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## Tahara

William L. Blizek  
University of Nebraska at Omaha, wblizek@unomaha.edu

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### Abstract

This is a film review of *Tahara* (2019) directed by Olivia Peace.

### Keywords

Ritual, Death, Suicide

### Author Notes

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).



**Tahara (2019), dir. Olivia Peace**

Tahara is a ritual of purification. In the Jewish tradition the body is to be purified before burial. This film is about Tahara, not for the dead, but for the living.

Carrie and Hannah have been best friends forever. When a former classmate completes suicide, Carrie and Hannah attend her funeral and the "Teen Talk-Back" session that follows. The Talk-Back session is designed to help young people understand grief through faith. The leader of the Talk-Back tells the students that they can deal with grief and death through "insightful conversations," but one of the students points out that the conversation they are having is merely a collection of shallow platitudes.

For the most part, Carrie and Hannah ignore the Talk-Back and participate in a variety of activities we usually associate with teenagers and teen angst. Both of the girls lust for Tristan, a cute classmate. Both of the girls explore their sexuality with each other, have their hearts broken and largely ignore their faith. But all of this can be seen as a purification ritual, preparing both their bodies and their minds for the next life: the life of an adult.