

Kensington Goes To The Movies

Week 3: Black Panther

BOTTOM LINE

There is so much pain and suffering in the world around us. God created us to make a difference.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

The goal of this week's group is to recognize that while we have the resources to help a desperate world around us, we struggle with the opportunities and challenges associated with deciding to step out of what is comfortable and use these resources.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 20:25-28 | Luke 22:47-51 | James 2:14-17; 4:17

Note: Scenes from the movie "Black Panther" were also played in the Weekend service to show the choices of the Wakanda who have the best technology in the world, and yet, they are hidden in plain sight. They choose to further their own way of life without getting involved in the pain and suffering happening in the world around them. After his father dies, T'Challa assumes the throne and is challenged to keep the Wakanda hidden and separated from the world or to engage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Share:** Have you ever been in a situation where you had the choice to 'remain hidden' and ignore a situation that you could have made a difference in, or step out of your comfort zone and make a difference?
2. Have you ever noticed that when you talk about church with people you get a mixed response? Some people say that the church has been an incredible source for good around the world, helping more than hurting. Others are quick to point to the church as the source for much pain around the world through human history.
 - a. What is the purpose of the church? What is our responsibility to the world?
 - b. In Black Panther, the Wakanda faced a similar question. They had the resources and technology that would be very helpful to the world around them, but they chose to remain "hidden in plain sight". It is not their "way" to get involved with the problems of other people and other nations. Compare this same position to the church and not politics. Identify ways that you've seen the church "hide in plain sight". How has that shaped your own actions?
3. **Read Matthew 20:25-28 & Discuss:** The back story is that two of the disciples want special positions of authority in Jesus' kingdom. Jesus' answer highlights the nature of the kingdom that is for the benefit of others, with humble service as a higher virtue than political power and authority.
 - a. Why is power so seductive? Does peace only arrive on the other side of violence and war?
 - b. How easy is it for you to serve someone? What if that someone is "below" you in status?
 - c. The political climate during Jesus' time was one in which the Jewish people were under the oppressive control of the Roman empire. The Jewish zealots were calling for a violent overthrow of the Romans. Jesus' followers wanted Jesus to lead the charge. Jesus' message was different. How?
4. **Read Luke 22:47-51 & Discuss:** Even though Jesus continued to preach a message of peace and humility, his disciples didn't get it. When Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Peter attached a soldier, cutting off his ear.
 - a. How did Jesus respond? Why is this so unexpected?
 - b. Why were the disciples still misunderstanding the type of kingdom Jesus was teaching about?
 - c. Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. How would you have responded in the same culture and circumstances? Can you relate to how they may have felt?

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5. **Read James 2:14-17 & Discuss:** As the early church grew, one of its hallmarks was how it was caring for people that were in need both inside and outside of the church. James, the brother of Jesus and a major church leader in Jerusalem, talked about the importance of not only faith and belief, but also of good works and caring for the physical needs around them.
- a. What would the world look like if everyone who followed Jesus Christ lived this way?
 - b. Discuss the positive impact this would have on the world around us. What barriers exist that would make this difficult to adopt as a way of life?
 - c. Verse 17 basically says that if we know the right thing to do, but we fail to do then it is a sin. How does knowing this change the way you might respond to situations in the future?

“The Church is the Church only when it exists for others...not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer



TRY THIS

What if each one of us chose to no longer be “hidden in plain sight?” Consider what changes you would have to make in the way you think and the way you act in order to love, serve and reach the community around you. Identify one person, place or need that you could use your resources to make a difference in. Share with someone else in the group what your plans are!

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Week 2: Wonder

BOTTOM LINE

God gives us eyes to see what no one else sees. Will we see and stand up for those who are different?

GOAL OF THE GROUP

The goal of this week's group is to process through the choice we all need to make when we are confronted with someone different from us. Will we be a friend to the friendless and show true kindness and love like Jesus did?

