



Engaging Youth in Theological Questing

This lesson focuses on practical ways to view a film through a theological lens.

ENHANCER OF JOY

Wisdom

DURATION

2 hours and 30 minutes

LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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TIPS TO PREPARE

Select a movie that you will want to view and discuss together. Following is a list that is hardly exhaustive. Just about any film can be used to highlight spiritual themes. But here is a mere taste of movies with themes of spirituality, self-discovery, identity formation, service, injustice, grace, self-sacrificial love, Sacramental allusions, and so forth:

Selma
Saved
Crash
Remember the Titans
Whale Rider
Stardust
Moana
Black Panther
The Way
Babette's Feast
Chocolat
Stranger than Fiction

Men in Black
Bruce Almighty
Les Miserables

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Movie
- Way to project the movie for all to see

SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

Make the room comfortable for all to view the movie and then create a circle to discuss.

Purpose

The goal of this lesson is to discover practical ways to view a film through a theologically inquisitive lens, to see what types of insights emerge.

Objectives

In this discussion youth will discuss themes of the holy that arise for them after viewing a commercial film.

Introduction for Leaders

It is widely believed that wisdom does not come with age. Nor does it come from outer occurrences. Rather, wisdom comes from integrating life experiences into one's inner being. Christian wisdom takes conventional wisdom and adds to it one's relationship with God.

While more life years might cultivate more opportunities for such integration, wisdom can be cultivated at any age.

By viewing a film in which theological themes arise- themes like self-discovery, service, community engagement, and so forth- youth are given the chance to connect these stories (outside of themselves) with their own inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Sharing such insights in a group allows all who are gathered to benefit from everyone's perspectives.

Gather

Gather (5 minutes)

- Greet participants and invite them to be seated in your viewing/discussion area.
 - Invite participants to name their favorite movie or TV show. Ask them why they like it, and what the connections are between the movie/show and their own lives.
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Engage

Engage (approx. 2 hours)

Watch film, and ask youth to keep these questions in mind:

1. Which character in the film do you like the best? What do you like about them?
2. Which character in this film is most like you?
2. Where do you see God in the story?

3. What themes in the film do you find most interesting?

Reflect

Reflect (20 minutes)

Facilitator: These are just general questions. Please feel free to add your own and adapt them to the specific movie you chose.

1. Was the character you liked the best, and the one you identified with the most the same person? (Note: This is a good self-worth marker.)
 2. What about this person stayed with you?
 3. Where did you see God at work?
 4. What themes did you observe? And how are these connected to what Christianity is about? (ie, Out of all the movies I could have chosen, why do you think I chose this one?)
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Send Forth

Send Forth (5 minutes)

- Pose this final challenge to the youth: The next time you're watching any movie or TV show, think about these two questions. "Where do I see God (or love, or goodness, or grace) in this story/person/situation?" and "What, if anything, does that have to do with my own life?"
- Closing Prayer