
Five Reasons Youth Workers Should See the Movie *Saved!*

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Youth Specialties

1. We teach from Jesus' parables all the time. While this movie certainly isn't scripture, it is an extremely rich parable – one I can *easily* imagine Jesus telling in our time. And Jesus would tell it to us youth workers (and the Christian sub-culture in general) to show us how easy it is for us good-intentioned-folk to slip into Phariseeism.
2. It's a rather brilliant snapshot (in caricature form, to be fair) of adolescent faith development for kids in the conservative bubble. The main characters wrestle with (and even against) their pre-conceived ideas of who Jesus really is. In the end, most of those characters find that their definitions or assumptions or paintings of the Christ are somewhere between not enough to wholly misguided. Hasn't every one of us come up against that? Don't we *deeply desire* to have all our students see the limitations of their limited understandings of Jesus?
3. Discomfort is better than comfort. That's one of the CORE Values we teach in our one-day training. Our best learning and growth takes place in the context of discomfort. And, I'm tellin' ya, this movie will make you uncomfortable – especially in the first half-hour, where the movie vacillates between not-quite-dismissible caricatures (that you'll *want* to consider unfair and reductionistic) to spot-on “oh man, that's so *us*” reactions that make it obvious the film makers had an inside source.
4. Real answers don't come easily. This film makes that point. You likely won't agree with some of its conclusions – but to assume you are expected to do so is truly to miss the point.
5. It's really funny! And it's so wonderfully healthy to laugh at ourselves.

One FAQ: should you take your students to see the film?

In most cases, no. If you find that most have seen it, it would be irresponsible and silly to not discuss it (which is why we asked Steve Case to write the great discussion questions following this). However, I do think it would be valuable to take a group of older leadership students to the film (those with some maturity) – it could be very helpful for them in the same way it could be helpful for you.

29 Questions about *SAVED!*

By Steve Case

A Word Before:

Don't do these questions in sequential order and please don't use all of them..It'll take way too much time! It's our hope that you'll pick out the 5-6 questions that will benefit your group, figure out where you want to go and use these questions as a springboard. This is a freebie, so use it and pass it on—just tell everyone where you got it...

Optional Activity: Find some large pieces of cardboard or butcher's paper and have your students create life-sized pictures of Jesus. If you can, begin the discussion while they are still coloring (painting, drawing). Very often it's easier to talk about something serious when your hands are busy. (Remember: Momma used to say, "There are things you can say doing the dishes that you can't say at the dinner table.")

DID YOU NOTICE:

* The Shooting Range is called Emmanuel and its slogan is "An Eye For An Eye."

* How many African Americans did you see in the school? (I counted one.)

* Brian Dannelly, the writer/director of *Saved!*, attended a Jewish summer camp, a Catholic elementary school and a Baptist high school.

- Let's start easy: Who was your favorite character? Which character was most like you? Which character did you not like? Why?
 - Why do you think some people find this movie offensive?
 - Was anything in this movie offensive to you?
 - If yes, what?
 - If not, why not?
 - Why do you think some people find this movie blasphemous?
 - Philosopher Carl Jung wrote, "The things we see in other people we don't like are often a reflection of the things in ourselves that we don't like."
 - After hearing that quote, do you think you're reaction to the movie is because you were offended or you were insulted?
 - What did Jesus say about hypocrites?
 - Matthew 3:7-8; Matthew 6:1-2; Matthew 6:5; Matthew 6:16; Matthew 6:24; Matthew 7:5; Matthew 7:15; Matthew 7:21-23; Matthew 9:13;
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Matthew 15:7-9; Matthew 16:3; Matthew 16:6; Matthew 16:12; Matthew 21:28-32; Matthew 22:12-13; Matthew 22:18; Matthew 23:2-33; Matthew 24:50-51; Matthew 25:3; Matthew 25:41-45; Mark 7:6-8; Mark 8:15; Mark 9:50; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 6:46; Luke 8:18; Luke 11:39-52; Luke 12:1-2; Luke 12:54-56; Luke 13:13-17; Luke 13:26-27; Luke 14:34-35; Luke 16:13; Luke 16:15; Luke 18:11-12; Luke 20:46-47; Luke 21:16; John 6:26; John 6:70; John 7:19; John 15:2; John 15:6

