

## Older Children

### *Amazing Grace*

#### Family Movie Night

#### **Best Use**

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

#### **Nutritional Value**

Triggers meaningful dialogue on the gospel in action

#### **Advance Preparation**

- Rent or purchase *Amazing Grace*. (Rated PG for slavery themes and mild language)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

#### **Serve It Up**

Be up front with your children, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### **Film Synopsis**

This epic film tells the true story of William Wilberforce – an 18<sup>th</sup> century British politician who led a very unpopular movement to end the slave trade. Wilberforce was motivated by a deep Christian faith and spiritually mentored by John Newton – a former slave ship captain turned minister and author of the famous hymn *Amazing Grace*. During his long battle Wilberforce overcomes many obstacles including powerful political enemies, the economic might of the slave-trade industry and failing health.

#### **Discuss**

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the “Think About It” notes below.

1. William Wilberforce was born into a life of wealth and achieved political power at a young age. Do you think this would make it harder or easier to embrace Christian faith? Harder or easier to speak out against injustice? (See A)
2. The stress of his battle against the slave trade caused Wilberforce serious health challenges. His marriage to Barbara helped restore his health and enabled him to continue his battle. Why does the practical love of family infuse health and balance in our lives? (See B)
3. After his conversion to Christianity Wilberforce seriously considered leaving politics to enter pastoral ministry. Others, including his “old preacher” John Newton, advised William to stay in politics and fight slavery. Many Christians think politics a less “spiritual” career than ministry. Do you agree or disagree? Why? (See C)
4. The abolitionist movement was primarily led by Christians who were unpopular at the time for “forcing their religious views on others.” Does this remind you of any movements in our day? (See D)

#### **Think About It**

- A. Jesus said that it is harder for a rich man to humble himself and believe than a poor man. (See Matthew 19:16-26) He also taught a parable showing it is rare for a man of status to risk his own comfort and influence for the sake of those less fortunate. (See Luke 10:25-37)
- B. The Bible says that husbands and wives complete one another and together they picture the saving truth of the gospel (See Ephesians 5:31-32). Research shows that married men tend to live longer, healthier and more successful lives than single men. Clearly God designed marriage and family as a life-giving gift to His children.
- C. William Wilberforce wrote a popular book titled *Real Christianity* presenting a compelling case for Christian belief. He also said that God had called him to pursue two great battles in life, starting with the abolition of the slave trade.
- D. Many compare the abolitionist movement to the pro-life movement since both are rooted in the dignity of human life. There is also a modern movement to rescue women and children from “slavery” of prostitution. But any effort to defend the defenseless and comfort the oppressed puts our faith into action. (See James 1:27)

For more ideas: [MovieNightChat.com](http://MovieNightChat.com)

## Older Children

### The Truman Show

#### Parent/Teen Movie Night

#### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

#### Nutritional Value

Triggers meaningful dialogue on the power of deception

#### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase The Truman Show. (Rated PG for language)
- Like most films, Truman Show includes offensive language and innuendo. You might consider buying a service like [clearplay.com](http://clearplay.com) that edits out language and offensive scenes.
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

#### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### Film Synopsis

Truman (played by Jim Carrey) is unaware that he is living on a giant television set and his every action is being broadcast to the world. Every person in his life is an actor or actress, every scene a prop, every discussion a scripted set-up to see how he will respond. As Truman begins to realize that there is something wrong with his world, he seeks to discover whether or not there is a world beyond the one in which he is trapped. Another key character is the producer of the Truman show (played by Ed Harris) who manipulates Truman's surroundings to make him think it is reality - when in fact it is all a grand deception.

#### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the "Think About It" notes below.

1. **How does Christof mirror what we know of Lucifer?** (See A)
2. **In what ways are we like Truman?** (See B)
3. **Read Jesus' words in John 8:44 and then John 8:32. What did you observe in this film reflecting these realities?** (See C)

#### Think About It

**A** - Christof manipulates Truman into believing and living a lie.

**B** - We sense that there is a reality beyond our immediate experience, and that there is more to reality than what we see. But we must overcome the obstacles of deception to reach our true home.

