

Movie Memories

Discussion Guide for Volume Four

Show film clips one at a time to a group. Four questions (as noted below) come onscreen at the end of each segment followed by the word “Memories” over a sunset. Pause the DVD on each question for discussion. The group leader can also refer to this Discussion Guide to trigger responses and sharing of memories stirred up by the film.

Disc #1 (48 minutes of film)



Betty White in “Life With Elizabeth” (1954, 9 min.)

Can you believe Betty White was ever that young?

Did you ever get scared reading a mystery novel?

What was your favorite situation comedy from the 1950s?

Pop Quiz! Name television situation comedies from the 1950s!

Who would brew a new pot of coffee late at night?

We just saw Betty White in her very first TV series from 1954, “Life With Elizabeth.” Anyone who does not love Betty is welcome to leave! Anyone who does love Betty may say anything they like about her.

Did Betty and Alvin seem like a normal husband and wife TV couple, or were they perhaps too normal?

“The Mild West” (1947, 6 min.)

Talk about corny jokes! Embarrass yourself and tell one!

Did you sing along with the Bouncing Ball?

(I’m a video. I wouldn’t know.)

Who sings louder -- boys or girls?

Did you ever visit a dude ranch?



This 1946 cartoon was released by Paramount Pictures and features a Sing Along to “I’m An Old Cowhand.” Many cartoons are funny, but this one has terrible jokes. Here’s your chance to tell us a really corny joke!

If you ever sang to the Bouncing Ball in a movie theater, who sang the loudest, the guys or the gals? Do you enjoy singing? Would the world be happier with more group singing today?

Who are your favorite cartoon characters?

“Musical Soundies” (1940s, 7 min.)

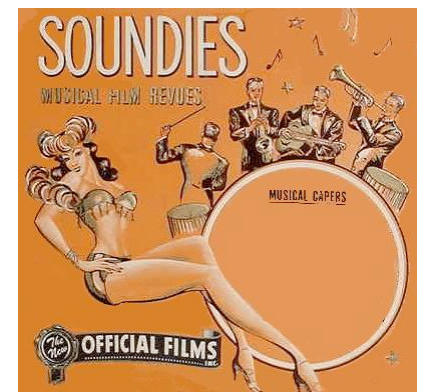
Ever hear of Musical Soundies for juke boxes?

What was your favorite Big Band?

Did you attend night clubs with bands, singing and dancing?

Would you like to see more musicals from the 1940s?

Soundies were three minute musical films that played on a kind of juke box called the Panoram in nightclubs, bars and so on. They were made from 1940 to 1947 and featured major bands, singers and dancers like the 3 we just watched.



Helen O’Connell sang with the Jimmy Dorsey band, and singer Anita

O'Day and trumpeter Roy Eldridge with Gene Krupa.

Did you follow the Big Bands, jazz bands and swing bands? Did you buy their records or listen to them on radio? Did you ever see any famous bands at a nightclub or on stage?

"Stump the Stars" (1962, 7 min.)

Did you ever play charades? Were you good at it?
How hard is it to make someone say "Sister?" We found out!
What games do you like to play today?
Yell out your all-time favorite TV game show!

Stump the Stars started out as Pantomime Quiz in 1951 and ran on TV all the way up to 1970.

Not right this second, but would you like to play Charades again? Do you have funny or embarrassing memories about playing it with friends.

Figure out how to mime the simple word "Sister."

"Hollywood Gorillas" (1940s, 7 min.)

Did you ever think that movie gorillas were real?
Why do white gorillas fight black gorillas? So you can pick one to root for!
Have you ever been in a jungle or rainforest?
Would you like to see the movies in the trailers?

They used to make jungle pictures with gorillas until kids figured out they were just men inside gorilla suits. Were you ever scared by a movie gorilla?



Some tantalizing questions were raised -- Who would keep a gorilla in a cage in their bedroom? How many of us were gorillas in a previous incarnation? Who will win in a battle between white and black gorillas? How about between tiger and crocodile?

These are two pretty awful pictures, but the coming attraction trailers made them seem fun at least. Would you like to see them after seeing these trailers?

Has anyone visited a real jungle or rainforest?

"Tomorrow's Drivers" (1954, 12 min.)

