

MOVIE: “Sister Act”**Subtopic Theme:**

Belonging to the Church

Lesson Objective:

To bring a multi-layered understanding of what belonging to the church means. By encouraging students to consider the many aspects of community, we will introduce and explore the various ways that the fellowship of believers impacts the individual, the church, and the world. In order to inspire them to stand apart from the world and join together as the body of Christ, we will dialogue about what impact belonging to the church has on our own life and the lives of those around us, both believers and nonbelievers.

**Intro to the Movie:***Sister Act*

According to Fandango.com:

Whoopi Goldberg stars as Deloris Van Cartier, a Reno lounge singer who accidentally witnesses a brutal murder carried out by her gangster boyfriend Vince (Harvey Keitel). Under the protection of a detective (Bill Nunn) who's trying to bring down Vince's criminal operation, Deloris is placed in protective custody at a San Francisco convent. Masquerading as a nun renamed Sister Mary Clarence, Deloris shakes up the established order of the sisters' lives, particularly enlivening their choral efforts. Although running constantly afoul of the Mother Superior (Maggie Smith), the new, jazzed-up musical act becomes a huge hit in the community, even drawing the attention of the Pope, but also alerting Vince to Deloris' whereabouts.

To view the trailer: <http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi3162702105/>

The 3D Lenses

Watch for how the characters change and grow throughout the movie. Pay attention to what makes that happen and consider how belonging to the church affects everyone.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. Which Character did you relate to the most in this story?
2. What was one part that stuck out to you as a good example of belonging to the church?
3. Who was changed by Deloris joining the church community?

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 bring a **multi-layered understanding** of what belonging to the church means. By **encouraging** students to consider the many aspects of community, we will introduce and explore the **various effects** that the fellowship of believers has on the individual, the church, and the world. In order to inspire them to **stand apart** from the world and **join together** as the body of Christ, we will dialogue about what **impact** belonging to the church has on our own life and the lives of those around us, both believers and nonbelievers.*

Bullet Objective:

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

I love this story because there are so many different things going on in it. On the one hand we've got the loud sassy Deloris who is dealing with hiding from people who want her dead, and getting thrown into a community she wants nothing to do with. We get to see her struggle to fit in and find her place. We feel her frustration in the beginning and her joy later.

Then we also get to see the change that happens amongst the nuns. Some is funny and some is challenging, but it's wonderful to see the way they grow and develop as a group. Finally, we see the effect the church, and Deloris in particular, has on the world. From the 20 or so people who attended mass growing to the crowds that packed themselves into the pews with TV crews and reporters and even the pope anxious to be a part of it all.

This is just a piece of all that belonging to the church means for us. It's not just about you and me and what we want or need. It's about what we have to offer our fellow believers; and, it's about what message we have to bring to the world.

The nuns stand out as set apart because of their habits. But Deloris comes to realize, and hopefully you do too, that what sets these ladies apart is so much more than their clothes. It is their joy and devotion and purity and love that sets them apart from the world. Each of them has their god given gifts and it's so fulfilling to see them find and use them. That's because that is how we were created. I can almost guarantee every single one of you was smiling their heads off when Sister Mary Robert found her voice. Right?

God created us to be in union with Jesus Christ and also in union with others. Through belonging to the church we find and develop our gifts and by working together collectively we bring God's message of love and forgiveness to the world. That's why the church exists - for you, for us, and for the world.

Listen to this description of the church from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27:

¹² *Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.* ¹³ *In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.*

¹⁴ *For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts.* ¹⁵ *If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I don't belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body.* ¹⁶ *And if the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I don't belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body.* ¹⁷ *If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell?* ¹⁸ *As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wanted it to be.* ¹⁹ *There would not be a body if it were all only one part!* ²⁰ *As it is, there are many parts but one body.*

²¹ *So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" Nor can the head say to the feet, "Well, I don't need you!"* ²² *On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker;* ²³ *and those parts that we think aren't worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care; while the parts of the body which don't look very nice are treated with special modesty,* ²⁴ *which the more beautiful parts do not need. God himself has put the body together in such a way as to give greater honor to those parts that need it.* ²⁵ *And so there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another.* ²⁶ *If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.* ²⁷ *All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.*

And listen to what Paul goes on to write in 1 Timothy 2:1-7 about the duty of the church and what God desires:

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; ² for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct. ³ This is good and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and human beings together, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself to redeem the whole human race. That was the proof at the right time that God wants everyone to be saved, ⁷ and that is why I was sent as an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, to proclaim the message of faith and truth. I am not lying; I am telling the truth!

Challenge:

Write a challenge together this week. Be sure to act as someone who belongs to the body of Christ and encourage, challenge, help, and love one another.

Pray for students to understand the reason the church exists and how they fit into that community. Ask that God give them wisdom and guidance as well as forgiving hearts and open minds as they seek out the fellowship of the Church. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of Belonging to the Church