

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.

So here are some questions you can apply to any film. Sometimes, you may feel that there is nothing much to say—but that itself can be its own message. Other films can be truly life changing! But whatever film you are watching, enjoy the experience!

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? How does the Bible tackle the issues the film raises?

Has the director taken a distinctive approach to filming or telling the story? If so, how does the film benefit from being made in this way?

Some Shrek trivia

In Yiddish, Shrek means monster (from the German for terror or fright).

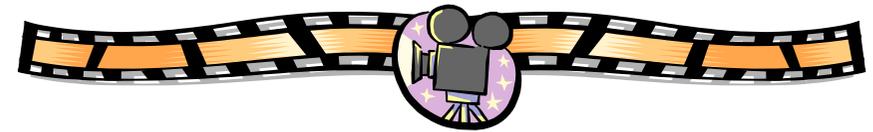
The principal actors never met each other. All read their parts separately, with a reader feeding them the lines.

The computer animation took more than four and a half years to complete.

The song at Shrek and Fiona's reception, "I'm a Believer", was chosen specifically because of the line "I thought love was only true in fairy tales."

Gingy, the Gingerbread Man, later became a spokescharacter for Wal-Mart.

Shrek 3 is due out in 2007.



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

15th Jan*	Bruce Almighty
5th Feb*	The Mission
12th Mar	<u>Shrek</u>
9th Apr	The Last Temptation of Christ
14th May	Bagdad Cafe
11th Jun	21 Grams

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

**10 Bletchington Road
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)
Or email info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk**

*Please note change of date



Shrek

Shrek tells the story of a reclusive ogre and a chatterbox donkey who end up on a quest to rescue a beautiful princess on behalf of Lord Farquaad, who is too timid and obnoxious a character to go himself. In the process, the film pokes fun at all sorts of fairy-tale stereotypes—the princess isn't sleeping, the prince isn't charming, the ogre is the hero—and in so doing reminds us all that it is not outward appearances that count but what is underneath. Interestingly, the only characters that refer to Shrek by name are Fiona and Donkey. To everyone else, he is "Beast", "Ogre", "That Thing", "It" or "Him". Yet, as the old saying goes, "you cannot judge a book by its cover".

Apart from the plot, the film's success also lies in the many clever references to other fairy tales and other films, thus ensuring it was a hit with both children and adults alike. Many of the jokes are at Disney's expense, DreamWorks having started off when one of its co-founders was forced to resign as head of Walt Disney film studios.

Some key issues

Acceptance

Love's true kiss breaks the spell that has been cast on Fiona and she is returned to love's true form. Unlike "Beauty and the Beast", where the beast returns to a handsome prince, here Fiona is not transformed physically but recognised to be beautiful as she is and loved for who she is. Such a moment brings wholeness and healing – and new life.

Loyalty and perseverance

Shrek and Donkey are an unlikely pair. To begin with Shrek wishes Donkey would simply go away. Yet a real friendship develops, one in which they can be honest and supportive of each other.

Going beyond the stereotypes

In standard fairy stories, the roles of the various characters are well-known. Here those stereotypes are broken. We, too, in our own lives are often bound by certain expectations. Our friends and family expect us to do particular things. Sometimes such expectations can be empowering. But often they are not, and then we need to have the courage to break out and do the right thing, even when it may not be what the world expects.

Relating it to the Bible

Mark 5: 21—34

Jesus asks "Who touched me?" And it is that question that we should be asking, too. Who, really, is the person behind the events and actions that we see? We need to really get to know those involved so that they become people rather

Some quotes

- Shrek:** Little donkey. Take a look at me, what am I?
Donkey: Really tall?
Shrek: No. I'm an ogre. You know, grab your torch and pitchfork. Doesn't that bother you?
Donkey: Nope.
Shrek: Really?
Donkey: Really, Really. Man I like you. What's your name?
Shrek: Er, Shrek.
- Shrek:** Well it's no wonder you don't have any friends.
Donkey: Wow, only a true friend would be that truly honest.
- Lord Farquaad:** Some of you may die, but that is a sacrifice I am willing to make.
- Shrek:** That'll do, Donkey. That'll do.
- Shrek:** Donkey, two things okay? Shut... up.
- Shrek:** If I treat you so badly, then why are you still here?
Donkey: Because that's what friends do, they FORGIVE EACH OTHER.
- Donkey:** Hey, what's your problem, Shrek, what you got against the whole world anyway, huh?
Shrek: Look, I'm not the one with the problem, okay? It's the world that seems to have a problem with *me*! People take one look at me and go "Aargh! Help! Run! A big stupid ugly ogre!" They judge me before they even know me - that's why I'm better off alone...
- Fiona:** By night one way, by day another / This shall be the norm / Until you find true love's first kiss / Then... take love's true form.
- Donkey:** C'mon, princess, you're not that ugly. All right, you are ugly. But you're only like this at night. Shrek's ugly 24/7.
- Shrek:** Fiona? Are you all right?
Fiona: Yes. But, I don't understand. I'm supposed to be beautiful.
Shrek: But you are beautiful!

than nameless faces in the crowd.

Matthew 23: 25—28; Galatians 2:6

These, and other passages, remind us of the danger of judging by appearances. Beauty is within, as Fiona discovers at the end of the film.