

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?

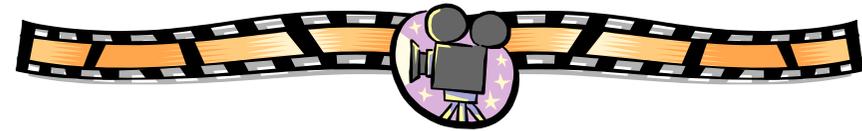
What issues did the film raise for you?

What character(s) do you most identify with and why?

Some trivia about the film

- Twentieth Century Fox registered the internet domain SIMPSONSMOVIE.COM on 22 April 1997. Work on the script began in 2003. 158 drafts were written. Virtually none of the gags from the original draft made it to the final cut. The script for the voice work was to be kept so secret that the producers personally shredded the script after every voicing session.
- For the entire month of July 2007, as part of a campaign to hype the July 27th opening of the movie, 12 "7-Elevens" stores all over North America changed their names to Kwik-E-Marts, and begun selling products like Buzz Cola, KrustyO's cereal, Radioactive Man comics, and Squishees - including WooHoo! Blue Vanilla flavour.
- A 180ft doughnut-brandishing Homer Simpson was painted next to the Cerne Abbas chalk giant on the hill above Cerne Abbas, Dorset, to promote this film.
- The states bordering Springfield are: Nevada, Maine, Kentucky and Ohio. This pays homage the long running joke in the TV series of not pinning down exactly where Springfield is located.
- Among the list of foreign language signs the one in Korean translates to "Learn English with a Texas accent", and the one in Russian says "Learn English or leave".
- The painting hanging above Homer and Marge's bed in Alaska is signed "Marge". This pays homage to the painting of the sail-boat above the couch in The Simpson's house, also done by Marge.
- The magazine Grandpa is reading, when Homer falls through the roof, is called Oatmeal Enthusiast. This is in fact a genuine Internet based magazine/journal.
- Homage is made to various films and programmes in the movie. Can you spot references to: *Titanic*, *Spiderman*, *Harry Potter*, *Disney*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Happy Feet* and *Lord of The Rings*?

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

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|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 6th Jan | Star Wars |
| 3rd Feb | Into Great Silence |
| 2nd Mar | Babel |
| 30th Mar | The Queen |
| 27th Apr | <u>The Simpsons Movie</u> |
| 1st Jun | Shooting Dogs |

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

**10 Bletchingdon Road
Islip**

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Web: www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk**



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The Simpsons

Springfield's lake becomes so polluted that the Environmental Protection Agency isolate the town in a huge bubble. The Simpsons, facing the wrath of the town following its discovery of who was responsible for the pollution, are forced to flee and manage to escape to Alaska. On learning that the EPA are planning to destroy Springfield once and for all and replace it with a new Grand Canyon, Marge insists that they must return to save the town from its fate. Homer, however, is not convinced the town any longer deserves their support.

Parenting and family life

Those familiar with the TV series will know that Homer is not the ideal role-model for a father, a theme which is further developed in the film. However, it should also be remembered that the family continues to stay together through all sorts of trials and tribulations and that there is a deep sense of love between them all—somewhere! The Bible, too, has its fair share of dysfunctional families—just read Genesis and look at Jacob's family. Yet God works through them, and God can be found in the life of the Simpsons, too.

Hearing the voice of God

People, whether religious or not, often find themselves "praying" in difficult situations or when seeking guidance about a future direction. What are we expecting prayer to "do" on such occasions? What happens when we get a response and how do we deal with it? Have you ever had a religious experience—whether like Grampa's or in another way?

God has always been a God who communicates with his creation (eg. Hebrews 1: 1-2), though God's prophets rarely had a receptive audience. In the movie, Grampa was seemingly used by God as a prophet, yet out of a whole church-full of people, only Marge was prepared to hear the message. Are we ready to hear God's voice today? Who might be the prophets through whom he is speaking? How do we determine whether a message is truly from God and worth acting on?

Looking for answers

At one point in the movie, Homer flicks through the Bible and exclaims: "This book doesn't have any answers!" Do you think that is true? Should we expect the Bible to have answers? And, if so, to what sort of questions? Or is it a different sort of book altogether?

Making choices

There are times throughout the film when choices have to be made: free donuts vs. properly disposing of waste; going to Alaska; returning from Alaska. Behind them lie conflicts between what the characters want, what their partners want, what is best for the environment, what is best for others, along with a deep-rooted love of those they care for. How do we make decisions? Where do our priorities lie? And how do we face up to the responsibility of make a wrong choice?

Stewardship of creation

In the biblical story of creation, "God saw that it was good". That is no longer the case. Global warming aside, our greed to consume our planet's resources is polluting the planet. Yet Genesis 2:1-3 tells us that the completion of creation is not humanity, but a day off—a day of re-creation. How do you engage in recreation? How can we help recreate our planet? And how do we properly balance activity (work) with recreation in today's world?

The end of the world

If you were suddenly told you only had an hour to live, what would you do during those last moments?

Memorable quotes

Ned Flanders Ok, boys, when you meet Jesus, be sure to call Him Mr Christ.
Todd Flanders Will Buddha be there?
Ned Flanders No.

Marge Simpson Mmmm, best kiss of my life.
Homer Simpson Best kiss of your life, so far.

Montgomery Burns Smithers... I don't believe in suicide, but if you'd like to try it, it might cheer me up to watch.

EPA Official S-sir, I'm afraid you've gone mad with power...
Russ Cargill Of course I have. You ever tried going mad without power? It's boring. No one listens to you!

Homer Simpson [*flipping through the Bible*] This book doesn't have any answers!

Ned Flanders [*surprised by the pink mutated multi-eyed squirrel*] Well, this certainly seems odd, but, hey, who am I to question the work of the Almighty? Oh, we thank you Lord for this mighty fine intelligent design! Good job!

Marge Simpson Wait! There's something I have to get!
[*Runs into house, unlocks "Keepsake Cabinet", grabs tape, washes dirty dish, and races out, mere steps ahead of fireball*]

Homer Simpson [*Marge gets back into car*] What'd you get?

Marge Simpson Our wedding video.

Homer Simpson We have a wedding video?

Homer Simpson Homer do good?

Bart Simpson Actually, you've doomed us all. Again.

Montgomery Burns Well, for once, the rich white man is in control.

Lisa Simpson But I'm so angry.

Marge Simpson You're a woman. You can hold on to it forever.

Grampa Homer? What are you doing now?

Homer Simpson Risking my life to save people I hate for reasons I don't quite understand. Gotta go!

Homer Simpson Marge, in every marriage you get one change to say 'I need you to do this with me.'

Marge Simpson I hate being late! (*for church*)

Homer Simpson Well I hate going. Why can't I worship the Lord in my own way, by praying like hell on my death bed.