

Media Suggestions for *Encountering Jesus*

By Douglas Connelly and Brian Pindar

You may want to use a video clip as an introduction to the theme of a particular study. If you have seekers in your group, a movie will be familiar territory (perhaps in contrast to the Bible) and a good connecting point. Some suggested clips are listed below. You may think of some short parts from more current movies that fit even better. If you choose to use a movie clip, keep a few things in mind.

- Emphasize to the group that you are not endorsing the film as an accurate depiction of biblical truth. You are using the clip to get them thinking about the theme of the study. You are connecting contemporary culture with the biblical story.
- Be sure you view the clip first. Advise the group of any harsh language or potentially offensive content first. If you think a particular clip will distract from the study and create controversy in the group, don't use it.
- Have the video tape set up and ready to go before the group meeting starts. Remember that you aren't meeting to watch the movie or discuss the movie. The discussion should center on the theme of the study.

Study 1. Water for the Thirsty. John 4:1-30.

Can't Buy Me Love. There is a scene near the end of the movie (1:28 through 1:31) in which the “geeks” and “jocks” in a high school have a confrontation in the cafeteria. The dialogue centers around what popularity really involves and the social barriers that separate people. (One curse word in the clip.)

If you want to use the group discussion question as the focus of your introduction, record a few commercials on video and watch them before asking the group for their answers.

Study 2. Searching for Truth. John 3:1-21.

Mr. Holland's Opus. This scene (1:20 through 1:24) opens at a high school graduation. A retiring principal gives Mr. Holland a compass as a reminder that he has found his true calling as a teacher. Play the tape through the song that follows the scene to give participants time to reflect on their own “center” in life and the focus of their hopes and dreams.

Study 3. Caught in the Act. John 8:1-11.

King George and Ducky (A Veggie Tale). The story is about selfishness and the writers use King George and Ducky to illustrate the story of King David and his sin with Bathsheba. The particular scene suggested (28:30 through 34:42) is toward the end of the video when King George is confronted by the prophet Melvin (Nathan in the biblical account) and the King repents of his sin.

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Study 4. Finding Forgiveness. Luke 7:36-50.

Courage Under Fire. Denzel Washington's character was responsible for killing another soldier accidentally. He goes to the soldier's parents and seeks their forgiveness. (1:49 through 1:52; the movie is rated R for harsh language and battlefield violence but nothing offensive is in the clip.)

Study 5. Facing Failure. John 21:1-19.

Karate Kid. A young man who has been beaten up by a gang wants to be trained in karate. His teacher puts him into training by assigning him menial tasks. (0:53:30 through 0:58:30)

Study 6. Set Free. Mark 5:1-20.

Footloose. This video includes a scene (1:25 through 1:27) in which the local pastor stops people from burning books from the library. He tells them that evil is not in the books but in their own hearts. (There is some harsh language in the film but none in the suggested clip.)

Study 7. Seeing the Light. John 9:1-38.

Powder. This movie about an albino boy who has a superior intellect includes a scene (1:00 through 1:04) in which a man shoots a deer. The boy makes him experience what the deer feels as it dies. As the boy explains it in the following scene, "He couldn't see what he was doing." The idea is to get the group to understand that sometimes we can't "see" the true reality around us. (Harsh language in the clip.)

Study 8. When All Else Fails. Luke 8:40-48.

The Green Mile. Two healings occur in this film. In the second one (Part 2; 0:16 through 0:26), a convict brings healing to the warden's wife. He takes the disease on himself. (The film is rated R for language and violence; some offensive language is in the suggested clip.)

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