- Mary believes that she has had a vision, and that Jesus has told her to do all she can to save her boyfriend. She later says, "I'm not the first person to get the message wrong." Do you think people often get the message wrong?
 - If so, how so?
 - Can ministers/church leaders get the message wrong?
 - Mary says, "How could he be gay? He's the strongest Christian I know."
 - What do you think of her question and statement?
 - One of the producers of this movie is Michael Stipe, the lead singer of the rock group REM. Stipe wrote and sang the song "Losing My Religion." (You can download the song from iTunes; to check out the lyrics, surf to this site: http://www.lyricsdomain.com/18/rem/losing_my_religion.html)
 - Do you think there's a connection between his song and the movie? Explain
 - Mary says that all the guys in her school "look like NASA employees." What does she mean?
 - Do you think an "if" or an "as long as" or any other conditional phrase can be connected to the statement, "Jesus loves me this I know."
 - What do you have to do to be saved?
 - What does the Bible say? (After some discussion, read Acts 16:29-31)
 - What's the difference between what Paul says and what Hilary Faye says?
 - Mary says, "Everything is part of God's plan."
 - How does that idea play out in Mary's life?
 - Hilary's?
 - Roland's?
 - Yours?
 - How does God work throughout this movie?
 - Hilary tells Cassandra, "If you would accept the love of Christ into your heart, then your people could join in on the fun and games, too." What does she mean?
 - Is American Eagle Christian High School any different than yours?
 - How are they similar?
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- How are they the same?
 - Did this movie have to take place in a “Christian” High School?
 - After Hilary Faye throws a Bible at Mary, Mary gives the Bible back to Hilary Faye and says, "This is not a weapon." Do you think that's true?
 - What are prayer warriors?
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
 - Do you think this means it’s okay to use the Bible to straighten other people out?
 - Patrick tells Mary that Mercy House exists for the people “who do the sending.” What do you think he means by this?
 - When Pastor Skip reluctantly teaches a sex-ed class, you get the feeling that none of the students have had any sort of sex education before.
 - Does the church have a responsibility to teach what a lot of schools do not?
 - Should Pastor Skip have taught more than "Christians don't get jiggy with it ‘til after they are married"?
 - Should the church teach more than that?
 - Mary begins studying other religions and says "They can't all be right, but they can't all be wrong." Is this true?
 - Have you ever looked into other faiths?
 - What did you find appealing about them?
 - What was unappealing?
 - Is it okay to have doubts about your faith?
 - Are you afraid to talk about that in church?
 - Why?
 - Pastor Skip is a 45-year-old man who uses phrases like "Are you down with G-O-D?" "Let's get our Christ on," do you know adults like that?
 - Who is the most conflicted person in the movie?
 - From Dictionary.com . . .“**Conflicted**: *Psychology*. A psychic struggle, often unconscious, resulting from the opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies.”
 - Why does Pastor Skip want the world to be black and white?
 - Do you think that’s true?
 - What do you think about the Patrick’s statement, "It's all a gray area?"
 - Do you think that’s true?
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- Pastor Skip tells Mary's mom that Mary's problems are the result of God punishing them. Do you think that's true?
 - Does God punish us by hurting others?
 - Mary says, "It's all too hard to live up to" is that true?
 - Do Christians experience peer pressure from other Christians? Explain.
 - Have you ever experienced peer pressure from other Christians?
 - At the end of the movie we see Pastor Skip with a bouquet of flowers, unable to decide if he should go into the hospital. What do you think he did?
 - What do you think happened to Hilary Faye?
 - Film critic Roger Ebert writes, "*SAVED!* is an important film as well as an entertaining one. People are going to think this movie is an attack of Christianity and what it is basically is an attack on intolerance." Do you think this is true?
 - Cassandra—the rebellious Jewish girl who Hilary Faye is the cruelest to—picks up Hilary Faye from the ground at the end of the movie. What does that say about her Christlikeness? Is she *SAVED*?
 - Mike Yaconelli often spoke about "grace monitors." (i.e., people who've been shown God's grace and then believe they can decide who gets it and who doesn't). Who are the grace monitors in this movie?
 - Do you know any grace monitors? (no names please).
 - What does it feel like to get "monitored"?
 - Imagine for a moment that there were no books, bumper stickers, earrings, or any other item with the letters WWJD. Then honestly ask yourself the question, "What would Jesus do with each of these characters?"

BONUS QUESTION: (not for the squeamish) Let's talk about the scene where Mary utters three profanities at the church. Do you think God heard Mary? How do you think God reacted? If Mary said this in front of your church, how would your church react? How would you have reacted if you were in earshot?
