

Film Analysis: Faces of Jesus

GRADE LEVEL

7-12

TIME REQUIREMENT

2 Periods (50 min each)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- View a variety of visual portrayals (film clips) of Jesus
- Analyze film techniques, devices, and other aspects inherent in each clip
- Compare and contrast effectiveness of film portrayals
- Examine background information behind each film to understand emphases in each film
- Understand how the historical context and filmmakers' personal views and issues influence their choice and development of themes emphasized in their movies

JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE CONNECTION

- ✓ Acceptance of God
- ✓ Commitment to the Church
- ✓ Interpersonal Relationships
- ✓ Responsible Citizen
- ✓ Healthy Balanced Living
- ✓ Intellectual Development
- ✓ Communication Skill
- ✓ Personal Management
- ✓ Aesthetic Appreciation

MATERIALS

- ✓ 4 Different film portrayals of the Life of Christ (Be sure all selections contain the same scene you want to use. RECOMMENDATIONS: Sermon on the Mount—where Jesus speaks about loving your enemies; and Jesus facing the devil's temptations in the wilderness). Be sure each film is cued up to the correct clip to be shown
- ✓ Handouts with 4 film titles and filming techniques and devices being analyzed (see samples; NOTE: these film suggestions may not all contain the same event in the life and teachings of Christ you wish to use—which is necessary in order to allow for comparison/contrast of interpretation. There are several more versions of Jesus' life on film to choose from....)
- ✓ Background information for each film used

PRE-ACTIVITY

- Optional: Discuss the following: How do filming techniques and devices affect the overall presentation of the gospel in films that feature the life of Jesus?
- Optional: Reflect (orally or written) on Jesus and how He lived His life out here on earth. What was He like? His personality? His appearance? His main focus? What stands out to you?

ACTIVITY

Viewing

1. Divide students into groups of 4. Each is given a paper with the title of one of the four areas for analysis (see samples included)
2. Provide instructions: Go through each of the four areas for analysis, explaining what each member in each group assigned to those areas will look for, analyze, and write about on the sheet provided. For example, student A will analyze "lighting and angles," student B will analyze "costume and stage set," student C will analyze "dialogue and delivery of lines," and student D will analyze "sound effects."

Analysis

1. After the first clip is shown, give students a few moments to write down observations and analysis of their area of film critiquing
2. Go through each analysis area, allowing student of each group assigned to that area to make comments from their observations
3. Upon completion of each segment of analysis, instruct students to rotate their analysis papers; so student A with the “Lighting and Angles” paper will hand off this paper to student D, who will hand off his/her “Sound Effects” analysis paper to Student C; who will hand off the “Dialogue and Delivery” to student B, who will hand off “Costume and Stage Set” to student A. After each clip and ensuing discussion/commenting, this rotation occurs again until each clip has been shown/analyzed, and each group member has observed and analyzed each area of filming
4. Lead students in a discussion of how aspects of a film— technique, cinematography, dialogue, delivery, etc. work together to communicate a message; how are these aspects to the effectiveness of impacting the audience?

Comparison and Contrast

1. Show the clips again. This time, before each clip, present to students the historical context, along with the director’s and producer’s personal interests and issues at the time.
2. After showing each clip, lead students in an exploration of how the filmmakers’ biases and the historical context shaped the making of that movie—the portrait painted of Jesus and the themes emphasized.
3. With each clip, ask students to compare the portrayal of Jesus with their personal understanding of Him in the gospels.
 - Is this how it really was? Why or why not?
 - What did they connect with in the portrayal?
 - What did they dislike, and why?
4. At the close of the lesson, discuss the following questions with students:
 - Which clip was most accurate, and why?
 - Which clip had the greatest impact on them, and why?
 - Which clip had the least impact on them, and why?

Assessment Activity

Have students research another film about Jesus' life. In essay format, have them write up their findings and reflections on the following:

- Film title
- Historical, cultural, and societal context
- Theme/s emphasized
- General or specific portrayal of Jesus
- Producer's and director's personal and collective motivations and intentions behind the filmmaking
- How those motivations and intentions are observed in the actual movie itself

LIGHTING & CAMERA ANGLES

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Director: David Lean; 1965

Observations:

King of Kings

Director: Cecil B. DeMill, 1972

Observations:

Visual Bible – Matthew

Director: Regardt van den Bergh, 1997

Observations:

Jesus

Director: Roger Young, 2000

Observations:

Dialogue & Delivery

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Director: David Lean; 1965

Observations:

King of Kings

Director: Cecil B. DeMill, 1972

Observations:

Visual Bible – Matthew

Director: Regardt van den Bergh, 1997

Observations:

Jesus

Director: Roger Young, 2000

Observations:

Costume & Stage Set

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Director: David Lean; 1965

Observations:

King of Kings

Director: Cecil B. DeMill, 1972

Observations:

Visual Bible – Matthew

Director: Regardt van den Bergh, 1997

Observations:

Jesus

Director: Roger Young, 2000

Observations:

Sound Effects

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Director: David Lean; 1965

Observations:

King of Kings

Director: Cecil B. DeMill, 1972

Observations:

Visual Bible – Matthew

Director: Regardt van den Bergh, 1997

Observations:

Jesus

Director: Roger Young, 2000

Observations: