



# GOD IN FILM

## STUDY GUIDES



Producer



Director



Reviewer

## WEST SIDE STORY

Shakespeare proves he transcends time

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

Luke 6:27

# GOD IN FILM STUDY GUIDES



*God in Film study guides combine your two favourite things, God and movies. Upskill yourself for group discussions that explores deep themes. Learn to be the Producer, Director and Reviewer of your own film discussion group.*



## PRODUCER

Prep for the discussion

*How can you make the most use of your time?*

- Watch the movie first alone to prepare to facilitate the discussion
- Read the guide for the movie you are watching, decide what your group needs
- Have a running sheet for the way the event will run, or use our template.
- Arrange your physical or online space for group dynamics
- Pray for the group before you meet.



## DIRECTOR

Keep the discussion rolling...

*How can you make sure the night runs smoothly?*

- As the "director", you are not the expert but the person who makes sure the night runs smoothly, not the final authority on film or God.
- Ask an opening question, to get people thinking.
- Watch the movie together all the way through to allow people to develop their own ideas
- Prepare key clips to re-watch and discuss (provided in guides). These help with engagement



## REVIEWER

Help your group members become reviewers

*How can you encourage your group to engage with deeper questions?*

- Establish a positive culture. Affirm people's comments and encourage respectful listening from the whole group through your example.
- Don't correct ideas but listen, mirror their response and then ask for the group's opinions to keep discussion flowing
- Encourage experiential comments and opinions. When people become more analytical, try and bring it back to the person's experience of the film by asking questions. Use your pre-prepared clips to refresh their initial reactions

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## Film Synopsis

Director Steven Spielberg chose to stay loyal to the original adaptation with some minor character changes. He keeps the story set in 1950s New York where the cultural landscape of the Upper West Side of New York City was evolving. These Burroughs used to be influenced by European heritage, but now it was experiencing a rush of Puerto Rican immigration. Even though there were tensions between the new and old guards within the community, the Jets and the Sharks kept fighting in the streets. With their worlds all being under threat, these two gangs were trying to hold on to their familiar turf, while most of the buildings around them were being razed to make way for the new Lincoln Center along with upscale housing.

Painted against the battle between the two gangs is the romance between Maria (Rachel Zegler) and Tony (Ansel Elgort). These star-crossed lovers must figure out how to commence their love for one another. Even though Maria is the sister of Bernardo (David Alvarez), the leader of the Sharks and Tony is one of the founding members of the Jets. It is their relationship that leads to the eventual rumble between the two gangs. As racial tensions rise and the battle is about to come to fruition, the young lovers try to do all they can to stop the fight from starting. With iconic songs and captivating dance routines, this Shakespearian love story plays out with beautiful effect on the streets of New York City.



## Produce

### Planning List

- 1) Watch the Film, what themes can you see? What will your group connect with?
- 2) Prepare some discussion points to highlight these themes (suggested clips (p. 3)
- 3) Prepare a run sheet or adapt the template
- 4) Pray and prepare your space (online or physical)



## Direct

### Discussion Questions

1. Do you enjoy musicals?
2. How is this story timeless?
3. In this film, who do you relate to the most? Why?



## Review

If you have not seen the original, it would be worth watching it prior to seeing this version. The Academy Award winner was amazing for its day, but the 2021 version stands toe to toe in the salt factory with it and might even be better. West Side Story may be set in 1957, but this tale proves that it holds up throughout history. Between the tragic romance and the statement on race relations, Spielberg's film speaks to this generation as well as it did when it opened on Broadway over six decades ago.

Do you agree? What would your review be of the film?



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## Discussion points

### Are you a Jet?

Albeit, the Jets are the villains within this Romeo and Juliet tale. Regardless, you have to appreciate their camaraderie and support of one another. Do you have relationships in your life that you would be willing to fight or even die for if pushed?

“For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. - Ecclesiastes 4:10-12

### Can love last past 'tonight?'

Tony and Maria began their short and passionate love affair after this evening. Yet, is this kind of love only for movies and Shakespeare plays? Can we find love in this lifetime that lasts forever?

What does the Bible have to say about love?

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

We love because God first loved us. - 1 John 4 :19

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## Close the Curtain

### Can we change?

Even though we live a difficult lifestyle, is it possible to rise above our circumstances?

Does the human heart have good within it? Is there something that can change our hearts?

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” - Jeremiah 17: 9-10

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. - 2 Corinthians 5:17