

MOVIE: "Saved"

Sub Topic Theme:
Doubting God

Lesson Objective:

Sometimes we can easily lose sight of how we live has an impact on those around us. Others that are watching our actions and attitudes can begin to doubt that we serve a vibrant and living God.

This can lead to doubt not only in their own lives, but in ours as well. Saved is a movie that follows a group of students at a Christian High School. This movie shows how we can lose sight of faith and the impact it has on others. It follows Mary, a young girl struggling with faith when she becomes pregnant and is ostracized by those around her. In particular, Hilary Faye is the "perfect" Christian girl on the outside. As these characters struggle, pay attention to how they portray Christ or do not portray Christ to others.

**Intro to the Movie:**

Saved

For a trailer go to: <http://www.traileraddict.com/trailer/saved/trailer>

According to mrqe.com:

Mary (Jena Malone) is entering her senior year at American Eagle Christian High School. She seems to be in an ideal social position as one of the "Christian Jewels," the most devout and popular clique of girls in the school, led by the aggressively cheerful Hilary Faye (Mandy Moore). But things take an unexpected turn when Mary's boyfriend, Dean (Chad Faust), tells her he may be gay. Mary hits her head and has a vision, in which Jesus tells her how to help "cure" Dean of his unnatural urges. Mary does everything in her power to sway Dean, but when his parents find out about his "problem," they send him away just before the school year starts, leaving Mary alone, confused, and, she soon finds out, pregnant. Mary's new situation causes her to question everything, including her friendship with the judgmental Hilary Faye and her faith. Her mother (Mary-Louise Parker) is too preoccupied with her flirtatious relationship with the school's married principal, Pastor Skip (Martin Donovan), to notice Mary's problem. Pastor Skip's dreamboat skateboarder son, Patrick (Patrick Fugit), has returned from missionary work and is attracted to Mary, but she already has too much to deal with. Just when she thinks

her situation is hopeless, she finds a pair of unlikely allies in Hilary Faye's cynical wheelchair-bound brother, Roland (Macaulay Culkin), and wild, muscle car-driving provocateur Cassandra Edelstein (Eva Amurri), the school's only Jewish student. *Saved!* marks the feature debut of director Brian Dannelly, who co-wrote the script with Michael Urban.

(The 3D lenses) Look at how the different characters react to things throughout the movies. Watch how they actually portray Christ and what role doubt plays in each of their lives. Pay attention to how that affects their responses and ability to see truth.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. Which character in the movie do you relate to the most? Why?
2. Which characters in the movie display a true Christ-like attitude? Which ones do not?
3. Do you think this movie is an accurate representation of how others often view Christianity and its followers? Why or why not?
4. Which character do you think displayed the most doubt as to who God is? Were you able to see any growth in that character throughout the movie? How?

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:

*Sometimes we can easily lose sight of how we live has an impact on those around us. Others that are watching our actions and attitudes can begin to doubt that we serve a vibrant and living God. This can lead to doubt not only in their own lives, but in ours as well. *Saved* is a movie that follows a group of students at a Christian High School. This movie shows how we can lose sight of faith and the impact it has on others. It follows Mary, a young girl struggling with faith when she becomes pregnant and is ostracized by those around her. In particular, Hilary Faye is the “perfect” Christian girl on the outside. As these characters struggle, pay attention to how they portray Christ or do not portray Christ to others.*

Bullet Objective:

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

This movie has many different layers. Some of the themes we see involve doubting that God can take care of us or our problems. We can also see how the characters will take matters into their own hands. In a sense, this is a type of doubt.

We have probably all experienced a level of doubt at some point in our walk with Christ. Sometimes we might pretend that everything is okay when it is not, just so others will not see that in us. How might things have been different in this movie if the characters had embraced their doubts and asked for input, counsel, and encouragement from others? God tells us to trust him at all times (cf. John 14:1; Romans 15:13). Yet, especially in our culture, this is difficult to do. *Saved!* shows the reality of how not trusting God can lead to other issues.

Perhaps you are dealing with doubt in some way right now. Maybe it is doubt in a “small” way of not trusting God to help you with some problem. Perhaps it is doubt in a “large” way of not even being sure that God exists or that he could love you.

How do you think you should respond to that doubt? How would you encourage someone else that was dealing with doubt? God loves us deeply, and he can see past the doubt that is in each of our lives. Does that encourage you or scare you?

Below is a Scripture that is filled with hope, grace, and trust. As this is read through twice, think carefully of what it means to you. The first time, listen to it as someone that has serious doubts to the existence of God. Do you think these verses would present an attractive picture of what it would be like to be a Christ follower? The second time, listen to it as someone that desires a deeper, more intimate walk with God. What are these verses saying to you about living a life in him?

Romans 15:1-13

We who are strong in the faith ought to help the weak to carry their burdens. We should not please ourselves. Instead, we should all please other believers for their own good, in order to build them up in the faith. For Christ did not please himself. Instead, as the scripture says, “The insults which are hurled at you have fallen on me.” Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us. And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of Christ Jesus, so that all of you together may praise with one voice the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you. For I tell you that Christ's life of service was on behalf of the Jews, to show that God is faithful, to make his promises to their ancestors come true,⁹ and to enable even the Gentiles to praise God for his mercy. As the scripture says,

“And so I will praise you among the Gentiles;

I will sing praises to you.”

¹⁰ Again it says,

“Rejoice, Gentiles, with God's people!”

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all Gentiles;
praise him, all peoples!”

And again, Isaiah says,

“A descendant of Jesse will appear;
he will come to rule the Gentiles,
and they will put their hope in him.”

May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Challenge:

1. What is one time in your life that you faced some form of doubt about God? How did God lead you to a place where you were able to trust him?
2. Make a list, or journal, some of the areas of your life in which you doubt God. Embrace those areas of doubt and be honest with God about them. Focus on one of those areas over the next week or two and ask God to reveal through Scripture, prayer, other believers, and his Holy Spirit the way that that particular area of doubt can lead to a stronger, more intimate faith. Repeat for another on your list the next week or two.
3. Pray that God will ultimately use your doubts to help others overcome their doubts. Pray for him to reveal one person to you that you can encourage.

Pray for God's purpose and love to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of Doubt: Doubting God.