

Film Discussions

Film Discussion Questions

1. Turtles Can Fly
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0424227> (available for purchase online)
2. Never Come Back
<http://www.omnitv.ca/on/en/docs/never-come-back> (viewable online)
3. God Grew Tired of Us
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0301555> (available for purchase online)
4. The Good Lie
<http://www.thegoodliemovie.com/> (available for purchase online)

Turtles Can Fly

DVD with English subtitles (90 minutes)

The setting of this movie is an Iraqi village on the border between Iran and Turkey. Villages have been pillaged, villagers massacred, and children are left to fend for themselves. They earn a little money by clearing fields of land mines. A mutilated boy tries to look after his younger sister, Agrium, and her son but she knows only one thing – she cannot live in this world that has ripped her life to shreds. Satellite, a young leader, purchases a satellite hoping to get information on the arrival of the Americans. His character brings a little humor to an otherwise dark film. Expect your heart to be broken as you watch this film.

Discussion questions

1. What significance does this title have?
2. In the opening scene Agrium looks back at the water. Why?
3. Why couldn't Agrium respond to kindness?
4. Who should be responsible for the children?
5. How is Satellite a good leader?
6. What is the meaning of the little red fish Satellite is given?
7. What do the adults of the village do? What kind of leadership do they give?
8. What is your reaction to this movie?
9. Do you know of other times when children in particular were at risk and were/weren't helped by the international community?

Never Come Back

DVD (56 minutes)

A documentary film by Karl Nerenberg and Malcolm Hamilton. It depicts the plight of Roma people in Eastern Europe and the journey of several Roma families as they seek asylum in Canada.

Discussion questions

1. Do you know any Roma people? If so, where are they from and what is their status?
2. How are Roma people stereotyped in Europe? In Canada?
3. How are these people being marginalized in Europe? In Canada?
4. What are the indicators which qualify Roma people as refugees?
5. What official group should identify people needing refugee status?
6. Is it a surprise that the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are democracies? What is the implication of this for asylum seekers in Canada?
7. What do you think of Bela Radic's advice to "Never come back!"?
8. What options are there for Roma people once they are in Canada?
9. How can Canadians come to the aid of undocumented people?
10. Would you turn in an undocumented person? Why? Why not?
11. What does sanctuary mean to you? How would it be helpful?
12. What direction do we get from scripture about foreigners and aliens?

God Grew Tired of Us

DVD (90 minutes)

This documentary chronicles the horrendous and heartbreaking journey three "Lost Boys" from Sudan took with 27,000 others fleeing the civil war. En route to a refugee camp in Kenya via Ethiopia their numbers dwindled to less than half. After their exile of 10 years the US agreed to relocate 4,000 "Lost Boys" in America. Amusing and also sad at times we see Panther, John and Daniel get accustomed to American life while trying to keep some of their own traditions. One lesson they learned early was to use the alarm clock because "time is money" in America.

Panther reflects on his past saying, "I thought God grew tired of us....so he wanted to get rid of us." Later he muses, "Why me in this good place? I pray I stay alive to become what I'm supposed to be." Always remembering their past, he and the others work hard to build their lives in America, to stay connected with other "Lost Boys", and to provide for those still left behind including family which some have found.

Discussion questions

1. What caused these boys, ages 4-10, to run for their lives while living in Sudan? What would you be most scared of?
2. What are the differences between us going for a hike and the trek the boys took to their destiny in Kenya?
3. Why are these boys called 'lost boys'?
4. What was life like in the camp in Kenya? How would you react in this situation?
5. Why would Panther say, "God grew tired of us?" Was/wasn't he correct? How would you feel if you were in his place?
6. Where was the church, the aid organizations and the UN during this time?
7. One of the first things Panther was shown was an alarm clock. What is the significance of this in our culture?
8. How might the 'Lost Boys of Sudan' feel like 'Lost Boys of America'?
9. Name some cultural differences between Sudan and the USA. Why was it important to Panther to keep some of his cultural traditions?
10. These boys are Christians. How did they react to the way we celebrate Christmas? How important is the Bible to them? What part of our lifestyle would shock them?
11. What difference would it have made to Panther and the others had they been sponsored by your church instead of by the government?
12. Panther prayed that he'd stay alive so he could be what God wanted him to be. How did that work out? What would you pray for if you were in his place?
13. Can you imagine the joy you would feel as a mother or sibling being reunited with family you thought were dead? How would you express it?
14. The boys found it very difficult to connect to Americans. Why? What changes should we make to be open and welcoming to refugees?

The Good Lie

This film is based on the true stories of some of the "Lost Boys" who were orphaned during Sudan's brutal civil war. 3600 of these orphaned boys and girls were brought to the United States, including several of the actors who starred in this movie. "The Good Lie" is a brilliant account of many of the challenges of newcomers and their influence on the lives of others involved in their stories.

1. This movie is based on the real life experiences of refugees. What did you learn about the refugee experience from this movie? What stood out to you as significant about what Mamere and the others went through that might be shared by other refugees?

2. How is the theme of sacrifice played out in this movie?

Ideas include:

- Theo's sacrifice of his life for Mamere and the others in the field.
- Mamere's sacrifice of staying in Kenya so that Theo can go to the USA
- They each sacrifice by working and pooling their money so that they can take turns going to school

3. At what point, do you think, did Carrie start to relate to the refugees with greater compassion? What was her turning point?

4. SCENE REVIEW: Carrie works to ready her home for Abital- a young woman she has not met. She opens up her life and her home to reunite Mamere's family and bring their sister back to them. She does not know the sister and yet, she not only welcomes her but she prepares her house in order to receive her. She was a "neighbour" to a true "stranger".

QUESTIONS: In what ways does your own cultural bias affect how you do/do not welcome strangers? Why do we find it difficult to trust those different than us? Can you think of a time when you were graciously welcomed? How did that affect you?

4. SCENE REVIEW: Mamere is taking classes in the United States and studying *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. In the classroom, he is asked about Huck's lie and if it was a good lie. Mamere responds that because the outcome saved his friend's life, that it was a good lie. As well, Huck's lie was considered a good lie because it was done to help someone else and it could've cost Huck if he'd been discovered. The focus of the good lie was serving someone else. Often, lies are self-serving. Mamere, in class, makes a key distinction that the lie became good because it saved the life of another person.

QUESTIONS: Is it possible to tell a "good lie"? Is it right to break the law to do the right thing? How do you feel about Theo's "lie" and Mamere's "lie"?

Some helpful thoughts:

- Perhaps the ultimate law we are supposed to obey isn't that of the state. The ultimate laws are the laws of justice and love. Those laws supersede all others, and sometimes, when what is right is clear and there is no other way, we must adhere to the laws of justice and love no matter the cost.
- In the Bible we see examples of this happening.
 - i. Think about Rahab's story. God honored her for protecting the spies, even though she had to lie to the soldiers in Jericho. We discover later that Rahab actually was an ancestor of Christ.

- ii. Moses' mother hid him alongside the river and pretended not to know him in order to take care of him. Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister and not his wife.

If appropriate you might want to discuss the fact that sometimes refugees who come to Canada have to lie in order to save their lives. For example, they might need to travel using a false passport or tell a lie in order to escape. People should know that as long as this is declared to Canadian authorities, these lies are not held against refugees. Immigration authorities generally understand that sometimes this is necessary. It is a different matter at a refugee hearing when it is expected that everything said be true.

5. Question for self-reflection after the film discussion:

In what ways are you similar to the Americans depicted here (Carrie, her boss, the grocery store boss, the restaurant boss, etc) and in what ways are you different from them?