**C** - In a military campaign, the element of surprise gives a major advantage. Spiritual warfare is the same since those who are tempted, abused or oppressed know it - but the deceived don't know it. Deception is our enemy's primary weapon used to gain a strategic advantage in our lives. We can learn from Truman by refusing to suppress the suspicion that we are made for more and by following clues that point us toward our true purpose - living what Jesus called "life to the full."

*For more ideas:* **MovieNightChat.com**

## *Older Children*

### *Lord of the Flies*

#### Parent/Teen Movie Night

#### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

#### Nutritional Value

Triggers meaningful dialogue on fallen human nature

#### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the movie *Lord of the Flies*
- Like most films, this movie includes offensive language and some intense scenes of cruelty. (You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

#### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### Film Synopsis

In this disturbing yet profound story a group of well-educated, well-behaved boys from an elite school find themselves stranded on a deserted island after a plane crash. With no adults to take charge, the boys must establish a system of order so that they can work together toward survival. As the story unfolds, these well-ordered children become ill disciplined, self-subverting animals. Ralph, a kind and natural leader, is rejected and attacked. The chubby outsider (Piggy) fears for and eventually loses his life. This group of well-behaved children turns into a pack of savages. They subvert order, embrace cruelty and kill the weak. If not for the timely intervention of a rescue team, they would have continued toward eventual self-destruction. The message at its core is one of evil in our world – and more troubling – in our hearts.

#### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the *Think About It* notes below.

1. **Were the boys good or bad at the beginning of the story?** (See A)
2. **Why did some boys become cruel/evil later in the story?** (See B)
3. **Did the evil come from outside or inside these boys?** (See C)
4. **In what ways does this story illustrate James 1:14-15?**

#### Think About It

**A** – They were both, but basically good.

**B** – Because there were no adults to keep them from doing bad.

**C** – From within their hearts.

**D** – We are fallen human beings with a bent toward sin and destruction – which is why we are called to follow Jesus rather than heed our own desires.

For more ideas: [MovieNightChat.com](http://MovieNightChat.com)

## *Lars and the Real Girl* Parent/Teen Movie Chat

### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

### Nutritional Value

Meaningful dialogue about the power of relationships

### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the movie **Lars and the Real Girl** (Rated PG-13)
- Like most films, this movie includes inappropriate language and some offensive themes. (You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

### Set It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

### Film Synopsis

Ryan Gosling stars in a quirky yet touching story about Lars, a man who isolates himself from everyone. He fears human touch and panics when anyone tries to draw close - even those he loves most. His brother and nurturing sister-in-law live fifty feet away yet feel like strangers. But one day, to the shock of his family, Lars introduces his girlfriend: a life-sized doll. He ordered her online, apparently unaware of the perverse reason such dolls are made. He instead treats her with affection and the kind of respect a lady deserves: a woman who may become his bride. Those closest to Lars fear he has lost his mind. But they go along with his delusion, hoping "the real girl" might just play a redemptive role in Lars's life. (Heads up: you might want to fast-forward through one or two brief scenes involving a male co-worker who talks about pornography and views women as sexual objects.)

### DISCUSS:

1. **QUESTION:** What is so bad about Lars isolating himself from other people? (See "A" below)
2. **QUESTION:** This film points to the power of a loving community to help someone with special needs or challenges. Lars is a severe example of a real struggle many grown children have after experiencing trauma in childhood. Do you think going along with Lars's delusion was the right thing for his friends and family to do? Why or why not? (See "B" below)
3. **QUESTION:** In the end Lars's deepest need was met and his sanity rescued by the very thing he was trying to avoid - human touch. Why are relationships such a powerful and essential part of our health and sanity? (See "C" below)

### THINK ABOUT IT:

- **A)** In Genesis 2:18 God calls something he just made "not good." He said "It is not good that man should be alone." As human beings we are made in the image of a God who is three persons, not one isolated individual.
- **B)** Who in our family/church/sphere might be isolated from others and could use an extra measure of patience, affirmation and love? What can you do this week to extend an invitation for relationship?
- **C)** We are most fully human (the image of God) when we are in deep relationship with others - especially a spouse and family.

