

God in Film includes theological reflections, dialogue texts, further resources, and discussion questions built around clips from each of the films covered in the book. To aid your discussion, the recommended clips for this film can be on this episode on the City Bible Forum webpage.



God in Film can be used as a personal resource for your own movie watching.

This is the practical guide for running a movie discussion group.

This study is intended mainly as a guide for those teaching an adult study group, for youth workers leading discussions after viewing movies with students, for those wanting to begin a neighbourhood discussion group for Christians and non-Christians alike, or for those wanting help in how to use film clips and Scripture to focus a group's meditation and prayer. These studies are also meant as a resource for church leaders and pastors who would like to use film clips and stories in their speaking, teaching, and preaching.

Just as many sermons unfortunately misinterpret a biblical text, using it for unintended purposes, so many in the church who want to connect the Christian faith with wider popular culture often misinterpret film clips and stories and use them to illustrate something other than what a movie is portraying. Thus the authors have tried to engage each movie at the center of the story's power and meaning and to suggest how it might prove useful for those charged with the teaching and preaching ministries of the church.



The basics of starting a discussion group

The Reel Dialogue team have made these studies for the various films that we have found to be both entertaining and spiritually provocative. They have challenged and informed us, inviting us into the lives of others who share God's image. We believe they will provide you a similar experience. We suggest that you invite a friend or neighbour to watch these movies with you.

Movie watching invites conversation and response. To hear a story and have no means of responding to it is to risk aborting its power and significance in your life. Though individual viewers can benefit from the conversation generated within these discussion groups, each meeting is intended primarily for use by those in group or public settings, particularly those speaking to or leading groups in the church or community.

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Leading a Discussion Group

Leading a movie group discussion is a subject worthy of a much longer treatment than we can give here, but the following are insights we have found useful in groups we have led:

1. As the leader, you are not the “expert” but the guide for the discussion
2. See the movie yourself before the event so you can prepare adequately to be the discussion guide.
3. If you are going to see the film together as a group (something we strongly recommend), keep your initial comments very brief. Let the movie introduce itself. Those bonus materials we have provided or other tidbits you uncover might best be used as part of the discussion following the movie.
4. After seeing the movie, begin with a question that helps participants express their experience with the film. Ask them to share their response to a scene that was particularly moving to them, or even ask why they liked or didn’t like the movie. There are no right or wrong answers here. If participants start to analyse the movie in an abstract way, politely ask them to respond to their own experience with the movie.
5. Remember, God in Film is a resource for you and your community. Don’t feel the need to use everything provided. And feel free to adapt/contextualise the questions for your group.
6. Groups can create their own momentum and process. Don’t sweat it if questions arise from the group, as long as faith and film are put in conversation.
7. Always be respectful. Because movies are viewer oriented, what moves one person will leave another cold. We all know this. If someone says something that seems not in keeping with the movie, ask the group if they agree. Let the wisdom of the group carry you forward.
8. Don’t be the “answer man or woman.” Your background reading, viewing, and preparation should be directed toward helping the group break open the movie’s story and begin a theological dialogue with it. There is no need for closure. Remember that Jesus usually left his parables open-ended. The power of story is in its ability to invite ongoing reflection and engagement.
9. Create a space where everyone can participate, which is especially important in intergenerational groups. If needed, respectfully ask the “talkers” to allow the quieter folks to share their ideas.
10. Pray for the group, enjoy the conversation as you pursue beauty, goodness, truth, and, by all means, have fun! Who knew that studying the Bible could be so much fun?



Three simple steps to getting started

1. Get friends, family or work colleagues together to watch one of the films
2. Download the Reel Dialogue discussion guide and study
3. Read through the questions and suggested biblical text together
 - Enjoy the film and then enjoy some Reel Dialogue