

## 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 film is inspired by the true story of a traditional English men's footwear factory in Northamptonshire which turned to production of kinky boots for transvestites in order to save the ailing family business and safeguard the jobs of the local community.
- ▶ The company was the subject of an episode of the BBC2 documentary *Trouble at the Top* and spotted by the producers of *Calendar Girls* at Harbour Pictures.
- ▶ Broadway producer Daryl Roth loved Kinky Boots so much he helped turn it into a Broadway musical, winning a Tony Award for Best Musical in 2013. A West End production is planned for 2015.
- ▶ The Kinks had a hit song about a transvestite in 1970, named "Lola".
- ▶ The factory sold its kinky boots under the name of Divine Footwear and, at its height, the boots accounted for 50% of the company's production. Sadly, though, production came to an end in 2000. This was partly due to an American firm pulling out on them and leaving them with a huge debt but also by the fact that the niche market that they had so cleverly and successfully exploited had been caught onto by others. Again, cheap imports - which has been the cause of their problems in the first place - began creeping into the market. Although Divine went on to diversify into women's shoes, bags, scent, erotic toys and underwear, in the end the firm had to close altogether.

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

5th Oct	Jimmy's Hall
2nd Nov	The Railway Man
7th Dec	The Fault in Our Stars
4th Jan	<u>Kinky Boots</u>
1st Feb	Pride
1st Mar	Two Days, One Night

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

**10 Bletchington Road  
Islip**

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## Kinky Boots

Charlie Price is trying to save his family shoe factory from ruin. Things look bleak and the lack of orders means inevitable redundancies. And then, by chance, he meets Lola, a sassy drag queen performer from London. When Charlie sees Lola's high heels snap due to the women's shoes he is forced to wear being unable to support the weight of a larger male body, Charlie experiences a "light-bulb" moment. Could designing boots for transvestites be that new niche market which could save the factory? And how will the workers respond to such an idea?

*Kinky Boots* was released in 2005 and was nominated for a Golden Globe Best Actor award for Chiwetel Ejiofor's performance as Lola. It was written by Tim Firth (Calendar Girls) and Geoff Deane and is inspired by a true story.

### Change your mind about someone

Bigotry and prejudice are often based on erroneous stereotypes and it is not until you meet somebody that those barriers are broken down. Are there people from certain sections of society that you have your doubts about? And are there instances in your own life when your prejudices have been challenged through meeting someone and where you have been able to respond positively to Lola's challenge to Don: "Change your mind about someone"?

### Thinking outside the box

Charlie's shoe factory faced a bleak future and would have closed down without finding a new market but it takes courage both to spot a potential new market and then exploit it. Can you think of other examples of firms, businesses or institutions that have remodelled themselves to survive? Such restructuring requires stripping things down to the basics (ie. what are we really about - in this case, making shoes), and then rebuilding something new on those fundamentals. How might that apply to the (Methodist) church in the 21st century?

### Letting go

Both Charlie's and Simon's Dad are frustrated by their children - one disappointed that his son is more interested in football than shoes, the other struggling to understand why his boy wants to dress up in women's clothing. How do we encourage our children to follow their own dream even when it might be vastly different from our own? And how do we deal with the tensions when we believe those dreams to be unrealistic?

### The need to conform

Being one's own person is not always easy, especially when those around you seem so different. Have you had experience of suppressing your own personality in order to fit in with those around you? What difficulties have you had in proudly being who you are and celebrating the person God made you to be?

## Memorable Quotes

- Lola** I have to warn you, Charlie from Northampton, I have a terrible habit of doing exactly the opposite of what people want of me.
- Lola** *[looks horrified]* Burgundy. Please, God, tell me I have not inspired something burgundy. Red. Red. Red. Red, Charlie boy! Red is the colour of sex! Burgundy is the colour of hot water bottles. Red is the colour of sex and fear and danger and signs that say, Do, Not, Enter. All my favourite things in life.
- Big Mike** Well, you wouldn't put a frock on. If you don't want to get off with blokes, why put a frock on?
- Augustus** Thing is, Mike, ask any woman what she likes most in a man. Compassion, tenderness, sensitivity. Traditionally the female virtues. Perhaps what women secretly desire is a man who is fundamentally a woman.
- Lauren** Maybe you judge what you leave behind by what you inspire in other people.
- Charlie** How much do you weigh?  
**Lola** The right amount! How much do you drink?
- Lola** One never knows what joy one might find amongst the unwanted.
- Lola** There are some very funny people out there.
- Lola** Ladies, gentlemen and those who are yet to make up your mind.
- George** *[about Charlie in the boots]* Does he look sexy?  
**Lauren** He does to me George.
- Lola** *[regarding his broken boot heel]* Like most things in life, they cannot stand the weight of a man.
- Charlie** *[describing his plans to make boots for drag queens]* The factory that started the century providing a range of footwear for men will go into the next century providing footwear for ... a range of men.
- Lola** Change your mind about someone.
- Lauren** Lola, you're gonna have to excuse Charlie. We don't have many transvestites in Northampton.
- Lola** I'm not merely a transvestite, sweetheart. I'm also a drag queen. It's a simple equation. A drag queen puts on a frock, looks like Kylie. A transvestite puts on a frock, looks like ... Boris Yeltsin in lipstick.
- Charlie** And remember. You are not making footwear. You are not making boots. You are making two and a half feet of irresistible, tubular sex!