## Older Children

# *The Golden Compass*

## Parent/Teen Movie Night

### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with teens

### Nutritional Value

Triggers dialogue on the soul and why we tend to rebel against authority

### Advance Preparation

- Caution: This film is based upon a series of books written by Philip Pullman, an author who overtly opposes Christianity. While the film only mildly touches these themes, it also lays a foundation for more troubling ideas developed in the three-book series.
- Buy/rent *The Golden Compass* (Rated PG for mild language and action)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enter into good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

### Film Synopsis

A pre-adolescent girl name Lyra lives in a world similar to ours but different in many ways. She stumbles into an epic battle between those on the side of her Uncle Asriel (the academic and scientific world) and a powerful group called "the Magisterium." As the adventure unfolds, Lyra becomes embroiled in a battle against those who claim allegiance to the "Authority."

### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the "Think About It" notes below.

1. In Lyra's world everyone's soul is called a "daemon" and it appears in an animal form that reflects the person's basic personality. What animal form would your soul take if visible? (See A)
2. Lord Asriel refers to someone called "The Authority." Asriel has a conflict with members of "The Magisterium" who support the Authority. Who do you think this "Magisterium" is supposed to represent in our world? (See B)
3. Why would Mrs. Coulter and the Magisterium cut children away from their daemons (souls)? (See C)
4. In what ways does *The Golden Compass* imply Christian beliefs are the problem rather than the solution? (See D)

### Think About It

- A. The word "daemon" sounds like "demon" but carries a different meaning. A "daemon" is an ancient word describing beings who bridge the physical and spiritual realms.
- B. *The Golden Compass* is the first of a three-book series in which author Philip Pullman portrays a war against God by those who reject any authority so everyone can rule his or her own life. He overtly claims to hate Christianity and the church. His books call God "The Authority" and the church "The Magisterium." Lord Asriel represents the elite members of the academic and scientific communities. Pullman's stories pit them against one another with "God" as the villain.
- C. Philip Pullman claims that religion cuts people off from their true nature by placing them under the authority of an illegitimate God. But Christians know that rebellion against a loving God cuts us off from his life-sustaining goodness. (Read Genesis 3, Matthew 5:5, Matthew 11:29, I Peter 5:5)
- D. Learn more about Pullman's agenda by listening to a related podcast at [MovieNightChat.com](http://MovieNightChat.com)

For more ideas: **MovieNightChat.com**

## Older Children

### *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* Parent/Teen Movie Night

#### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with mature teens

#### Nutritional Value

Triggers meaningful dialogue on the reality of our spiritual enemy

#### Advance Preparation

- Caution: This film is NOT appropriate for younger viewers as it deals with a true story involving possible demonic activity. This is not a feel-good movie for casual viewing and should only be viewed with teens mature enough to discuss the reality of Satan vs. the power of Christ.
- Rent or purchase *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. (Rated PG-13 for offensive language and disturbing, scary scenes)
- Brace yourself for an intense film based upon a true story about demonic possession.

#### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enter into good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### Film Synopsis

Based upon a true story, this film shows a minister on trial after trying to help a college-aged girl (Emily Rose) break free of what appears to be demonic possession. The clergyman is accused of negligent homicide because he used spiritual intervention in place of psychiatric treatment. His defense attorney, an unbeliever, faces the difficult challenge of proving the existence of demons.

#### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the "Think About It" notes below.