SCRIPTURE

Acts 4:13; John 15: 12-17

Note: Scenes from the movie "Wonder" were also played in the Weekend service to show the struggle and impact of one boy, Jack, choosing to be a friend to someone completely different than himself, Auggie Pullman, who was born with significant facial deformities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share:** Can you remember a time when you were the 'new kid' at school, in the neighborhood or at work? Were you welcomed with friendship or mocked and bullied?
- The bullying of Auggie Pullman at school progressed to a dangerous point. The principal shares a brilliant idea: "Auggie can't change the way he looks, but maybe we can change the way we see him."
 - Jesus saw people differently than the people of his day. He chose 12 men to be his inner circle of disciples. Based on current requirements for being a disciple of a rabbi at that time, these men didn't meet them. Discuss why you think Jesus did this.
 - Share what you think, whether biblically based or not, what Jesus' relationship was with his disciples. Teacher? Friend? Boss? How do you think their lives changed because he chose them?
 - In the movie, Auggie's classmate, Jack, chose to befriend Auggie. Because of that decision, Auggie's life and the class around him were impacted in an amazing way. Share an experience in your life where you have seen this same transformation.
- Read John 15: 12-17 & Discuss:** Jesus took his relationship to his disciples to a very unique and different level.
 - How does this description of his relationship with them vary from your answer to 2b?
 - Is the concept of Jesus as a friend a new one to you? How does this change your view of Jesus in your life?
 - Jesus called his closest followers his friends and then commanded them to love others in the same way that Jesus loved them. How well do you think you are able to love others who are different than you?
 - Friendship with Jesus radically changed the lives of the disciples, and the world around them would be changed in a profound way through their love and courage. When you consider who your current circle of friends are, do you see the same opportunity to make life change and impact the greater community around you? If not, what opportunities for reaching others different than yourself are available to you to consider?
- Read Acts 4:13 & Discuss:** Friendship with Jesus had changed the disciples from men that no one else wanted, to men that were changing the world.
 - The disciples were 'unschooled and ordinary men' and yet Jesus took note of them, invested in them and they went on to change the world. Does this change the way you see others in your life? Does it change the way you see the 'rejected and unlovable' of this world? Share how.
 - The way that we respond to those that are different than we are has an impact on the people in our lives that we have influence over. Spouses, children, co-workers. Discuss how changing how you see others can change the legacy that you leave others that look up to you.

Will we choose to see what only God can see?
Will we choose to show friendship to those
others have rejected?

"This is my command: Love each other."
John 15: 17

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TRY THIS

Pray and ask God to reveal to you those that He wants you to see differently. Ask Him to give you the courage to step into their lives and offer nothing more than friendship. Ask someone in your life to help you take the first step.

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Week 1: The Last Jedi

BOTTOM LINE

When we are in a season of life where we have lost our passion and purpose we need to remember that God has designed each of us to fulfill a plan and purpose that reflects His glory to the world. We need to rise and stand with courage to what God has called us to do.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This guide is a suggestion. Adjust the questions as appropriate for your group.

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 1:23-26; 3:13-15

Note: Scenes from the movie "The Last Jedi" were also played in the Weekend service to show Luke Skywalker's struggle to re-engage in the fight to save The Rebellion. His past haunts him and he feels disqualified and disinterested.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share:** Have you ever found yourself in a season where you see what needs to be done, but are unwilling to engage and do it? To what degree do past hurts, betrayal or your mistakes play a part in this struggle?
- Luke Skywalker is reminded of his past failures and present fear. He reaches a point of not only walking away from everything, but also destroying the future of the Jedi rising again. There are many characters in the Bible who faced situations like this. The Apostle Paul has a past he wasn't proud of. He saw his failures and mistakes very clearly. There were moments in his life where he dreamed of stepping out of the fight.
 - Read Philippians 1: 23-26 & Discuss** the parallels between Paul and Luke Skywalker. How do you relate them to situations in your own life?
 - Paul was wrestling with urgency of the daily battles that he faced, while being drawn to be finished and resting in the presence of Jesus in heaven. Understand that this is not a desire to take his life, but rather to just be finished with the tasks that God has for him to do here on earth. This is challenging to desire heaven better than being here on earth with friends and family. To what degree can you consider eternity with Christ 'better by far'?
- Luke eventually concedes to jump back into the fight and teach Rey in the ways of The Jedi. He realizes it is through the messy business of teaching and training a young disciple that the Rebellion will rise again. This is true of our lives. We have a responsibility to teach others in the truth of the love of Christ. Is this an idea that is relevant in your own life in the season you are in? Why or why not?
- In verses 24-26 Paul realized it wasn't about him but for the sake of others he needed to stay engaged. People were depending on him. He knew that the opportunity for others to experience Jesus would be through the example of his life. One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to think our actions or inactions only affect us. Share an experience in your own life that is an example of someone being positively impacted because you engaged in their life.
- Read Philippians 3: 13-15 & Discuss:** Paul is talking about finishing well. Are we willing to shake off the mistakes of our past and re-engage in the present because we are passionate about the future movement of God in this world?
 - There are moments awaiting each of us that only we can step into! Does this thought excite you or overwhelm you?
 - Paul says "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead". He calls on the strength of God to empower him to forget the past and move on with purpose. Do you believe that you have the same ability as Paul to do what God calls you to do?
 - If the answer to the previous question was no, what would it take for you to change the way you feel? Is there someone in your life that models this attitude? Consider asking them to mentor you.

Will we rise and stand with courage to what God has called you to do? Who will join the great race and finish well? We are looking for Luke Skywalker, Paul the Apostle, and you!



TRY THIS

Are you willing to rise up in the moment even when the odds are against us, confident that God will give us the strength to stand? Think about the faces of the people that you know and love that draw you back into the battle for hearts. Is there someone who needs you to teach and disciple them? Reach out to them and offer to lead them. Or, maybe you are in a season of needing someone to teach and disciple you? Reach out to someone in your life who is strong in their faith and ask them to do this with you. If you don't know where to begin, check out the Kensington website: kensingtonchurch.org/ministry/care-help