

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 we only 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

- Juno was the Roman Goddess of childbirth and marriage.
- The film was shot in 31 days. To show all four seasons within such a short schedule required digitally darkening spring cherry blossoms to look like summer flowers and having crew members off camera throw falling silk leaves for autumn. There was a fluke snowstorm (unusual for March in Vancouver) and three different shots were coordinated that day before the snow could melt. Since fake snow can be expensive to put in a shot, this saved the film considerable money for the winter scenes.
- The film won the 2008 Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and earned three other Oscar nominations, including Best Picture and Best Actress for Ellen Page.
- The film has received both criticism and praise from members of both the pro-life and pro-choice communities. The New York Times described its message as "not anti-abortion but rather pro-adulthood." Ellen Page commented, "What I get most frustrated at is when people call it a pro-life movie, which is just absurd... The most important thing is the choice is there, and the film completely demonstrates that." Jason Reitman, the director, thought that it was "fantastic" that both pro-life and pro-choice groups were embracing the film. He said that "Juno seems to be a mirror, and people [on both sides] see themselves in it."

Relating it to the Bible

A biblical adoption story—Exodus 1:22—2:10

Judging others—Matthew 7: 1—5 & Romans 14: 1—5, 10—21

God's unconditional love—Isaiah 49: 13—16 & Romans 5: 6—8



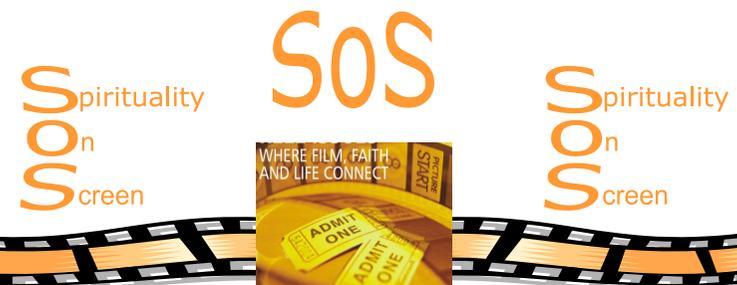
**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

4th Jan	<u>Juno</u>
1st Feb	The Kite Runner
1st Mar	Son of Rambow
4th Apr	Son of Man
3rd May	WALL-E
7th Jun	Into the Wild

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road
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Juno

Juno tells the story of a sixteen year old girl who finds herself pregnant after a one-night stand with a school friend. Initially, she favours an abortion but, after encountering a school friend demonstrating outside the clinic, decides she can't go through with it. Instead, she opts for adoption and sets about finding the "perfect couple" for her future baby.

Teenage culture

Sixty years ago teenagers didn't exist. People simply moved from childhood to adulthood at around 14. It wasn't until the 1950s that advertisers began to market things specifically to "teenagers". Since then, the teenage label has become very much part of our culture, sadly often being used in a negative way. Just think for a moment of words you associate with teenagers. How many are positive? How many negative? What are your initial impressions of Juno and her friends? In what ways is Juno like teenagers you know? And in what ways is she different?

Unplanned pregnancies

According to the Family Planning Association, the UK has higher teenage birth and abortion rates than any other country in Western Europe. Indeed, some newspapers (notably the *Daily Mail*) have criticised the film for giving an unrealistic view of pregnancy and the choices Juno makes. What do you think? If you had been Juno how might you have reacted? And what about Paulie?

What do you think of the way Juno's parents respond to the news? How do you think you might react if Juno was your daughter? If you have children, have you ever been faced with a difficult choice concerning them? What did you do—and what do you wish you had done better?

Judgmentalism

Throughout the film, Juno is judged by teachers, hospital staff and others for being pregnant, while receiving support from family and close friends. It is tempting to judge people for being different to us or for making choices we would not make, usually as a way of making ourselves feel superior. But do we really know what we would do in that situation?

A perfect world

Juno wants the perfect parents for her baby. Meanwhile, Vanessa, the prospective adoptive mother, wants the perfect environment in which to bring up a child. In his turn, Mark is chasing his own unfulfilled dreams. Everyone has a picture of what their perfect world would be like. And everyone, us included, has to come to terms with the fact that, in this life, a perfect world doesn't exist.

Abortion

"All babies want to be borned". Abortion is a complicated issue. For some it remains black and white. For others it is a very grey area indeed. How comfortable are you with the issues? And how do you cope with people who have equally sincere views but who, nonetheless, disagree with your position?

Memorable Quotes

- Juno** I'm pregnant.
Paulie What should we do?
Juno Well, I should just... I was thinking I'd just nip it in the bud before it gets worse. Because they were talking about in health class how pregnancy... It can often lead to an infant.
- Mac** Did you see that coming?
Bren Yeah... but I was hoping she was expelled, or into hard drugs.
Mac That was my first instinct too. Or a DWI... anything but this!
- Leah** All right, how about this one? 'Healthy, educated couple seeking infant to join our family of five. You will be compensated. Help us complete the circle of love.'
Juno Yeesh, they sound like a cult, is what the sound like! And besides they already have three kids. They're just like greedy little bitches!
- Vanessa** Your parents are probably wondering where you are.
Juno Nah... I mean, I'm already pregnant, so what other kind of shenanigans could I get into?
- Juno** I'm losing my faith in humanity.
Mac Think you can narrow it down for me?
Juno I guess I wonder sometimes if people ever stay together for good.
Mac You mean like couples?
Juno Yeah, like people in love. ... I just need to know if it's possible for two people to stay happy together forever, or at least for a few years.
Mac It's not easy, that's for sure. Now, I may not have the best track record in the world, but I have been with your stepmother for 10 years now and I'm proud to say that we're very happy. In my opinion, the best thing you can do is find a person who loves you for exactly what you are. Good mood, bad mood, ugly, pretty, handsome, what have you. That's the kind of person that's worth sticking with.
- Juno** Ow, ow, fuckity-ow! Bren, when do I get that spinal tap thing?
Bren It's called a spinal block. And you can't have it yet, honey. The doctor said you're not dilated enough.
Juno You mean I have to wait for it to get worse? Why can't they just give it to me now?
Bren Well, honey, doctors are sadists who like to play God and watch lesser people scream...
- Juno** I think I'm in love with you.
Paulie You mean as friends?
Juno No... I mean for real. 'Cause you're, like, the coolest person I've ever met, and you don't even have to try, you know...
Paulie I try really hard, actually.