1. Medical and psychiatric experts claimed Emily's symptoms suggest epileptic seizures rather than demonic possession. If you were a member of the jury, would you have found their arguments convincing? Why or why not? (See A)
2. After learning of several scary incidents in the lawyer's life, the priest suggests she herself may be under spiritual attack. Do you believe Satan manipulates people in this way when they are doing something that threatens his agenda? (See B)
3. The prosecuting attorney claims to be a religious man, yet he repeatedly dismisses the possibility of supernatural activity. The defense attorney claims no faith, yet seems open to the priest's perspective. Which more closely reflects a spiritual worldview vs. a purely materialistic view of the world? (See C & D)

#### Think About It

- A. The symptoms of demonic possession described in the Bible are very similar to an epileptic seizure. (See Mark 9:14-27) It seems that both physical or supernatural causes can trigger the same symptoms.
- B. Jesus said that the Devil's primary weapon against us is deception. (John 8:44) If he can get us to believe a lie and live according to that lie he has gained control over us.
- C. C.S. Lewis said that Satan is equally happy with two errors: (1) Thinking too much about demons, or (2) Thinking they don't exist at all. Which error is more common in our generation?
- D. In Ephesians 6:10-18 Paul told believers that we battle against spiritual forces. In John 8:31-32 Jesus said that our primary weapon against Satan's deceptive power is holding to the truth.

For more ideas: [MovieNightChat.com](http://MovieNightChat.com)

## Older Children

### Dead Poets Society

#### Parent/Teen Movie Night

#### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

#### Nutritional Value

Triggers meaningful dialogue on disappointment and meaning in life

#### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the 1980 film *Dead Poets Society*. This film is rated PG and includes some offensive language and brief sexual innuendo. You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

#### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### Film Synopsis

Mr. Keating (played by Robin Williams) is a wonderful teacher who uses unconventional methods to awaken his student's minds to poetry, beauty and a passion for life. But he does so based upon a view of the world which says that we should pursue life to the full while we are alive because when it's over, it's over. His primary theme is "Carpe Diem - Seize the Day!" One young student named Neil fully embraces Mr. Keating's philosophy, giving him the courage to defy his overbearing father. But doing so ends in tragedy when Neil's *Carpe Diem* dream is taken away.

#### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, refer to the "Think About It" notes below.

1. What view of God & eternity does Mr. Keating present? (A)
2. What is the problem with this view? (B)
3. What book of the Bible speaks to the same issue? (C)
4. Deep down, do you think Neil's father loved his son? (D)
5. Why did Neil take his own life? (E)
6. Do most people achieve their *Carpe Diem* dreams in this life? (F)

#### Think About It

**A** - The view that there is no God or life after death.

**B** - In truth God who gives purpose/meaning in and beyond this life.

**C** - In the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon describes life "under the sun" (which means "apart from God") as meaningless.

**D** - Yes, but he was an imperfect and overbearing man.

**E** - He had embraced a philosophy that says there was no meaning to life unless we are able to do what we want - so he lost hope.

**F** - No, but they still have meaning and a God-given purpose in life.

For more ideas: **MovieNightChat.com**

## Older Children

### Contact

#### Parent/Teen Movie Night

##### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

##### Nutritional Value

Meaningful dialogue on how creation points to the reality of God

##### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the movie **Contact** (Rated PG)
- Like most films, this movie includes offensive language and some scenes of sensuality. (You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

##### Set It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

##### Film Synopsis

The main character Ellie (played by Jodi Foster) is a scientist on a quest to find intelligent life beyond earth. Once contact is made, the people of earth create a machine which allows her to travel across the galaxies and communicate directly with alien beings. While traveling through space Ellie becomes overwhelmed with the beauty and majesty of space - to the point that she can't even speak. Zero in on this scene to discuss.

##### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. After sharing your own thoughts, reference the *Think About It* notes.

