

Teenagers

The Golden Compass

Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with teens

Results

Triggers dialogue on the soul and why we tend to rebel against authority

Advance Preparation

- Caution: This film is based upon a series of books written by Philip Pullman, an author who overtly opposes Christianity. While the film only mildly touches these themes, it also lays a foundation for more troubling ideas developed in the three-book series.
- Buy/rent *The Golden Compass* (Rated PG for mild language and action)
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

Application

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enter into good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

Film Synopsis

A pre-adolescent girl name Lyra lives in a world similar to ours but different in many ways. She stumbles into an epic battle between those on the side of her Uncle Asriel (the academic and scientific world) and a powerful group called “the Magisterium.” As the adventure unfolds, Lyra becomes embroiled in a battle against those who claim allegiance to the “Authority.”

Discuss

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, reference the “Think About It” notes below.

1. In Lyra’s world everyone’s soul is called a “daemon” and it appears in an animal form that reflects the person’s basic personality. What animal form would your soul take if visible? (See A)
2. Lord Asriel refers to someone called “The Authority.” Asriel has a conflict with members of “The Magisterium” who support the Authority. Who do you think this “Magisterium” is supposed to represent in our world? (See B)
3. Why would Mrs. Coulter and the Magisterium cut children away from their daemons (souls)? (See C)
4. In what ways does *The Golden Compass* imply Christian beliefs are the problem rather than the solution?

Think About It

- A. The word “daemon” sounds like “demon” but carries a different meaning. A “daemon” is an ancient word describing beings who bridge the physical and spiritual realms.
- B. *The Golden Compass* is the first of a three-book series in which author Philip Pullman portrays a war against God by those who reject any authority so everyone can rule his or her own life. He overtly claims to hate Christianity and the church. His books call God “The Authority” and the church “The Magisterium.” Lord Asriel represents the elite members of the academic and scientific communities. Pullman’s stories pit them against one another with “God” as the villain.
- C. Philip Pullman claims that religion cuts people off from their true nature by placing them under the authority of an illegitimate God. But Christians know that rebellion against a loving God cuts us off from his life-sustaining goodness. (Read Genesis 3, Matthew 5:5, Matthew 11:29, I Peter 5:5)

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