

MOVIE: “Hoosiers”**Sub Topic Theme:**

Community: The Anti-Alone

Lesson Objective:

To understand that although good community can be hard to build, being a part of it is also important for all of us.

Remember that we can call on and depend on God always.

When we enter into good community, we help each other grow, we learn more about ourselves, and we strengthen each other. Good community challenges us and those around us as we walk in life together.

**Intro to the Movie:**

When the movie starts we find that a new coach has come to the small Indiana town of Hickory. Coach Norman Dale, a successful college basketball coach, has not coached in over ten years, and now he has shown up in the middle of nowhere to coach this unknown high school team.

As the story progresses we find that Coach Dale actually got banned from coaching college basketball, and he is showing up in Hickory as a favor for a friend. Coach Dale does his best by beginning practices right away, having the boys, all *five* on the team, running drills, practicing passing and getting into shape. This outrages the very involved townspeople who would much rather their team be scrimmaging and shooting all day. Coach Dale has to close the door as an angry crowd of has-been basketball stars begin their protest.

As the first game rolls around the team has added to its numbers. They now have six players on the court, but it's still not a lot, and the team is struggling to believe in themselves because last year's star player, Jimmy, has chosen not to come back since their last coach passed away. Jimmy's choice is reinforced by Myra Fleener, a teacher at the school who does not like Coach Dale. She informs the coach that Jimmy will go to college on an academic scholarship, and he needs to stay away.

In their first game, the coach is insistent that they pass the ball at least four times before throwing up a shot. One of the players gets sick of not scoring, so begins throwing the ball up and making it! The crowd goes wild as their team begins the comeback. The player gets off three or four more shots before the coach pulls him out for not following his instructions. Then another player fouls out, and the team is left with only four players on the floor. The town is upset by the coach's choice, and as the team keeps losing, the town continues to get more upset.

Coach Dale then goes and asks the town drunk and avid basketball fan, Shooter, to be his assistant coach under the conditions that he show up in time for games and practices, cleans up and sobers up. Shooter ends up being an amazing addition to the team because as an avid basketball fan. He knows tons about all the teams they play. While the conditions are hard for Shooter to come to terms with, he shows up at their next game and the team gains a valuable asset. At this point the town is so off balance that they finally hold an emergency town meeting where they will decide whether or not to keep Coach Dale around or not.

At this point Ms. Fleener has gained a fair amount of respect for Coach Dale because, good to his word, he has not tried to recruit Jimmy for the team. She is now in favor of Coach Dale staying, but the town rules otherwise. Suddenly, Jimmy enters the doors and requests to speak. He informs the town that he will come back and play. The town is overjoyed to have their star player back and hope for victory, but then he informs them that he will only play for Coach Dale. While the range of emotions felt by the townspeople after that statement ranged widely, after a quick re-vote, Coach Dale gets to stay.

Things begin to look up for the team after this. The boys have a renewed energy and excitement for the future and hope they will start winning. The boys begin winning right away and make it into the conference game where they push themselves to new limits. However, for this game, Shooter has not shown up, and in the middle of the game, he wanders in drunk, embarrassing the team, town, his son and himself. The team gets penalized and he gets ushered out and checked into a hospital to recover.

The boys move on to win the conference game and on to Regionals but not without one more challenge. Shooter's son, and starting player, ends up crashing into a trophy case and gets almost ten stitches in his shoulder just before the game ends.

The boys still move on to Regionals with confidence; but when Shooter's son has his stitches pop open, the coach is forced to take him out of the game. This, followed by another player fouling out, leaves little Ollie, a pint-sized bench warmer, to play in their most important game so far. What happens here is inspiring, though. The team gathers around him despite his obvious struggle and encourages him when he gets a second chance at free throws where he sinks two shots for the win.

Following those two intense games with unexpected turns, the state game almost seems too easy for the boys once they work through their stage fright with help from their coach to settle their pulsing hearts. Hickory's small town goes on to be state champions, an unexpected win to say the least, but an exciting journey to follow.

(The 3D Lenses) Look for themes of group identity and the struggle it takes to be a community. Help students understand the costs of creating and holding together community and the costs of living without it. Observe the benefits as well and the sense of accomplishment that is greater than yourself. While building community is a real challenge for a mobile military teen, help kids realize the significance of trying and the God-given need for it as a human being.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. What are some of the ups and downs the team faced together?
2. How did Coach Dale foster community? Was it in a good way or bad way? Think about the first game when one of Coach's players got tired of passing four times before shooting and just started sinking shots. Did Coach's reaction to the disobedience build or destroy community? What did his players learn? Long-term was it a good choice? [Building a good community can be tough in the beginning.]
3. What did Jimmy's coming back give to the team? Could the team have made it to state without him? Besides his skill, what did Jimmy bring to the team? [In community we strengthen one another, bring hope and courage to others.]
4. Think about Shooter. Nobody saw much in him, but Coach Dale did. How did Coach's actions bring redemption to Shooter? [Good communities make us better, even if it hurts us at first.]
5. The boys made it to state and won, but not without depending on every member of their team, no matter how skilled. Think about Ollie at the Regional game. How did Ollie feel walking onto the court and how did his team help to encourage him and strengthen him? Why did this help? [Ollie's team loved him and encouraged him just as God does for each of us. Ollie didn't think he could do it, but he learned he could. Ollie was not alone and neither are we.]

