

## 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

- ▶ *Pride* premiered at the 2014 Cannes film festival where it received a standing ovation. It has since been met with very positive reviews and was nominated for a Golden Globe (Best Comedy or Musical) and three BAFTAs (Best British Film, Best Supporting Actress, Outstanding Debut by British Writer or Director).
- ▶ The song 'For a Friend', which is heard playing over the end credits, was actually written for the real life Mark Ashton by The Communards, whose members Jimmy Somerville and Richard Coles were both friends of Mark.
- ▶ There are cameo appearances of the real people some of the characters are based on in the Westminster Bridge scene. Reggie Blennerhassett and Ray Aller (played by Chris Overton and Joshua Hill), Gethin Roberts (played by Andrew Scott), Gethin's Mum (played by Olwen Medi), Mike Jackson (played by Joe Gilgun) and Ray Goodspeed (not directly portrayed in the movie but a leading light in LGSM).
- ▶ The film was released straight to DVD in North America and the publicity material was changed so as to remove all references to lesbians and gays.
- ▶ Many of the characters are based on real people. Joe, however, was one of the film's fictional characters, created to be an "audience surrogate" (ie. someone with whom the audience can identify, or who expresses the questions and confusion of the audience.)

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

**4th Jan Kinky Boots**  
**1st Feb Pride**  
**8th Mar Two Days, One Night**  
**5th Apr After Life**  
**10th May Belle**  
**31st May TBC**

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road**  
**Islip**

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## Pride

Based on real life events, *Pride* tells the moving story of a group of gay and lesbian activists determined to help the miners during the strike of 1984, even when their initial approaches are rejected by some members of the mining community who have difficulty in accepting them for who they are.

### The outsider

What initially drives Mark and his friends to form “Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners” is a realisation that both groups are “outsiders”. The bile and hatred that they, as homosexuals, have experienced for many years is now being directed at the striking miners and, in solidarity, they reach out to help. Have you had any experience of being “an outsider”? And what has it meant to then discover you have a friend? We celebrate at Christmas how Jesus came to the “outsider” - those on the edge of society, whether shepherds, lepers, prostitutes, “sinners” or others shunned by polite society. But how much do we, as a church, still live up to that? Who do you think the outsiders in our society now are? And how do you think we can we reach out that hand of friendship?

### The Good Samaritan

Help for the miners comes from, to them, a very unexpected corner - one that they actually struggle to accept. As such, the story echoes that of the Good Samaritan, and the shock Jews would have had in coming to terms with help from someone who, in their mind, stood for everything they did not. Have you had experience of receiving help from an unexpected corner - from someone you didn't expect or who saw life in a very different way to you? How easy do you find it to see God in everyone you meet, whatever their background?

### Pride vs Shame

Pride plays a variety of roles in the film. There is pride in the gay community in owning who they are and not hiding away in shame. As Mark at one point says, the trick is to use those words of abuse used by others as a badge of honour, and thus rob them of their potency. Yet it is also pride in the mining community which drives them to rebuff Mark and his friends. When, for you, has a sense of pride helped and when has it hindered? How do we get the balance right?

### Being honest about who you are

Joe is having trouble coming to terms with his sexuality and who he is, both wanting to acknowledge it but afraid of the reaction he will get from his family and those around him. Are there things within your own character that you find it difficult to acknowledge, fearful of what others may think or how they might respond? How, as a church community, can we provide that open and safe space for people to be truly honest about who they are?

### Manipulating the system

Have you had experience of people manipulating the rules of a group or society in order to ensure they get their way? How can we avoid “process” preventing proper debate? Or does due process actually help debate?

## Memorable Quotes

- Dai** Where are you from?  
**Gethin** Rhyl, originally.  
**Dai** No, no way!  
**Hefina** Listen, we don't mind the gays, and the lesbians, that's fine. But don't you dare be bringing people from North Wales down here!
- Joe** The thing is, I'm actually from Bromley  
**Mike** Well, don't worry about that. We're a broad church.
- Reggie** Nobody said anything about hiding who we are.  
**Ray** Yes, they did. You.  
**Reggie** I just think if everybody takes it easy on the ...  
**Mark** Flamboyance.  
**Reggie** We're more likely to fit in.  
**Jonathan** I'm sorry, just to be clear, when you say “flamboyance”, you mean gay. And when you say “everyone”, you mean me.  
**Reggie** Jonathan.  
**Jonathan** Good. It's just that I haven't spoken 1950s in quite a while.
- Joe** I've never met a lesbian before.  
**Steph** Really? I've never met anyone who irons their jeans.  
**Joe** I live at home.
- Steph** What are you? Ten?  
**Joe** I'm twenty.  
**Steph** I wouldn't go spreading that around. You're illegal, darling. Sixteen for the breeders. Twenty-one for the gays. Did you learn nothing on that march? You're still a minor.
- Joe** Jesus!  
**Steph** Victory to the Minors!
- Receptionist** There are no gay artists on this label. I'm sorry.  
**Mark** They don't have to be gay. That's the point. This is a coming together of all different people.
- Dai** I've had a lot of new experiences during this strike. Speaking in public, standing on a picket line, and now I'm in a gay bar.
- Jonathan** Well, if you don't like it, you can go home.  
**Dai** As a matter of fact, I do like it. Beer's a bit expensive, mind. But, really, there's only one difference between this and a bar in South Wales. The women. They're a lot more feminine in here.  
*[the crowd laughs and cheers]*
- Dai** What I'd really like to say to you tonight is thank you. If you're one of the people that's put money in these buckets, if you've supported LGSM, then thank you, because what you've given us is more than money. It's friendship. When you're in a battle against an enemy so much bigger, so much stronger than you, well, to find out you had a friend you never knew existed, well, that's the best feeling in the world. So, thank you.