



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

6th Nov	Sophie Scholl
4th Dec	Nativity!
8th Jan	The Adjustment Bureau
5th Feb	<u>Grace is gone</u>
4th Mar	Tokyo Story
1st Apr	He who must die

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

**10 Bletchington Road
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)
Email: info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk
Web: www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk**

Spirituality
SOS
n
screen

SOS

Spirituality
SOS
n
screen



Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if only we take time to look.

Questions to ask yourself

- ▶ What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?
- ▶ Which incidents made you think or feel most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?
- ▶ What issues did the film raise for you?
- ▶ What character(s) do you most identify with and why?
- ▶ Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values?

Some facts about the film

- ▶ The music in the film received two Golden Globe nominations. Clint Eastwood was nominated for Best Original Score, while the song "Grace is Gone" with music by Eastwood and lyrics by Carole Bayer Sager was nominated for Best Original Song. The film also won the Audience Award for Drama at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.
- ▶ This was the first time Clint Eastwood composed the music for a film that he did not write, direct or star in.
- ▶ This was the film debut for both Shelan O'Keefe, who plays Heidi, and Gracie Bednarczyk, who plays Dawn.
- ▶ The film was originally due to be directed by Rob Reiner, director of such films as "When Harry met Sally" and "Stand by me". When Reiner dropped out, the writer of the film, James C. Strouse, took over. It was his directorial debut.
- ▶ The theme park, "Enchanted Gardens", is actually "Cypress Gardens" in Winter Haven, Florida.
- ▶ The film never went on general release in the UK, though it was shown at the London Film Festival in 2007.
- ▶ The Weinstein Company, producers, was formed in 2005 by Bob and Harvey Weinstein. They were one of the producers of "The King's Speech".

Memorable Quotes

- Stan I was proud to see her go.
- John It's important that people have their own views based on an understanding of facts. But its also important not to trust the facts because most of them are lies.
- Heidi I don't understand.
- John Well, it basically comes down to a gut thing. You just have to be open to allowing for a truth which differs from your own opinions, or else you'll never actually see the truth at all.
- John Do you really think that taking them to an amusement park is going to help them get over losing their mother? They'll never forgive you.
- Stan Get out of my way! Nobody asked you! Do you understand?
- Heidi Dad? What's going on? Why are we doing all this?
- Stan I just wanted to give you girls a surprise, you know? Take you on a trip.
- Heidi You didn't go to work yesterday, did you?
- Stan No, I didn't go to work.
- Heidi Were you fired? You know Mum will be really mad if you lose your job, right?
- Stan I didn't lose my job, Heidi. Okay?
- Heidi But if you were going to you'd tell us, right?
- Stan Yeah - I'd tell you.
- Stan Will you do me a favour if you can't sleep? Will you wake me up?
- Heidi Why?
- Stan So I can talk to you.
- Heidi Really? You'd do that?
- Stan Yes, I would do that.
- Stan You miss home?
- Dawn Yeah. I miss Mum, too.
- Heidi Dad? Do you ever think Mum should have stayed at home?
- Stan All the time.
- Heidi Why did she have to go?
- Stan She was doing her duty, Heidi. You know that.
- Heidi I know, but what exactly does that mean?
- Stan We have people all over the world looking out for our safety. When they discover a threat, they have to act on it. That's the way the world is.
- Heidi On the news they're saying that we went to war with the wrong people, that it was all a lie.
- Stan Well, you can't always believe everything you hear on television. Sometimes you've just got to trust that you're doing the right thing. You've got to believe.
- Heidi Well, what if you can't?
- Stan Then we're all lost.
- Politician In our 200-plus years, America has learned some important lessons, and one is that weakness is provocative. It tempts aggression.
- Stan I need to tell you something, and it is something I should have told you a lot earlier.

Grace is gone

Grace Is Gone, made in 2007, tells the story of Stan Phillips (John Cusack) and the crisis which engulfs him when his wife Grace, a sergeant in the U.S. army, is killed on the battlefield. Stanley cannot bring himself to share this devastating news with his two young daughters, Heidi, aged 12, and Dawn, who is 8. In lieu of speaking to them immediately about their mother's death, Stanley internalizes his devastation and takes the girls on a road trip while he attempts to sort through a myriad of conflicting feelings about the war itself and contemplates how to break the shattering news. Meanwhile, Heidi tries to make sense of her father's uncharacteristic behaviour while Dawn appears to remain cheerfully unreflective.

The film represents the brainchild of producer/star John Cusack and writer/director James C. Strouse. It was sparked off by Cusack's fury at the Bush administration's policy banning footage of coffins returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan appearing on TV screens, and his desire to see those events played out onscreen in the lives of American citizens.

Sharing bad news

Have you ever had to tell someone bad news? How did you approach it? What strategies did you use? How did it go? Is it different when it is someone you don't know (eg. compare the army telling Stan against Stan telling the children)? Does that make it easier or not?

Dying for a reason

Stan was proud that Grace was serving her country in the army. Yet, at times, he finds that hard to hold on to, particularly when others cast doubt on the reasons behind the war. Many people, when someone dies prematurely, want to know why and an understanding of what has happened is part of the grieving process. How important is it for people to believe someone's death has not been in vain? And what happens when that rationale begins to crumble?

Weakness - a provocation?

"In our 200-plus years, America has learned some important lessons, and one is that weakness is provocative. It tempts aggression." So says a politician on one of the newscasts portrayed in the film. Do you agree? What role does a Christian perspective on power and weakness have to play? What do you think that Christian perspective is?

Counting the cost

The film doesn't particularly take a pro or anti war stance. It simply seeks to portray some of the human cost that war incurs, a cost that is often hidden or which we don't think about. How good are we as a society at recognising the cost of warfare undertaken on our behalf? The people of Wootton Bassett have recently paid their tributes to the fallen, but most of us opt to not give these things too much thought. In particular, we hear very little about those who lose limbs or who are injured or traumatised in some other way. Whatever we think of the rights and wrongs of warfare itself, how do we best care for all those who get caught up in it? And how do we hold our politicians to account? Part of the rationale for making the film was as a response to a government policy of burying bad news in not letting people see the coffins of those who had died.

Controlled temptation

At one point, Stan offers to smoke a cigarette with his daughter on the basis that, if she is going to experiment, he would prefer to be there to keep an eye on things. Do you agree?