

MOVIE: LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

(this movie may take some planning to acquire, but it's worth it!)

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

Sub Topic theme:

THE FATHER EFFECT: good, bad, and absent

**Lesson objective:**

To understand the protective and providing heart of a good father, especially those who are volunteer soldiers. While having fun, teaching and being an engaging person with your kids are marks of a good dad, a father's true love and devotion actually takes its purest form in acts of sacrifice. Such men are to be loved, honored and deeply appreciated.

Intro to the Movie:*Life is Beautiful*

(Originally titled La vita è bella. It has English voice-over- not subtitles; originally in Italian)

In 1939, Jewish-Italian Guido Orefice comes into Arezzo, Italy, ultimately to open a book store. In the meantime, he will work as a waiter at the hotel restaurant where his Uncle Eliseo is the maître d'. In town, he meets a school teacher named Dora, whom he calls Princess and who comes from a wealthy Italian family. For him, it's love at first sight. Despite that she is already in a relationship with another man, Guido ultimately sweeps her off her feet. They get married and have a son they name Giosué. On Giosué's fifth birthday, World War II is in full force. Since they are Jewish, the Germans take away Guido, Eliseo and Giosué to a labor camp. Wanting to be with her family, Dora insists she be taken too, but she is housed in the women's side of the camp. To protect Giosué from the horror of what is happening to them, Guido tells him that they are playing a game, certain actions which garner points, other actions which take points away or disqualify one from the game. The first to reach 1,000 points wins the prize of a real tank. Guido's primary goal is to keep Giosué safe at all cost, while he tries to figure out a way to get his family out of the

camp and keep the Germans at bay from learning what he is doing with Giosué.
(Written by [Huggo](http://www.IMDB.com) from www.IMDB.com)

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as living life to the fullest, joy of living, seeing life as basically positive. As the movie shifts to the horrors of war, focus on the incredible resiliency with the father, as well as protection and provision at all costs for the son. Ultimately look for love expressing itself in the purest way, through sacrifice. Note that the mother has also willingly sacrificed her freedom just to be with her family and experience their pain.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. What ways was Guido's (the dad) positive outlook on life responsible for his handling of the most difficult of human conditions?
3. If the movie has a turning point, what do you think it is?
4. Have you ever heard of a story like this? If so, what is it?
5. How do you view sacrifice? Is it an act of love, stupidity, or just giving up?

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 the protective and providing heart of a good father, especially those who are volunteer soldiers. While having fun, teaching and being an engaging person with your kids are marks of a good dad, a father's true love and devotion actually takes its purest form in acts of sacrifice. Such men are to be loved, honored and deeply appreciated!*

Bullet Objective:

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

Military fathers are pretty stretched insofar as trying to meet all of the responsibilities facing them. Sometimes their sacrifice is not well understood by their families, and especially their teens who would just like to have their dads around for all of the things happening in their own lives. Understanding what a tough job it is to be a father in a military family will allow us to appreciate the protection and provision dads offer to us and to try to appreciate the sacrifice that they are engaged in. This is a way that men show their love, and knowing that can help us accept that and discover ways to connect relationally with our dads who are deployed or generally absent.

The Scriptures give us an interesting look at what might be a familiar story to some of you. It's the story of Noah, the man whom God told to build an ark (a really big boat or ship for you Navy types!) Noah was a father, so listen to this passage from the standpoint of a protective, providing, sacrificing father.

Genesis 6:5-22

⁵ When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, ⁶ he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret ⁷ that he said, "I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them." ⁸ But the LORD was pleased with Noah. ⁹⁻¹⁰ This is the story of Noah. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. He lived in fellowship with God, ¹¹ but everyone else was evil in God's sight, and violence had spread everywhere. ¹² God looked at the world and saw that it was evil, for the people were all living evil lives. ¹³ God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all people. I will destroy them completely, because the world is full of their violent deeds. ¹⁴ Build a boat for yourself out of good timber; make rooms in it and cover it with tar inside and out. ¹⁵ Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the boat and leave a space of 18 inches between the roof and the sides. Build it with three decks and put a door in the side. ¹⁷ I am going to send a flood on the earth to destroy every living being. Everything on the earth will die, ¹⁸ but I will make a covenant with you. Go into the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ Take into the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and of every kind of bird, in order to keep them alive. ²¹ Take along all kinds of food for you and for them. " ²² Noah did everything that God commanded.

You might have noticed that Noah, as a father, obeyed God even before this story because God was pleased with him. This led to Noah protecting and providing for his

whole family, even his son's wives. He had sacrificed through obedience and it paid off big time. I'm guessing his sons gave him a really nice Father's Day card once they got off the ark! And maybe you should discover ways that your father does these kinds of things for you as well. It's never a bad time to say "thanks" and "I love you" to your dad. That will keep his relational engine going for a long time!

Challenge:

1. Sometime this week, write a card to your dad that expresses some form of appreciation for something specific he does that you think is pretty cool (like protection, provision, sacrifice). Give it to him or send it to him this week. Perhaps you want to write a card to another significant male figure in your life, or a friend's father if your dad is not here or has passed away.
2. When you're with your friends sometime in the next couple of days, instead of criticizing, try giving your dad a little 'shout out' with the group. Have a "Dad brag session" where you just say something you admire about your dad and let your friends do the same with their dad (this is NOT a competition like my dad's better than your dad, but a chance for you to appreciate something about YOUR dad).

Pray for God's purpose and power 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 a family Chain of Command.