

The [Conserv]atives

Putting the "conserve" back.

The [Conserv]atives follows four conservative climate activists as they defy party lines to push for action during the fight over the Inflation Reduction Act. As President Biden struggles to pass the bill without Republican support, these unlikely advocates, an evangelical scientist, a pragmatic farmer, a young movement leader, and a Miami mayor, work to bridge a polarized nation. But when Trump returns and begins dismantling the IRA, their efforts take on new urgency, revealing how fragile progress can be when it depends on one party alone and how lasting change will require meaningful collaboration in local communities and rebuilding trust across partisan divides.

Discussion Guide for Community Screenings

Time: 45 to 60 minutes
Suggested Group size: 10-50

A Note for Facilitators:
Discussions should offer an invitation to connect, not debate. Nobody needs to change anyone else's mind. The goal should be to listen and encourage each other to name what we already share and find specific ways we can all protect what we love.

To learn more, host a screening, or connect with other mission-aligned groups, visit **theconservativesfilm.com**



The [Conserv]atives

Community Discussion Guide



First Hand Knowledge

Early in the film, Ray says, **"Farmers trust other farmers."** What he means is that experience is its own credential, that someone who has worked the same land for decades, who has watched the water table shift and the seasons change, earns a kind of authority no outside expert can replicate.

People with hands-on skills, farmers, hunters, anglers, foresters, ranchers, and firefighters who tend land are among the most trusted voices in conservation, precisely because their knowledge is lived rather than learned from a distance. Most of us have more of that kind of knowledge than we talk about in our day to day.

Let's Talk About It

- From your perspective, what's one thing happening right now in your local environment, a river, a species, a weather pattern, a land use change, that you think more people in your community should know about?
- Is there a conservation action, something practical, skill-based, hands-on, that people in your community could take regardless of where they stand politically?
- Ray's authority comes from decades of working the same land. What's a place you have loved or seen change over decades?
- What skill, practice, or place gives you firsthand knowledge that others in your community might not have?



Ray's Local Actions

- Lead by example, try something new first and tell your neighbors about it.
- Start a skill-sharing group to pass along tips and tricks from what you've learned and learn from others, and problem-solve together.
- Advocate for your community to get the financial support they need to create resilience plans or adapt to better practices.

The [Conserv]atives

Community Discussion Guide



Legacy & What We Pass On

When Francis talks about Miami, he says, **“The city is in me; it's the place I call home.”** When someone asks him why he cares, he says the question almost doesn't make sense. Asking why he cares about Miami is like asking why he cares about his life and his family.

Jessica brings that same instinct into her faith community through tree planting. Drawing on the Christian image of the tree of life, a symbol of heritage, and the care between generations. A tree planted today may take decades to mature. You may never sit in its shade. But in planting it, you've done something lasting that your children and their children will inherit.

What connects Francis and Jessica is a promise to the places and people they love, to leave the world better for the generations they'll never meet.

Let’s Talk About It

- Is there a place you feel so deeply connected to that it feels like part of your family or core to your identity?
- Are there any places you love that are currently under environmental stress? What could help?
- Planting a tree is one of the most tangible ways to improve a community’s beauty and health. What else can you think of that would improve where you live, a concrete act of service that anyone could join and would improve life for future generations?



Jessica & Francis’ Local Actions

- Fall in love with the place you live. Experience the things that bring you joy, because we protect what we love.
- Volunteer to improve one thing in your community. Plant a garden, clean a trail, adopt a stretch of road.
- Create a disaster preparedness plan with your neighbors. A power outage, a flood, a fire, an earthquake can change your life in an instant, and people with strong neighbor networks recover faster and are more resilient.

The [Conserv]atives

Community Discussion Guide



Community & Courage

Benji founded the American Conservation Coalition as a college freshman, with the idea that conservatives who already cared about conservation needed a space to connect, a shared language, and a community of their own before they'd feel safe raising their hand. It worked — ACC became the largest conservative environmental organization in the country.

But Benji kept running into the same wall. The more partisan the frame, the more it fed the polarizing dynamic he was trying to break. Near the end of the film, he says he was part of the problem, contributing to the partisanship. It takes real courage to say that, to let go of an identity, and admit the category itself had become the obstacle. His response was to found Nature Is Nonpartisan, not abandoning his values but refusing to let them be put in a red or blue box.

Let's Talk About It

- Benji's early strategy was to build community and trust before asking anyone to take a stand. Is there a group you already belong to, a congregation, a professional association, a neighborhood, a sporting community, that could become the natural home for a conversation like this one?
- We tend to think of polarization as something other people do — politicians, media figures, "the other side." In what specific ways might you be contributing to it? In how you talk about issues, who you listen to, the language you use, what you share online?



Benji's Local Actions

- Bridge, don't just build. Find the common ground that brings people together over shared goals. Look for the intergenerational bridges in your own community: who's under thirty and frustrated, who's over sixty and already doing the work, and how might you connect them?
- Drop the political language when it starts doing more harm than good. Notice when your own framing is doing that, and say the thing plainly instead.

(more on the next page)

The [Conserv]atives

Community Exercise



Filmmaker's Lessons Learned

The impact research behind this film found that we often get stuck talking about these issues in a way that makes people feel as if they're being asked to get political at a level they didn't sign up for. Not because they don't care, but because they don't feel agency in the outcome, or don't feel represented by any political party, and want to opt out rather than argue.

The fix is to get specific about what you can do together. Get local, get concrete, get clear about what people can actually do.

Don't ask people to care about "the environment," say "our water supply." Don't say "the planet," say "our neighborhood park." Don't say "society," say "our local businesses." The more local the frame, the less partisan the conversation becomes. You're talking about something you both can see and recognize connects with your life.

Let's Practice

Try explaining to the person next to you:
"We should care about climate change because..."

Pick one specific reason that matters to you or affects you personally, and describe it using only language specific to your place, work, or experience. Remember, avoid "environment," "planet," "society."



Challenge to Take Home

None of the four people in this film fit where you'd expect them to. At the heart of the story is the realization that we're nuanced. We're presented with false polar opposite sides that most people don't feel represented by.

- Think of one assumption you hold about someone based on nothing but a vibe, a bumper sticker, a job, a church, a vote.
- Swap the assumption for a question. "What made you feel that way?" "How has your experience on this changed over time?" "What do you think we can do together about it?"

Get involved with a personalized action plan at ConserveOurFuture.com