

Friends with God

MOVIE:
BRUCE ALMIGHTY



Lesson Objective:

God wants a personal friendship with us! Through Jesus Christ specifically and creation and other expressions generally, God has invited us to know him as intimately as he knows us.

Intro to the Movie:

Bruce Nolan, a television reporter in Buffalo, NY, is discontented with almost everything in life despite his popularity and the love of his girlfriend, Grace. At the end of the worst day of his life, Bruce angrily ridicules and rages against God and God responds. God appears in human form and, endowing Bruce with divine powers, challenges Bruce to take on the big job to see if he can do it any better.

Now his chance to make life perfect has appeared, but as he enjoys his new found powers, he starts to mistreat the things that matters the most. When he tries to grant everybody what they want, turmoil ensues. And while Bruce is getting everything he wants, he has been ignoring his girlfriend, Grace, and loses her. It seems that the only thing that he can't do is alter a person's free will, so if he wants her back, he has to do it the old fashioned way.

There are tons of great lines from this movie, and while there some inaccurate portrayals and theology of the biblical God, the key is to grasp the depth of conversations Bruce and God have and the fact that God shows up personally.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as God being involved with individuals, personally showing up in the world of people, having open dialogs with Bruce, allowing Bruce to rant, asking hard questions of Bruce and allowing him to fail. God is depicted as being very personal in this movie.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. What was the funniest line in the movie for you?
2. Have you ever thought of God as being personal? What would that look like?
3. Have you ever experienced God personally? Describe it.
4. Do you think a personal friendship with God is possible? If God sent his Son, Jesus, to be his personal expression, how would that change your view of a personal friendship with God?
5. Consider this statement from the Bible story about Moses (the one who parted the Red Sea, you know, the Prince of Egypt movie) and discuss what you think about the reality of speaking personally with God like Moses (Exodus 33:11):
¹¹The LORD would speak with Moses face-to-face, just as someone speaks with a *friend*. Then Moses would return to the camp. But the young man who was his helper, Joshua son of Nun, stayed in the Tent.

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: *God wants a personal friendship with us! Through Jesus Christ specifically and creation and other expressions generally, God has invited us to know him as intimately as he knows us.*

Bullet Objective:

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

There is some funny stuff in this movie and some serious moments, too. Any of the things that are said are actually things many of us have probably thought about at some time or another.

Have you ever yelled and ranted at God? Do you think you should do that or are permitted to do that – with GOD? How much should you tell God anyway? How well do you think you can get to know him? Does he want to be known? If so, why does

he seem to hide from us sometimes? Listen to how Job rants with God (Job 30:20-22): ²⁰I call to you, O God, but you never answer; and when I pray, you pay no attention. ²¹You are treating me cruelly; you persecute me with all your power. ²²You let the wind blow me away; you toss me about in a raging storm.

The truth that most defines God for us is that he sincerely *desires* to be known. He wants our friendship so much that he went to great lengths to make it possible! Listen to this. He tells us generally what he is like and he tells us to look at Jesus to know him:

(from Romans 1:20) ²⁰Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all!

(from Colossians 1:15) ¹⁵Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things.

Then God goes on to say he has done extraordinary things to make a friendship with us possible!

(from 2 Corinthians 5:17-20) ¹⁷Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his *friends* and gave us the task of making others his *friends* also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making all human beings his *friends* through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message, which tells how he makes them his *friends*. ²⁰Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his *friends*!

If you've never really considered it, you should look hard at the real truth about having a personal relationship with Almighty God, not just because you want it, but because he wants it with you. And he has made it all possible through Jesus Christ.

Challenge:

1. If you've discovered that a friendship with God is possible and that's something you want to look into, this week talk to a friend or adult whom you trust to have some spiritual maturity about what that means for them. That could be a parent, a youth leader, a chaplain, but do it this week.
2. Get a Bible if you don't have one and read for yourself what God says about knowing you and loving you. Start with Psalm 139 and then read Colossians 1 for starters. Get other ideas from your friends or leaders.

*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
Friends with God.*