Did you ever own a toy car like the ones in the film?
Did you want one?
Did anything remind you of your life in 1954?
Jimmy Stewart narrated the film. What is your favorite Jimmy Stewart film?

Do you remember any Driver's Education you got in first grade? Did any school in the country have toy cars like the ones in this film?

Were you taught safety in crossing the street or bicycle safety?

Do you recall the first day you drove a car with an instructor next to you? Did you get your driver's license while you were in high school?

Disc #2 (50 minutes of film)

Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers Trailers (1930s, 7 min.)

Ladies -- Did Fred Astaire make you want to learn ballroom dancing?

Gents -- Did Ginger Rogers make you want to be Fred Astaire?

Where did you learn to dance? A) From Arthur Murray. B) From Fred Astaire Studio. C) From your spouse. D) I was clueless, lost and forlorn!

Where did you go on the first date with your spouse-to-be?

Seriously, did you learn to dance and go out dancing all because of Fred and Ginger? Did you ever try to dance The Continental, The Carioca or The Piccolino?



Pop Quiz! Name some other dance partners of Fred Astaire.

(Answers: Rita Hayworth, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford, Eleanor Powell, Paulette Godard, Jane Powell, Cyd Charisse, Audrey Hepburn, Vera-Ellen, Leslie Caron, Barrie Chase, Gene Kelly.)

Popeye in "Little Swee'Pea" (1936, 8 min.)

Did you ever eat spinach just because Popeye did?

Did you ever get in a fight with zoo animals? Ever get eaten by a crocodile?

Talk about taking a child to the zoo.

What are your favorite animals?

This cartoon was made in 1936. All movie heroes had a great impact on our way of life, so while it sounds silly -- Did you ever eat Spinach just because it made Popeye strong?

Do you recall the era when cartoons were made for adults and a cartoon was shown before every feature film?

Did you like going to zoos when you were kids, or taking your kids to them?

Which were your favorite zoo animals? A husband doesn't count.

"Our Home Town" Part 2 (1954, 12 min.)

Can you date the film exactly from the car models?

Did Levittown, PA remind you of the town where you grew up?

How has America changed since 1950?

Do you wish you could live in 1950?

We just saw the second half of a visit to Levittown, Pennsylvania in 1954. It seems like a typical American town of that era. The 1954 date is on a sign at the Mercury dealer.

Did the film remind you of the town or neighborhood you grew up in?

There weren't any chain stores in the film. All of the lunch rooms, realty and fuel oil companys, gas stations, shoe and department stores and milk company were locally owned and run. Did you or your parents ever own a business like one of these?

Did you ever belong to a service club?

How about the fashions of the people coming out of church?

Did you notice anything else that has passed forever from the American scene?

Our Gang in "Lodge Night" (1923, 6 min.)

Did girls go ga-ga over a new boy in class?

Were you ever part of a gang of kids?

Did you have a secret club, clubhouse or tree house?

Did you ever have to practice piano?



This silent comedy was made in 1923, which is before most of us were born. Does anyone remember seeing silent movies in a theater?

The Our Gang or Little Rascals series ran from 1921 until 1944, and then again on television for years. Who were your favorite Our Gang kids?

Did you belong to a "gang" of kids? Did you have a secret clubhouse?

"A Wonderful New World of Fords" (1960, 4 min.)

Was 1960 a wonderful new world for you?

Describe the three cars. White, white, white and what else did you notice?

What were your favorite cars from the 1960s? (You better say Ford!)

Do you feel like going for a ride?

This 1960 film unveils the all-new, all-wonderful line of Ford cars. Did you like the three models shown? Did you ever own or drive one? Would you like to go for a drive now?

"Queen for a Day" (1956, 13 min.)

Was your life ever so bad that you could have been on this show?

Has anyone competed on a TV game show?

Did you ever dream about getting a new dryer?

What is your favorite TV Game Show?



This 1956 reality show ran until 1964. Emcee Jack Bailey interviews 4 women and lets the audience vote on which one is most pitiful! It is kind of like "The Biggest Loser" on TV today, because in each show the woman who had the very worst life -- Was the winner!

I hope not, but was anyone's life so dreadful in the 1950s that you could have been a contestant on **Queen for a Day**?

Did you ever want to be **Queen for a Day**? Would you like to be crowned Queen today?

Has anyone competed on any television game shows?

