

FINDING GOD IN FILM



What does film
have to do with your faith?



Producer



Director



Reviewer

A 2 session training course
for leaders

How to use this Course

Welcome to Finding God in Film. This short course is designed as a companion to the Reel Dialogue God in Film guides. These guides provide video clips, themes and questions that help you discuss a film formally in a group, or just with a friend. The guides span a number of genres and are aimed at discussing film in a way that leads to a discussion about themes of faith, truth, beauty and love.

This course will give you the confidence to plan for and run a group discussion based around a film viewing. We hope you enjoy Finding God in Film.



Who is this course for?

This course is designed for people who want to start a discussion group or who are already teaching adults or youth in churches, schools or community groups. The God in Film guides can be used as a resource for speakers and small group facilitators wishing to use film clips and stories in their groups.



Video 0: How to use this course

Watch the introductory video to find out more about how Finding God in Film will prepare you to organise your group, discuss film and express your faith.

Finding God in Film Session 0



Course Description

This short course will introduce you to a new kind of discussion group, one based around film and God. The course gives you the basics of how to have these kinds of discussions as well as introducing you to our God in Film guides, which cover a wide range of film titles from many different genres.



Why discuss Movies?

In our culture, film is a universal language. While there is more that can be learned about camera angles, filters, staging, framing and so forth, people naturally discuss film without any of these primers. Story-telling is a powerful tool that allows people to explore themes of justice, truth, beauty, love, forgiveness and grief in a safe, entertaining and relationship building way.



Video 1: Why Discuss Movies?



Bible Passage Acts 17:22-31

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”



Course Elements

This course will equip both experienced and new group leaders in several skills, dividing up the elements of running a movie discussion group into three leading roles you will take: Producer, Director and Reviewer.



Producer

This section will give you tips on how to prepare for your discussion group to make the best of the time you have.



Director

This section helps you establish how you will encourage discussion and establish a positive culture, without being too controlling.



Reviewer

This section will give you a starting point to make sure that the group discussion is respectful, inclusive and focuses on the participant's experience of the film.



Video 2: How to be the Producer, Director and Reviewer



Roll Camera

Are you ready to learn how to be the Producer, Director and Reviewer in your new movie discussion group? Then click "continue" and start the camera rolling.

Finding God in Film Session 1



Session Summary

This session will cover everything you need to know to start a movie discussion group that includes deep discussion that is evangelistic. You will learn how to manage three different roles, Producer (planning the event), Director (running the event) and Reviewer (guiding the discussion). The session includes valuable practical tips for each of these roles, a talk from Russ Matthews and introduces you to a suite of guides to get you on your way.



Small Bites

This course equips you to plan, run and guide a movie discussion group as part of an evangelistic course for non-Christians.



Video 3: Reel Dialogue - Connecting God and Film

Watch the next clip



Producer

With your producer hat on, here's how to plan for your movie night with your group.

1. Watch the movie ahead of time in preparation.
2. Read the guide for the movie you are watching, keeping in mind you don't need to use all of it, but consider what will be helpful for your group. Create a run sheet or use our template in the leader's guide.

3. Arrange your room or online space for comfort. Consider how you will maintain the balance between more talkative and less talkative guests for an enjoyable group dynamic. Ice breakers such as a Kahoot quiz online or a face-to-face game of “get to you know” bingo can help.
4. Pray for the group before you meet.



Director

Now that the night has started and you have your plan, it's time to run the event. Here are some tips for your director role.

1. As the “director”, you are not the expert but the guide. Establish yourself as the person making sure the night runs smoothly, not the final authority on film or God.
2. Before screening the film, ask an opening question, to get people thinking. Suggested questions are in the God in Film Guide materials.
3. Watch the movie together all the way through to allow people to develop their own ideas and connect with the film.
4. Prepare some clips of key scene to rewatch and discuss. Clips are provided for you in the [God in Film guides](#). These key scenes may not be needed but will help discussion stay engaged.



Reviewer

Your job as reviewer is to enable the group to become reviewers themselves, expressing their opinions without feeling like they need “permission” or expertise.

1. Establish a positive culture. Affirm people’s comments and encourage respectful listening from the whole group through your example.

2. Don't correct ideas but listen, mirror their response and then ask for the group's opinions to keep discussion flowing.
3. Encourage comments and opinions that focus on the experience of the film. When people become more distant and analytical, try and bring it back to the person's experience of the film by asking questions. Use your pre-prepared clips to remind people of their initial reactions.



Video 4: How to Start a Discussion Group



What now?

So now you know the three hats you can wear to make your movie discussion group event run smoothly, what else do you need? If you're studying this course alone, send some questions to your instructor. If you're doing this training in a group, discuss your questions now.



Video 5: Closing the Curtain



Prayer

Pray for the people you will be sharing the God in Film resource with, pray alone or with your group. May God bless it.

