how Leonardo, and perhaps other characters look at the world, but also how they look to other people. What do you take the title to mean, and why?
4. How does the arrival of Gabriel influence a change in perspective for Giovanna and Leonardo?
5. How do the challenges that the three main characters in the film face represent the challenges that all teenagers face when growing up?
6. Leonardo's blindness is less emphasized as a challenge in the film. Similarly, it seems very easy for him to realize and come out that he is gay. His biggest challenge seems to be his desire for independence from his parents. How does Leonardo's journey throughout the film help him to realize his own independence? How does his relationship with Giovanna, and his relationship with Gabriel change, and how does this affect his own development?

Useful Links and Resources

[LGBTQ in Brazil](#)

[LGBTQ Around the World](#)

[Gay-Straight Alliance Network](#)

Interested in Film?

The Chicago International Film Festival's Student Film Council is looking for members for the 2015-2016 school year! Visit chicagofilmfestival.com for more details!

Adobe Youth **Voices helps students/teachers get a film club started at their school to encourage** students to foster their creativity, practice their storytelling techniques, and even influence change through experimenting with society's most powerful medium. Find out more: youthvoices.adobe.com

