

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 based on an original idea by Matthew Robinson and was written jointly, and subsequently directed, by Matthew and Ricky Gervais. This is the first film Ricky has directed.
- ▶ The original title for the film was *This Side of the Truth*.
- ▶ The wedding chapel at the end of the movie is located in Sudbury, Massachusetts, west of the Wayside Inn. The Martha-Mary Chapel was built by Henry Ford in 1938-9. Also visible outside the chapel is the red schoolhouse made famous by Mary Sawyer, who had a lamb follow her to school.
- ▶ The film was nominated for the Peter Sellers Award for Comedy as part of the Evening Standard British Film Awards in 2010.



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

4th Nov War Horse
2nd Dec Tsotsi (replacing The Bishop's Wife)
6th Jan Kundun
3rd Feb In Time
3rd Mar The Invention of Lying
14th Apr The Hunger Games

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)
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The Invention of Lying

It's a world where everyone tells the truth and just about anything they're thinking. Mark Bellison is a screenwriter, about to be fired. He's short and chunky with a flat nose and that means he hasn't a hope with Anna, the woman he loves. At a bank, on the spur of the moment he blurts out a fib, with eye-popping results. Then, when his mother's on her deathbed, frightened of the eternal void awaiting her, Mark invents fiction. The hospital staff overhear his description of Heaven, believe every word, and tell others. Soon Mark is a prophet, his first inventive screenplay makes him rich, and he's basically a good guy. But will that be enough for Anna?

Made in 2009 and starring Ricky Gervais and Jennifer Garner, this film invites us to reflect on the importance of telling the truth and whether a truly honest world would be as desirable as we might think.

Telling the truth

Should you always tell the truth? If not, in what circumstances might you decide to varnish the truth? Have there been times in your life when you have not been as truthful as you could have been? What were the consequences? What examples can you think of in the Bible of people who have been less than truthful?

Comfortable Religion

Mark suddenly finds himself at the heart of a new religion when he paints a very attractive picture of heaven. Some people continue to claim that religion is just about comforting stories to help us get through life and face death. How do we know our faith is more than that? How important is it for our bible accounts to be literally true? If they contain some truth about the way the world is, does it matter if they are true or not? What things in your faith need, for you, to be literally true such that your faith would crumble otherwise? The stories in Genesis? The virgin birth? The physical resurrection?

Being let down

Have you ever felt let down by someone who hasn't told you the truth? How did you feel? Was there a reason why they had embroidered the truth? Did that help or make it worse?

Good lies and bad lies

Mark tells lies both to gain advantage, but also to help others. He also refrains from lying to Anna because the result then "wouldn't have meant anything." With the power to shape the truth comes great responsibility. How well do you think Mark copes with that responsibility?

An honest world

What did you think of the film's portrayal of this alternative reality where no one could tell a lie? What other consequences might there be?

Memorable Quotes

Anna What's your name?

Brian Short Fat Brian.

Anna You are so much more than just that!

Richard *[surprised by the homeowner during a burglary]* What are you doing here? It's Monday at noon. You're not supposed to be home now!

Man If you must know, I'm incredibly stressed at work, I've come home early, I'm having a bit of me-time. More importantly, what are you doing?

Richard Well, I was gonna rob your house.

Man I don't like that idea. Not a fan of that at all.

Richard I'm not gonna do it now, because you're in.

Man Do you know what's gonna happen? I'm gonna call the police, you're gonna be arrested.

Richard Well, I'm just gonna leave, and you don't know my name.

Man What is your name?

Richard Richard Bellison.

Anna's Mother Just because he's talking to the man in the sky doesn't mean he's good enough to be your friend.

Mark *[calling Anna]* Hi, this is Mark.

Anna Oh, hi Mark. Didn't you get my email?

Mark The one about being not good enough for you?

Anna That's the one.

Mark Yeah, got that. Cheers.

Bob Hi, I'm Bob. I'm here today to ask you to continue buying coke. Sure it's a drink you've been drinking for years, and if you still enjoy it, I'd like to remind you to buy it again sometime soon. It's basically just brown sugar water, we haven't changed the ingredients much lately, so there's nothing new I can tell you about that. We changed the can around a little bit though and we added a polar bear so the kids like us. Coke is very high in sugar and like any high calorie soda it can lead to obesity in children and adults who don't sustain a very healthy diet. So that's it, it's coke. It's very famous, everyone knows it. I'm Bob, I work for coke, and I'm asking you to not stop buying coke. That's all. It's a bit sweet. Thank you.