



GOD IN FILM

STUDY GUIDES



Producer



Director



Reviewer

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

Crime, Punishment, Redemption, Justice

"...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"

Romans 3:23-24

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

Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) is sentenced to life in Shawshank State Penitentiary for the murder of his wife and her lover. Andy claims to be innocent and maintains this during his time behind bars. He befriends “Red” (Morgan Freeman), a cynical lifer who smuggles contraband for inmates. Surviving brutal beatings and assaults, Andy shrewdly becomes a tax adviser to corrupt prison warden and guards, as well as landing a job in the library. Andy finds ways to extend to his inmate friends the protection and privileges he is afforded by prison staff. As Red’s lack of hope is challenged by Andy’s steely optimism, an intricate plan comes together that will offer these two prisoners a future that seemed impossible. Synopsis written by Ben McEachen



Produce

Planning List

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



Direct

Discussion Questions

1. The Shawshank Redemption remains the best rated film on IMDB. Why do you think it has become a classic movie?
2. What elements of the story or performances impact you most? Why?
3. How does your opinion of crime, punishment and justice fit with what happens within The Shawshank Redemption?



Review

What to highlight in the discussion?

Redemption means to deliver or rescue; to save from sins; to atone for guilt; to buy back at a price. The Shawshank Redemption paints a picture of redemption that delivers two prisoners to physical freedom.

Andy and Red’s journey beyond Shawshank’s bars also offers glimpses of justice, mercy, forgiveness and salvation. Such deeply felt things revealed by The Shawshank Redemption are memorably expanded in the Bible. The redemption that Jesus Christ offers all people goes way beyond prison walls or Mexican beaches.



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Clips

Get busy livin' or get busy dying (language warning)

A defining element of Andy is hope. Hope that he will leave Shawshank. Red doesn't believe he personally will, unless it's when he's on the way out of life itself. The prisoners also speak of paying debts for wrongs committed, the issues of being institutionalized, and the perils of misplaced hope. Discuss Red and Andy's different outlooks, particularly about being free. What does Andy mean by "get busy livin' or get busy dying?"

The sound of freedom (language warning)

A soul-stirring opera causes an entire prison to stop and "escape" – as if a rescue mission has reached their hearts with song. Red notes that Andy's record delivered singing of something so beautiful it's beyond words. The scene drips with a longed-for taste of liberation or salvation. Andy finds a small yet profound way to broadcast his hope to everyone at Shawshank. Why do Shawshank prisoners long to be free? What is true freedom to you? Why do we long for it?

On the beach (language warning)

"Hope is a good thing. Maybe the best of things." The future Red thought impossible comes to pass as he follows Andy's lead to the fabled Mexican beach of new beginnings and "no memory" of the troubled or painful past. On his way to meet Andy, Red feels "the excitement only a free man feels." A free man who has broken the law and, also, doesn't actually know if his future is secure (or will he be caught for skipping parole?). What is the redemption in The Shawshank Redemption? Who receives it? Why?



Close the Curtain

Redemption means to deliver or rescue; to save from sins; to atone for guilt; to buy back at a price. The Shawshank Redemption paints a picture of redemption that delivers two prisoners to physical freedom. Andy and Red's journey beyond Shawshank's bars also offers glimpses of justice, mercy, forgiveness and salvation. Such deeply felt things revealed by The Shawshank Redemption are memorably expanded in the Bible. The redemption that Jesus Christ offers all people goes way beyond prison walls or Mexican beaches. Romans 3:22-26 offers one snapshot of the Bible's depiction of redemption.