

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?

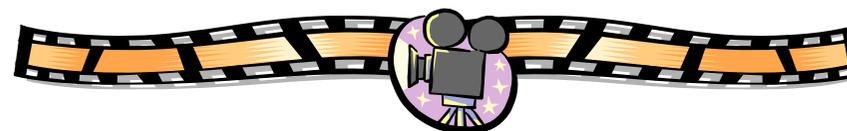
What issues did the film raise for you?

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

- The film is based on the novel *Push* by the poet Sapphire, written in 1996. The character of Precious is based on an adult student Sapphire taught in Harlem in the 1980s, though the story itself is a combination of different people's life experiences.
- The film won both an Oscar and a BAFTA this year for Mo'Nique as Best Supporting Actress in her role as Mary. It also won an Oscar for Best Screenplay based on previously published material.
- It took only five weeks to shoot.
- Mo'Nique accepted her role in order to raise awareness of sexual abuse. A confessed victim of incest herself, the actress initially had great reservations about playing the part, but ultimately found the experience very therapeutic.
- General Educational Development (GED) tests are a group of five subject test which, when passed, certify that the taker has American or Canadian high school level academic skills. Also known as a Good Enough Diploma.
- BET stands for Black Entertainment Television.



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

**9th Jan Toy Story 3 (2.30pm with FEATURES
@ Tackley)**

6th Feb Departures

6th Mar Heavens Above!

3rd Apr Precious

8th May Creation

5th Jun Keeping the Faith

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road
Islip**

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Precious

Set in Harlem in 1987, *Precious* is the story of Claireece “Precious” Jones (Gabourey Sidibe), a sixteen-year old African-American girl born into a life no one would want. At the beginning of the film, she is pregnant for the second time by her absent father; at home, she must wait hand and foot on her mother (Mo’Nique), a poisonously angry woman who abuses her emotionally and physically. School is a place of chaos, and Precious has reached the ninth grade with good marks and an awful secret: she can neither read nor write.

Precious may sometimes be down, but she is never out. Beneath her impassive expression is a watchful, curious young woman with an unformed but unshakeable sense that other possibilities exist for her. Threatened with expulsion, Precious is offered the chance to transfer to an alternative school, “Each One, Teach One”. Precious doesn’t know the meaning of “alternative,” but her instincts tell her this is the chance she has been waiting for. In the literacy workshop taught by the patient yet firm Ms Rain (Paula Patton), Precious begins a journey that will lead her from darkness, pain and powerlessness to light, love and self-determination.

Some questions to ponder (from *the Damaris Reel Dialogue discussion guide*)

The movie speaks to the fact that we are all precious. Whether it is our ability to overcome something horrible or finding something powerful within ourselves we didn’t know existed or the realisation that our own self-worth is far greater than we often admit, we are all precious.

What type of person do you think Precious is? How would you describe her to someone else? Based on the circumstances in her life, what might you expect from Precious? What do you think “society” would expect?

What do you think it is within Precious’ character that leads her to overcome her situation?

Are there any parallels between Precious’ life and yours?

The film (and the book) is virtually devoid of men. What do you think that says about the roles of men and women in Precious’ life? How about society at large? Do you think things have changed in the last 30 years since the time the story was set?

What roles do the people around you—men, women, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, friends—play in your life? How have they shaped and moulded you? And what about your own role in the lives of others?

We are all precious to God, loved for who we are, made in his own image. What does it mean to you to know that? How good are you at really believing it? And if **everyone** is valued and precious in God’s sight, what does that mean for the way you relate to others, particularly those you find difficult or simply do not understand?

Memorable Quotes

Precious My name is Clareece “Precious” Jones. I wish I had a light-skinned boy friend with real nice hair. And I wanna be on the cover of a magazine. But first I wanna be in one of them BET videos.

Precious *[Crying hysterically]* Nobody loves me!
Ms Rain People do love you, Precious.

Precious Please don't lie to me, Ms. Rain! Love ain't done nothing for me... but beat me... rape me... call me an animal! Make me feel worthless! Make me sick!

Ms Rain *[Tears begin falling from her eyes]* That wasn't love, Precious. Your baby loves you. *I* love you!

Mrs Weiss You know, let's talk about your father. Tell me about your relationship with him.

Precious I don't know much more than you do, Mrs White.

Mrs Weiss That's Mrs "Weiss." Talk to me about the little you do know about your father. It is important, whether you know it or not.

Precious He give me his baby and my one before it, but I don't never see him...

Mrs Lichtenstein *[In the principal's office]* Hello, Clareese. Are you pregnant?
[Precious looks away]

Mrs Lichtenstein You're 16; you're still in Junior High School; and you're pregnant with your second child. Is that correct?
[No reply]

Mrs Lichtenstein Are you pregnant, again? What happened Clareese?

Precious I had sex, Mrs Lichtenstein.

Precious *[Taking an assessment test]* There's always something wrong with these tests. These tests paint a picture of me with no brain. These tests paint a picture of me and my mother, my whole family as less than dumb. Just ugly black grease, need to be wiped away, find a job for.

Ms Rain *[to Precious]* PUSH yourself.

Precious The other day, I cried. But you know what? F*** that day. That's why God, or whoever, makes other days.

Mrs Weiss Let's talk about the abuse in your household. You know what I'm talking about.

Mary *[Tearfully]* You sit there and you judge me, and you write them notes on your notepad, because you think you know who I am!

Precious Every day I tell myself somethin' gonna happen, like I'm gonna break through, or somebody gonna break through to me. I'm gonna be normal, and pay attention, and sit at the front of the class. Someday.