

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

### **THE STORY OF SONAM**

India at a Glance: Capital City	New Delhi	
Population	946.7 million (estimate for 1995)	
% of Population	22.2 % 10-19 years old	
Surface Area	1,269,573 square miles	
Languages	Hindi, regional	
What Things Cost: chocolate bar	\$ .53 cola	\$ .14
music tape	\$1.40	
Average Life	60.4 Expectancy	
Political Regime	Federal Republic	

Figures from the World Resources Institute 1992-93 Guide To The Global Environment.

#### **BEFORE THE FILM:**

The role of religion is examined in this segment of the TURNING 16 series. What role does religion play in your life? Are teens around the world more or less devoted to their religious beliefs than U.S. teens? Do you think teens today make moral decisions based on their individual religious upbringing?

What are your views of someone who chooses to follow a religious vocation? Do you have any peers who are considering such a choice? Are they regarded in honor or ridicule for their decision? Why is it that in some societies a religious vocation is considered the highest and most admirable position one can attain?

Do you think any form of religious persecution exists today in the U.S.?

#### **India**

#### **The Story of Sonam**

#### **Do teens believe in God?**

*"I don't believe in fooling around with girls, drinking beer or being lazy...The most important things in life are knowledge and religion."*

Sonam Puljor had been a Tibetan Buddhist monk since he was eight. While he leads a monastic life of prayer and study, he has developed a taste for sports, magazines and video games. Will he eventually throw off his monk's robes for the secular life? Only time — and karma — will tell!

#### **AFTER THE FILM:**

What do you think of Sonam's decision to devote himself to his religious beliefs? Was he mature enough at his age to commit to entering a monastery? How has culture influenced his decision? Is religion more important in some countries than in others?

How do religions differ from superstitions? Why are some religions respected while others are cast in a negative light and deemed cults? Do you know the religious affiliation of your friends? Do you know how their beliefs differ from yours? Are teens taught about other religions of the world, or do they only learn about the religion of their parents?

How would your parents react if you chose to follow a different faith from the one they taught you? When dating, do you consider the other person's religion as a factor? Might this become important later in life when choosing a partner? If parents have different beliefs, what do they teach the children?



#### **Series of eight 26 minute programs**

#### **Youth and the Global Village (Introduction)**

Do teens around the world hold similar views on issues such as marriage, culture and religion?

#### **The Story of Rosie (Jamaica)**

What is the role of the family?

#### **The Story of Idrissa (Niger)**

Are cultural values being threatened?

#### **The Story of Eman (Egypt)**

Do men and women share the same rights and freedoms?

#### **The Story of Pintinho (Brazil)**

Are sports a ticket to the future?

#### **The Story of Puttinan (Thailand)**

Are young people being exploited?

#### **The Story of Sonam (India)**

Do teens believe in God?

#### **Youth and the Future (Conclusion)**

How do teens feel about their future?

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