

older kids

Amazing Grace Family Movie Night

Best Use

As a movie night discussion guide for parents with their teens

Spiritual Value

Triggers meaningful dialogue on the gospel in action

Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase *Amazing Grace* (rated PG for slavery themes and mild language)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

Instructions

- Be up front with your children, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

Film Synopsis

This epic film tells the true story of William Wilberforce – an 18th century British politician who led a very unpopular movement to end the slave trade. Wilberforce was motivated by a deep Christian faith and spiritually mentored by John Newton – a former slave ship captain turned minister and author of the famous hymn *Amazing Grace*. During his long battle Wilberforce overcomes many obstacles including powerful political enemies, the economic might of the slave-trade industry and failing health.

Discuss It

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the "Think About It" notes below. William Wilberforce was born into a life of wealth and achieved political power at a young age. Do you think this would make it harder or easier to embrace Christian faith? Harder or easier to speak out against injustice? (See A)

The stress of his battle against the slave trade caused Wilberforce serious health challenges. His marriage to Barbara helped restore his health and enabled him to continue his battle. Why does the practical love of family infuse health and balance in our lives? (See B)

After his conversion to Christianity Wilberforce seriously considered leaving politics to enter pastoral ministry. Others, including his "old preacher" John Newton, advised William to stay in politics and fight slavery. Many Christians think politics a less "spiritual" career than ministry. Do you agree or disagree? Why? (See C)

The abolitionist movement was primarily led by Christians who were unpopular at the time for "forcing their religious views on others." Does this remind you of any movements in our day? (See D)

Talk about It

A) Jesus said that it is harder for a rich man to humble himself and believe than a poor man. (See Matthew 19:16-26) He also taught a parable showing it is rare for a man of status to risk his own comfort and influence for the sake of those less fortunate. (See Luke 10:25-37)

B) The Bible says that husbands and wives complete one another and together they picture the saving truth of the gospel (See Ephesians 5:31-32). Research shows that married men tend to live longer, healthier and more successful lives than single men. Clearly God designed marriage and family as a life-giving gift to His children.

C) William Wilberforce wrote a popular book titled *Real Christianity* presenting a compelling case for Christian belief. He also said that God had called him to pursue two great battles in life, starting with the abolition of the slave trade.

D) Many compare the abolitionist movement to the pro-life movement since both are rooted in the dignity of human life. There is also a modern movement to rescue women and children from "slavery" of prostitution. But any effort to defend the defenseless and comfort the oppressed puts our faith into action. (See James 1:27)