How did you like some of those prizes? Knives, vacuum cleaner, a Speed Queen washer, Amana food freezer, a Tapan Range and a Spiegel catalog.

The Hawaii trip looked like fun. Anyone ever vacationed in Hawaii?

Did you ever dream about getting a new dryer, refrigerator or car? Did you dream about something else that you never got?

Disc #3 (45 minutes of Movie Memories, plus 73 min. feature film)

"Science-Fiction Trailers" (1950s, 6 min.)

Do space aliens come to Earth from elsewhere?

How about spouses?

Have you ever seen a UFO?

Did you ever star gaze?

Do you enjoy science-fiction movies, TV shows, books and comic books? Did your kids enjoy them?

Clark Kent presents "Kelloggs Cereal Ads" (1950s, 7 min.)

Do you like actor George Reeves better as Superman or as Clark Kent?

Did Kelloggs Cereals taste better than Post Cereals?

Did every kid in America watch Superman 1952-1958?

Did you recognize actress Zasu Pitts in one of the ads?



George Reeves starred in "The Adventures of Superman" from 1953 to 1958. As you just saw, he also helped sell Kelloggs Cereal on the show. This was pretty common at the time, like Buffalo Bob selling everything in the world on the **Howdy Doody Show**.

Did TV commercials dictate which brands you bought? Did you tell your parents what to buy, or did your kids tell you to get Sugar Frosted Flakes?

Did every ten-year-old boy in the world love Superman?

Did anyone in your family ever have a Superman shirt or full costume?

What other fads from the 1950s do you remember, like Davy Crockett?



Bing Crosby in "I Surrender Dear" (1931, 16 min.)

This was Bing Crosby's first starring film from 1931.

Bing Crosby fans -- tell us about Bing!

Did you ever search all over for a boy or girl you did not really know?

Do you have a favorite Bing Crosby movie or song?

Let's just talk about Bing. Did you like him or love him?

Did you listen to Bing on the radio or buy his records or see his movies?

What were your favorite Bing movies? How about his TV specials in the 1950s and 60s? Was Bing part of your Christmas?

Did you ever fall in love at first sight? Did you ever follow someone around secretly just to get another glimpse of them?

Serial Thrills! "The Undersea Kingdom" (1936, 6 min.)

Do you think the lost kingdom of Atlantis really existed?

Do you like serials with "cliffhanger" endings? Did you go to Saturday Matinees?

What kid didn't love killer robots?

Here is how Crash escaped at the start of the next chapter: They opened the gate so there was no big collision.



This 1936 adventure serial in 12 chapters is about a trip to lost Atlantis, which happens to be under the ocean. Do you think the ruins of Atlantis are out there and might someday be found?

Did you like this kind of film when you were young?

Did you see serials in movie theaters or on TV in the 1950s?

In the chapter ending it looks like the hero is crushed when the tank crashes into the wooden gate. However the film cheats. When you see the next chapter seven days later, the people inside the fort suddenly open the gate and there is no crash at all!

William Powell in "The Kennel Murder Case" (1933, 10 min.)

So who dunnit? Do you like mysteries?

Can you usually spot the murderer early on in murder mysteries?

Did you think for a single second that the death was a suicide?

Watch the complete "Kennel Murder Case" to unmask the murderer!

This 1933 murder mystery looks a lot like a **Thin Man** movie because actor William Powell plays a detective in each. He even has a small dog in each film. We only saw the part of the film that sets up the mystery. You can see the complete film later if you want to find out how the victim was really killed.



How many of you like mystery movies? Can you usually spot the murderer when he makes his first appearance? Does it spoil the film if you are right?

What was it like going to the movies in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s?

Did you ever go to movie "Palaces" that seated over 3,000 people?

Bonus Feature:

The complete film "The Kennel Murder Case" is also on this disc! (1933, 73 min.)

Note to moderator: Each segment ends with the word "Memories" onscreen over a sunset. This is your cue to pause the DVD player. Otherwise the next segment will begin without time for discussion. You can experiment with pausing on each question while it is fresh in the viewer's mind and right there on the screen. You can certainly run several short segments before discussing them, or run segments for entertainment without any discussion, although sharing memories is the heart of this Activity.

Additional Study Guides may be downloaded from www.fesfilms.com/mm.html.

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