

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?

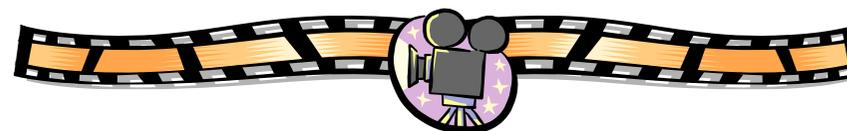
What issues did the film raise for you?

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 true story of Khalid El-Masri who was mistaken for Khalid al-Masri, a known member of al-Qaeda (the names are spelt the same way in Arabic script). El-Masri, a German citizen, was detained at the Macedonian border en route to Skopje for a holiday, flown to Afghanistan, interrogated and allegedly tortured by the CIA for several months.
- The movie also has similarities to the case of Maher Arar, a telecommunications engineer with dual Syrian/Canadian citizenship. He was detained during a stop-over at John F. Kennedy International Airport in September 2002 on his way home to Canada. He was falsely accused of links to al-Qaeda and held in solitary confinement in the US for nearly two weeks before being deported to his native Syria, where he was tortured and detained for almost a year. On his release he was fully exonerated by the Canadian government.
- In the film, the Muslims are heard saying "Amen" after their blessing. In fact, Muslims never ever say "Amen" after "May the peace and blessings and glory of God, the Almighty, be upon you".
- The film was directed by Gavin Hood, whose also directed the South African film "Tsotsi".
- Jake Gyllenhaal also starred in "Brokeback Mountain", a performance for which he won a BAFTA and was nominated for an Oscar as Best Supporting Actor.
- SoS regulars may remember Reese Witherspoon from "Pleasantville" where she played Jennifer who, along with her brother David, found herself transported back in time.



**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
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Rendition

After a terrorist bombing kills an American envoy in a foreign country, an investigation leads to an Egyptian-born chemical engineer who has been living in the States for years. He subsequently disappears on a flight from South Africa to Washington. While his American wife is left struggling to find out what has happened to him, he is flown out and undergoes interrogation and torture. Meanwhile, an America CIA operative, observing the interrogation, is forced to question his assignment as he becomes party to the man's unorthodox interrogation.

Country right or wrong

How much loyalty do you owe to the country to which you belong? And what do you do when you feel it is beginning to step out of line? How do you react to Corrine's belief that the fate of one person is effectively a casualty of war, but if it potentially saves the lives of 7,000 it is a price worth paying?

What about loyalty to your family? Does that differ? And, if so, how?

Keeping faith

What lengths are you prepared to go to for the one you love? How well do you really know them? If they suddenly disappeared, what would you do? And if you suddenly discovered a truth about them which shocked you, how would you respond? Would you intervene? Walk away? Put your own life on the line? Or what?

Holding firm

During persecutions of Christians in imperial Japan, people were asked to stamp on an image of Christ in the belief that Christians would refuse and thus could be identified. Some Christians refused—and were summarily executed. Others did not—and their lives were spared. Today, many people across the world are still persecuted in one way or another for their faith. When is it right to hold firm? And when is it okay to say whatever your interrogators want, so that you can live to fight another day?

Dying for what you believe in

Today's suicide bombers, rightly or wrongly, nonetheless firmly believe (or have been made to believe) that what they are doing is right. They thus willingly sacrifice themselves for "the good of others". Jesus, too, gave himself for others, though in his case, as with many noble examples of self-sacrifice since, his dying didn't cause others to die at the same time. However, the question remains the same: are you prepared to die for what you believe in? Under what circumstances? And when would you opt for an alternative? And, if you might be prepared to die for your beliefs, would you also be prepared to kill for them—or to allow others to kill on your behalf?

Memorable Quotes

Douglas This is my first torture.

Corrine I'm very sorry for your distress, I wish I could help you with your problem but I simply cannot.

Isabella My problem? My problem?

Senator Hawkins [overlapping] Young lady, if you just leave your name and information ...

Isabella You have my name. You have my home address, you have my phone number, you have everything! You have my husband!

[they look at each other and begin to leave]

Isabella Please don't walk away from me! Just tell me where he is!

Guard [restraining her] Ma'am.

Isabella JUST TELL ME HE'S OKAY!

Corrine Honey, this is nasty business. There are upwards of 7,000 people in central London alive tonight, because of information that we elicited just this way. So maybe you can put your head on your pillow and feel proud for saving one man while 7,000 perish, but I got grandkids in London, so I'm glad I'm doing this job... and you're not.

Corrine Why don't you ask your boss how badly he really does want to stick his neck out for a terrorist.

Alan Well, he might for due process. Maybe I should have a copy of the Constitution sent to your office.

Douglas In all the years you've been doing this, how often can you say that we've produced truly legitimate intelligence? Once? Twice? Ten times? Give me a statistic; give me a number. Give me a pie chart, I love pie charts. Anything, anything that outweighs the fact that if you torture one person you create ten, a hundred, a thousand new enemies.

Douglas "I fear you speak upon the rack
Where men enforced do speak anything." (Merchant of Venice)

Relating it to the Bible

Mark 14: 53—72 Jesus before high priest; Peter's denial

John 15:13 "Greater love hath no one than this, that they lay their life down for their friends."

Acts 7 The death of Stephen