

## 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 Shawshank trivia

When Warden Samuel Norton opens the Bible where Andy hid his rock pick, it opens to the Book of Exodus, which details the redemption of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt.

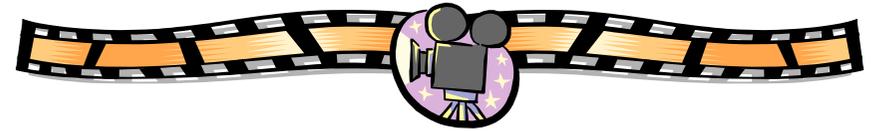
Although a very modest hit in cinemas, it became one of the highest grossing video rentals of all time.

During the scene where Brooks feeds his crow a maggot, the American Humane Association objected on the grounds that it was cruel to the maggot. A maggot that had died from natural causes was found, and the scene was filmed.

Warden Norton whistles the hymn "Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott", the English title of which is "A Mighty Fortress is Our God".

Note the various similarities to "The Count of Monte Cristo".

TREAL THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION LOVE ACTUALLY THE GOSPEL ACCORDING T



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

<b>10th Jul</b>	<b>Babette's Feast</b>
<b>14th Aug</b>	<b>The Incredibles</b>
<b>11th Sep</b>	<b>Jesus of Montreal</b>
<b>9th Oct</b>	<b><u>The Shawshank Redemption</u></b>
<b>13th Nov</b>	<b>Love Actually</b>
<b>11th Dec</b>	<b>The Gospel according to Matthew</b>

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road  
Islip**

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



TO MATTHEW BABETTE'S FEAST THE INCREDIBLES JESUS OF MONTREAL THE SHAW

# The Shawshank Redemption

*The Shawshank Redemption* is based on a story by Stephen King. Andy Dufresne is a young and successful banker whose life changes drastically when he is convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his wife and her lover. Set in the 1940's, the film shows how Andy, with the help of his friend Red, the prison entrepreneur, turns out to be a most unconventional prisoner. His spirit and determination, leads us into a world full of imagination, filled with courage and desire. As such it is a story of hope and freedom: freedom from isolation, from rule, from bigotry and hate.

## Some key issues

### **Hope**

Throughout Andy is sustained by memories of the outside, especially of its music. Instead of lamenting the injustices done to him, both inside and outside prison, he focuses on what cannot be seen and waits for it with patience. Long before he actually breathes the outside air, Andy is free, for he has been freed inside himself.

This hope within Andy is also something he seeks to share, through the music of Mozart. It proves to be a costly act, but one he believes is worth paying.

### **Hypocrisy**

The warden preaches the Bible to keep the prisoners in control but by his actions contradicts everything the Word of God is meant to be.

### **The importance of a name**

Near the beginning a man dies and Andy wants to know his name. "He must have a name". All the way through, names are carved on the prison walls and both Brooks and Red leave their carved names at the boarding house.

### **Freedom**

The film picks up a cinematic tradition in which prison becomes an image of the human condition and explores how human dignity and heroism can transcend that prison setting. Although few of us will end up in prison ourselves, there can be plenty of other things which imprison us: a dead-end job, a lingering illness, a move to a hostile or strange place where we despair of ever finding a new friend. It is then that we desperately need the hope that sustained Andy in order to be set free.

---

## Relating it to the Bible

### **Romans 8: 24—25**

Andy's inner freedom is that which Paul describes—a freedom that all who are "in Christ" can know.

### **Luke 13: 22—30**

Those who seem worthy on the outside are hypocrites who contrive to avoid the narrow door while urging others through it in the name of the Bible. Who then will

## Some quotes

**Red:** Prison life consists of routine, and then more routine.

**Warden:** I believe in two things: discipline and the Bible. Here you'll receive both. Put your trust in the Lord; your ass belongs to me. Welcome to Shawshank.

**Red:** These walls are kind of funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, gets so you depend on them. That's institutionalized. They send you here for life, that's exactly what they take. The part that counts, anyways.

**Red:** Let me tell you something my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane.

**Andy:** That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you... Haven't you ever felt that way about music?

**Red:** I played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost interest in it though. Didn't make much sense in here.

**Andy:** Here's where it makes the most sense. You need it so you don't forget.

**Red:** Forget?

**Andy:** Forget that there things in this world not carved out of grey stone. That there's a small place inside of us they can never lock away, and that place is called hope.

**Andy:** Hope is a good thing. Maybe the best of things. And a good thing never dies.

**Warden:** Salvation lies within.

**Andy:** Get busy living, or get busy dying.

**Red:** I have no idea to this day what them two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don't *want* to know. Some things are best left unsaid. I like to think they were singin' about something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words, and makes your heart ache because of it ... It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made these walls dissolve away ... and for the briefest of moments every last man at Shawshank felt free.

be saved? Those who were last. Those like Andy, Red, and like Tommy, who is killed for the sake of truth.

### **Hebrews 12: 5—7, 11—13**

Andy is unjustly imprisoned for twenty years. There is a kind of cruel irony here for the "bad luck" that befalls Andy: "... whom the Lord loves, he disciplines." There is hope as well, because Andy is a man who has suffered wrongly, and he makes the best of the situation. "Discipline brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it."