1. **What view of God does Ellie represent?** (See A)
2. **Why did she become overwhelmed at the splendor and majesty of space?** (See B)
3. **What passage of scripture speaks to what she experienced while traveling through space?** (See C)
4. **What is the reality she refused to accept?** (See D)

##### Think About It

**A** – A materialist view that there is no reality beyond the physical universe.

**B** – She was experiencing something greater than herself and more vast than her mind could comprehend.

**C** – Psalm 19 says that the heavens declare the glory of God.

**D** – That the order and beauty of our universe is evidence of a Creator God.

*For more ideas:* **MovieNightChat.com**

## *Captain America* Parent/Teen Movie Chat

### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

### Nutritional Value

Meaningful dialogue about heroic character

### Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the movie **Captain America** (Rated PG-13)
- Like most films, this movie includes inappropriate language and some offensive themes. (You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

### Set It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

### Film Synopsis

During World War II most able-bodied American men were volunteering to defend freedom by fighting the Nazis, including Steve Rogers. But Steve was too small and thin for the armed forces to accept. Then a scientific experiment turned him into "a new breed of soldier" called Captain America. With a larger body and super-human strength, Steve Rogers gives the world's meanest bullies what they deserve. This sometimes funny, sometimes inspiring action film affirms the priority of being a good man over being a dangerous warrior.

### DISCUSS:

1. **QUESTION:** Describe Steve Rogers' life at the beginning of the story. Would you call him successful? A failure? What is the driving desire of his heart? How does he want to make an impact? (See "A" below)
2. **QUESTION:** When asked if he wants to kill Nazis Steve says "I don't want to kill anyone. I don't like bullies, no matter where they're from." What does Steve's response to bullies reveal about his character? (See "B" below)
3. **QUESTION:** Steve's mentor tells him that the serum amplifies what is already within a man. What did it say about Steve when he threw himself on a grenade? (See "C" below)

### THINK ABOUT IT:

- **A)** Steve Rogers illustrates the courage of many real-life men and women who have been willing to sacrifice their own freedom and safety for others. Read 2:4-8. How does Steve's attitude echo the attitude of Christ as described by the Apostle Paul?
- **B)** Read 2 Timothy 1:7. Courage in the face of danger honors God and reflects His nature rather than fearful self-preservation.
- **C)** Read John 15:13. It is when we willingly give our lives for and to others that we reflect great love and noble character.

## Older Children

### Bella

#### Parent/Teen Movie Night

#### Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with teens

#### Nutritional Value

Triggers dialogue on the healing power of relationships

#### Advance Preparation

- Buy/rent *Bella* (Rated PG-13 for mature themes and disturbing images)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

#### Serve It Up

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enter into good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

#### Film Synopsis

Jose is a man with a heartbreaking secret in his past. Nina is a woman with no hope for her future. They become friends and help one another discover the healing power of family relationships and sacrificial love.

#### Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions.

1. Throughout the film Nina seems a distant personality with a hard edge, as if trying to protect herself from close relationship with others. Yet she quickly warms to Jose and his family. Why does spending time with a loving family help us overcome isolation and pain? (See "a" below)
2. Throughout the story we wonder what caused Jose to live with such a heavy burden of regret. He seems to punish himself until he can find a way to make things right. In what ways do you think his attempts to help Nina are part of his healing? (See "b" below)
3. The opening statement of the movie is "If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans." How does this statement play out in the story told? (See "c" below)
4. Did you find it surprising that Jose rather than Nina raised her child? Why is this significant? (See "d" below)

#### Think About It

- a) *The scriptures describe a loving home as a mysterious picture of God Himself. (See Ephesians 5:31-32) Even those in a troubled home are drawn to the reflection of God's love found in other nurturing families.*
- b) *It is impossible to make full restitution for all of our failures (See Ephesians 2:8-9), but we can become agents of God's grace in the lives of others which in turn brings meaning and healing in our own lives. (See Matthew 5:16, Ephesians 2:10, Titus 3:8-14, Hebrews 10:24 )*
- c) *This story reflects how God can use even our most painful experiences to accomplish something good. (See Romans 2:28-29)*
- d) *As Jose sits on the beach he looks a bit like our image of Jesus. This is fitting since he plays the part of Christ-like sacrifice by loving Nina, rescuing the child, and giving up his own plans in order to "lay his life down" for another. (See John 15:13, I John 3:16)*

For more ideas: [MovieNightChat.com](http://MovieNightChat.com)