

***Chasing Gideon* Discussion Group Toolkit**

The enclosed toolkit contains everything you need to organize and successfully run a discussion group focused on *Chasing Gideon*, a book that illustrates the scope and seriousness of the indigent defense crisis nationally, and makes the case that defending Gideon is essential and a true test of our nation's commitment to "liberty and justice for all."

Hosting this event will help build awareness among target audiences in your community about this critical issue and what we can do together to rebuild the system so that there is justice for all.

The toolkit includes:

- A [template event invitation](#) to circulate to your network;
- A tailored [discussion guide](#);
- Suggested [follow-up activities](#) for event attendees; and
- A [sign-up sheet](#) to collect contact info from event attendees.

[LOGO]

Chasing Gideon: The Elusive Quest for Poor People's Justice

Please join **ORGANIZAION** on **DATE** to discuss *Chasing Gideon: The Elusive Quest for Poor People's Justice*, a new book by Karen Houppert that illustrates the scope and seriousness of the indigent defense crisis nationally. We will discuss the book on the 50th anniversary of the landmark Gideon v. Wainwright Supreme Court case, which sought to provide everyone accused of a crime with a defense lawyer.

Unfortunately, the promise of Gideon has gone unfulfilled, with underfunded public defenders who carry overwhelming caseloads and in turn, defendants who don't receive quality representation. The book makes the case that defending Gideon is essential and a true test of our nation's commitment to "liberty and justice for all."

The discussion group will also focus on the steps we can take in our community to ensure everyone gets a fair hearing and a fair result in our nation's courtrooms.

To join the discussion and get a free copy of the book, please email **NAME at **EMAIL**.**

When: MONTH DAY, 2013 | XX:XX am/pm – XX:XX am/pm

Where: ADDRESS

~ Refreshments will be served ~

Discussion Guide

To spark some discussion, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

1. How is it that 50 years after Gideon we are still so far from fulfilling its promise and what are the greatest challenges we face in getting there?
2. Who are the key decision makers that can affect change and what can be done to incentivize them to make Gideon's promise a reality?
3. Do you think people accused of misdemeanors (less serious crimes where the punishment is less than one year in jail) should be entitled to free lawyers if they can't afford them?
4. What do you see as the most important reforms that should be made at the state or federal level to improve the quality of our public defense system?
5. What can people like those of us gathered in this room do to help?

Suggested Follow-up Activities for Discussion Group

The discussion group may generate its own list of activities they'd like to pursue individually or as a group. Here are some suggested follow-up activities:

- Visit the film's website: <http://gideonsarmythefilm.com>.
- Join the campaign at www.Gideonat50.org.
- Your chief defender is **XX**; contact him or her and find out what reforms are needed where you live.

