

**MOVIE: THE BLIND SIDE**

**\*\* Please read the Introduction to Large Group Studies in order to best utilize this material**

**Sub Topic theme:**

THE MOTHER EFFECT:  
Influence of nurturing

**Lesson objective:**

Recognizing and appreciating the character traits and influence our mothers have had on our families and us. The constant nurture, love, and guidance they provide need to be both understood and acknowledged for the impact these traits have had on our development as a person and of our family's health and stability.

**Intro to the Movie:***The Blind Side*

*The Blind Side* is the story of a fairly wealthy white family in the south getting involved with helping a homeless African-American teenager named Michael. Based on a true story of Leigh Anne and Sean Tuohy and Michael "Big Mike" Oher, the story reveals a mother's nurturing heart for a young man who is not her own. Eventually, the whole family gets behind the campaign to help Big Mike succeed.

Michael has no idea who his father is and his mother is a drug addict. Michael has had little formal education and few skills to help him learn. Leigh Anne soon takes charge however, as is her nature, ensuring that the young man is given every opportunity to make it. When he expresses an interest in football, she goes all out to help him, including giving the coach a few ideas on how best to use Michael's skills. They not only provide him with a loving home, which is crucial, but hire a tutor to help him improve his grades so that he would qualify for an NCAA Division I athletic scholarship. It's a success story to the point that Big Mike considers Leigh Anne to be his mother to this very day. (Michael Oher was the first-round pick of the Baltimore Ravens in the 2009 NFL draft.)

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as protection and provision, love and nurture, tenacity when it comes to family, how the mom influences the whole family for good, encouragement and empowerment, as well as recognition of potential. Also



look for attitudes of racism and negativity and selflessness, which are in such stark contrast to the tough love of Leigh Anne!

### Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. Which home life did you most associate with, Michael's projects' life or the Tuohy's country club life? Why?
3. What characteristics of a good mother did you see in Leigh Anne? What negatively-affecting characteristics did you see in Michael's real mother?
4. Give some examples of ways that Leigh Anne demonstrated a tough love as a mom. How would you like to be in her family?

### Group input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *Recognizing and appreciating the character traits and influence our mothers have had on our families and us. The constant nurture, love and guidance they provide need to be both understood and acknowledged for the impact these traits have had on our development as a person and of our family's health and stability.*

### Bullet Objective:

*Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:*

Growing up in a military community you may not get some of the racial overtones in the movie. Some of the southern states have had a long battle with prejudice and racism, and the fact that a wealthy white family takes a poor black teen under its roof may at first seem like a kind, Christian 'project.' That's the way it appeared to some characters in the movie and the inferences toward persuasion on behalf of Ole Miss carries some of the same innuendos. However, the veracity with which the mother, Leigh Anne, goes after the protection and inclusion of Michael demonstrates

something far beyond an altruistic moment in the life of the Tuohy family. She leads out as a strong, confident woman who has the best interests of her children in mind. In this case, she has come to understand her motherly duties of nurture, provision, protection and love to completely include Michael. The whole Tuohy family follows her lead as S.J. and Collins claim Big Mike, their black brother, as their own. Mom has created a strong and resilient family dynamic. She is a force; a momma bear when it comes to her cubs! In the Scriptures, God describes a woman of great character who is also a noble mother this way in the book of Proverbs:

(from Proverbs 31)

- 17 She is a hard worker, strong and industrious.
- 18 She knows the value of everything she makes, and works late into the night.
- 19 She spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth.
- 20 She is generous to the poor and needy.
- 21 She doesn't worry when it snows, because her family has warm clothing.
- 22 She makes bedspreads and wears clothes of fine purple linen.
- 23 Her husband is well known, one of the leading citizens.
- 25 She is strong and respected and not afraid of the future.
- 26 She speaks with a gentle wisdom.
- 27 She is always busy and looks after her family's needs.
- 28 Her children show their appreciation, and her husband praises her.
- 30 Charm is deceptive and beauty disappears, but a woman who honors the LORD should be praised.
- 31 Give her credit for all she does. She deserves the respect of everyone.

### Challenge:

1. Some time this week, have a conversation with your mom and tell her some of the ways you admire her talents, her character, her attitudes. Compliment and build up your mom.
2. Swap moms for a day and tell your friend's mother what things you admire and appreciate about her. No joke, these two things will demonstrate recognition to your moms in a way that they will not soon forget. Besides, life as a military mom is tough, and they could use the encouragement from their teens!

*Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey for further involvement with this topic of a Mother's Effect.*