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: *To understand that although good community can be hard to build, being part of it is also important for all of us. Remember that we can call on, and depend on God always. When we enter into good community we help each other grow, we learn more about ourselves and strengthen each other. Good community challenges us and those around us as we walk in life together.*

Bullet Objective:

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

Most of you are probably used to moving from community to community...a lot. Sometimes it may not even seem worth it to go deep because you know you will be gone

again and going deep just means opening yourself up, which can be hard and scary. It's easier to be alone, to protect yourself. Maybe you are engaged in a community, but you don't let people really know you, see into you. Maybe because, honestly, sometimes people just end up hurting you when you do take the risk and open yourself up. It's hard. I get that, but let's think back to the movie. Those guys didn't want to do things differently. Didn't want to trust somebody new. They weren't sure of their new coach, and a lot of the things he did in the beginning appeared to hurt the team at first, but we know they go on to win. They come together as a team.

These guys built a community together, they bonded over the game, experienced pain together, sweated it out together, and grew to be a better team and better young men because of it. They never could have done it alone. Good community gives us hope; challenges us to dream in ways we never imagined possible, brings us healing from our past and helps us overcome unexpected obstacles. It's the people who know you best who encourage and inspire you in ways others can't, because, your community knows you. Together we are stronger. Your strength may be my weakness. We need each other. God knew this when he created us. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, he talks about how it is not good for us to be alone. We also have good examples in the Bible of how community helps us, one of those occurrences being in Exodus 17. Let's look at both of these Scripture passages:

Genesis 2:15-25

15 Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. 16 He told him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, 17 except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day."

18 Then the LORD God said, It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him. 19 So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. 20 So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. 21 Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. 22 He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. 23 Then the man said, "At last, here is one of my own kind—Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. Woman is her name because she was taken out of man. "24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

25 The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

Exodus 17:8-16

8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. 9 Moses said to Joshua, Pick out some men to go and fight the Amalekites tomorrow. I will stand on top of the hill holding the stick that God told me to carry. 10 Joshua did as Moses commanded him and went out to fight the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 As long as Moses held up his arms, the Israelites won, but when he put his

arms down, the Amalekites started winning.¹² When Moses' arms grew tired, Aaron and Hur brought a stone for him to sit on, while they stood beside him and held up his arms, holding them steady until the sun went down. ¹³ In this way Joshua totally defeated the Amalekites.

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write an account of this victory, so that it will be remembered. Tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekites." ¹⁵ Moses built an altar and named it "The LORD is my Banner." ¹⁶ He said, "Hold high the banner of the LORD! The LORD will continue to fight against the Amalekites forever!"

Crazy, right? God knew that we would need to be in relationship with one another. He knew our needs when he created us, and we can see through Moses, a great servant of the Lord, that even he needed to rely on those around him. Without the support from his friends, the Israelites probably would not have won. His community brought him the strength and support he needed.

We don't have to do life alone. In fact, we were *made for community!* In both Genesis and Exodus we see that the Lord was with Adam and Moses. We're never alone, even if we feel like we are. We also see that God provided the support they both needed. God desires for us to be in community, and he will help us find it. Are we willing to listen to him? Take a risk. Are we willing to open ourselves up to others, even if it hurts at first, so that God can bring us into a beautiful healing community?

Challenge:

1. What are things that stop you from really entering into a good community? Make a list of what those things are; then pray over them this week. Ask God to give you courage and to help you start overcoming some of these fears. Sometimes it takes a leap of faith.
2. What are some things you desire from a group of friends? Do you want them to be trustworthy? Open with you? Fun? Are you those things? Sometimes we can't change the things around us but we can begin bettering ourselves, and many times that alone begins to slowly open doors. Look for areas of growth in your own life. How can you grow in these areas? Make a plan. Ask a trusted person (friend, mentor, parent) for accountability.
3. Remember to be in prayer. Surrender your hurts, fears and anxieties to the Lord. When we give them to him, we begin to experience freedom.

Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at RezLife.com for further involvement with this topic of Community.