

## 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?

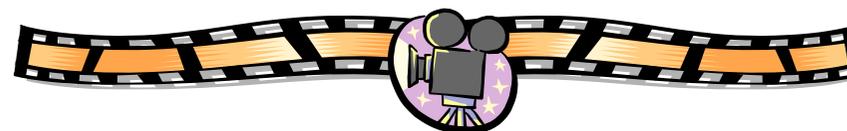
What issues did the film raise for you?

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

- Sofia Vassilieva shaved her hair and eyebrows off in order to play the role of Kate Fitzgerald. Vassilieva described it as being the least she could do to understand Kate's pain. Due to filming in a television show as well as the film, Vassilieva's long hair was turned into a wig for her.
- SoS regulars may remember Abigail Breslin from "Little Miss Sunshine". Also, look out for the reference to the film "Pleasantville", the town where everything works out perfectly.
- **\*\*\* SPOILER ALERT \*\*\***  
Do not read this if you don't want to know how the film or book ends. The film is based on the book by Jodi Picoult. However, there are significant differences. In particular, the ending is not the same. In the novel, Anna wins her court case against her parents thus granting her medical emancipation, but she is involved in a car accident that leaves her brain dead. With Anna unable to make decisions about her body, her lawyer, Campbell Alexander, who was given medical power of attorney, thus giving him the power to make medical decisions concerning Anna, gives permission to have Anna's organs donated. Anna dies, but Kate lives on, believing that Anna took her place in heaven. Other differences include the ages of the Fitzgerald sisters being changed. They are younger in the film than in the book. In the novel, Anna is thirteen and Kate is sixteen, while in the film, Anna is eleven and Kate, fifteen. Also, because of the scenes in the film showing Kate's point of view among a few other elements, Sara Fitzgerald is presented more favourably than in the novel.



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

**3rd Jan Hairspray**  
**7th Feb Aspects of Love I: *Away from her***  
**7th Mar Aspects of Love II: *Rendition***  
**4th Apr Son of Man**  
**9th May Aspects of Love III:  
*My Sister's Keeper***  
**6th Jun Aspects of Love IV: *The Road Home***

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road  
Islip**

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## My Sister's Keeper

*My Sister's Keeper*, based on the Jodi Picoult novel, tells the story of Anna, a girl who has been conceived to be a genetic match for her older sister who suffers from leukemia. Knowing she will have to donate one of her organs to her sister, and unable to live the life she wants because of her sister's dependency on her, she sues her parents for the rights to her own body.

### **Letting go**

One of the major themes of the film revolves around "letting go" and, in particular, Sara's struggles in letting go both Kate, the daughter she longs to keep alive, and Anna, who wants to make her own decisions and not have them made for her. They are the dilemmas faced by all of us. Parents slowly handing over autonomy to their children is part of them growing up. Letting go of something we love dearly is a struggle we all may have to face. Yet, unless we do, they may never become the people they were meant to be.

What have your experiences of "letting go" been like? Have you been able to let go of others and allow them to grow up in their own way, even when they do things we wish they wouldn't? What about people who may have clung on to you? And where has God been in all this? Are there times you have wanted to cling on and he has made you let go—painful times, but nonetheless times which have ultimately shaped you and made you who you are? Mary meets the risen Jesus in the garden and one of the things he tells her is that she is not to cling to him. Part of growing up, physically and spiritually, is letting go.

*For this is not a place for making good.  
It is the space to teach just this:  
that only that which can't be held  
is worth the having.*

### **Helping someone to die**

Life is sacred—but what sort of life? There are some illnesses which rob us of our dignity. There are times when people have been ill for so long, they simply have had enough. How do we react to people, particularly those whom we love, who just long for life to end? Is it ever right to "help them on their way"? And what help would you feel able to give? Withdrawing treatment (eg. not resuscitating someone or not enabling a transplant) is one thing. Actually administering lethal drugs is another. Where do you draw the line? And why?

### **Making the most of what you have**

When life is short, every moment becomes precious. Yet all of us could die tomorrow. How do we make the best use of the time we have? Enjoying a day on the beach, even though it might hasten our end, is surely a better thing to do than remain in a sterile hospital room. But how do we decide what is best? Who should be making those choices? And how can we ensure those we love live lives worth living, even if it may mean us letting go of them sooner than we would like?

## Memorable Quotes

- Anna** Most babies are coincidences ,, products of drunken evenings and lack of birth control. They're accidents. Only people who have trouble making babies actually plan for them. I, on the other hand, am not a coincidence. I was engineered. Born for a particular reason ... to save my sister's life.
- Anna** I want to sue my parents for the rights to my own body.
- Anna** I wouldn't even be alive if Kate wasn't sick. I'm a designer baby. I was made in a dish to be spare parts for Kate.
- Sara** I'm not gonna let her die. You know that, right?
- Doctor** I'd like to suggest something completely off the record. ... Have you considered another child? Umbilical blood can be an incredibly effective tool. It's like a miracle.
- Sara** Well, how would you know that the new child would be a match?
- Doctor** We could make sure of it ... In a test tube.
- Brian** A donor child?
- Doctor** It's not for everybody.
- Sara** Well, we gotta do it. We gotta try.
- Anna** I'm important, too, Mum. I'm important, too.
- Judge** You're not an idiot. I see idiots every day. You're not even close.
- Judge** There's no shame in dying.
- Kelly** I know it's important for you to feel like you never gave up. Who are you if you're not this crazy mother fighting for her kid's life? But there's a whole world out there. You don't see anything of it, nothing. Sooner or later, you ... you gotta stop. You gotta let go. I can't.
- Jesse** Kate's dying and everybody knows it. You just love her so much that you don't want to let her go. But it's time, Mom. Kate's ready.
- Sara** That's not true.
- Brian** Yes, it is. She told you a million times. You just didn't wanna hear.
- Anna** Once upon a time I thought I was put on earth to save my sister. And in the end, I couldn't do it. I realise now that wasn't the point. The point was, I had a sister. She was fantastic.