Epiphany Films

JOSHUA

HOPE HAS A NAME…

Leader's Guide

"Sometimes you have to tear something down in order to build it back up."
Joshua

Introduction:

Based on the first novel of Joseph Girzone's multi-million selling *Joshua* series, this film explores the ramifications – spiritual, dramatic and comedic – of a mysterious and seemingly selfless stranger's arrival on a community in small town America.

When Joshua moves to the outskirts of Auburn, he awakens the curiosity of the sleepy town. The locals aren't quite sure what to make of him. They don't know who he is, or where he came from, but no one can shake the feeling that they've known him for years.

"Sometimes you have to tear something down in order to build it back up again," he explains to the amazed townspeople as he attempts to single-handedly rebuild a Baptist Church destroyed by a storm. It is with this simple logic combined with his enigmatic presence that Joshua convinces them to join him. But what actually ends up getting rebuilt is each of their lives, their hearts, their trust in themselves and each other. In the end, these co-existing strangers come together as a community.

Joshua is a modern parable about how faith, hope and love can transform our world.

The Movie and Your Ministry:

A new opportunity to teach using current movies has arrived! The use of various teaching methods can be the key to communicating to various kinds of people. Using visual teaching methods is even more important when trying to communicate to generations of people who are stimulated by television, video and movies. Why just tell them something when you can tell them and show them? Why just talk about it when you can experience it together?

Millions of people go to the movies every week. The talk at school, work or the gym is often centered around the latest movie on the big screen. Using a movie to make a point is natural. Looking at the message within the movie will create an entirely new viewing experience. *Joshua* is a movie that makes people think. It is not just a "religious" or "spiritual" movie. It is a movie that speaks to the heart of what is faith and hope and love. This movie can teach. We hope that you will use this guide to do just that.

Step By Step:

1. Make plans to get your friends, co-workers, class, ministry, small group, bible study or your church together for dinner and movie on April 19th.
   *[Fundraiser idea: Purchase the tickets using the group sales discounted rate and then you may sell them to your members at regular price. Or sell them for an increased rate and give the money to a local charity that feeds or houses the homeless, takes care of teenage moms, provides classroom supplies to kids.]

2. Pick a theater in your city showing *Joshua* – you can find the theater closest to you on this site (www.joshuathemovie.com) -or-

3. Call 1.800.828.2828 [ext. 1] and purchase discounted tickets on the group sales hotline.

4. Download this movie guide.

5. The day or week following the movie use the Leader's Guide in your class, church or small group to talk about the "Faith, Hope and Love" that Joshua talks about.

The Study:
What are the questions that those around us are asking? Are they questions about life and death? Or are they about what to do in life? What are they good at? What is life about? Will things ever change for me? People are asking challenging questions, and all too often we do not know what the questions are or we are not answering them. In this study we want to help you to answer some difficult questions not with simplistic answers, but with exploration and discussion.

Introduce the discussion:
To start the discussion you might say something like: "The other night we went to see the movie *Joshua* together. Since that time I have been thinking about it and the issues that it raises. Today I thought we could discuss those issues together; to ask some questions that maybe you've been asked or questions that you've asked yourself."

Question #1:
What do you think endures forever?
• Death and taxes
• Mortgage and car payments
• College Loans
• Spiritual truths
• The souls of human beings
• Relationships
• Other

Possible Answer:
God has told us that three things endure forever. [1 Cor. 13:13]
1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Love

Question #2:
What is "faith" to you?
• Getting on an airplane
• Working in a sky scrapper
• Cashing in on my Social Security pension
• Trusting people
• Believing in _____?
• Other
• How does *Joshua* define faith? When Joshua and Father Pat go to shoot pool together, Father Pat is attempting to write his Sunday message. He says it is about faith. Joshua replies that the message should be simple enough to write. Father Pat doesn't think so. He thinks the concept of faith is difficult. To show him it is not, Joshua does what?

Possible Answers:
• Joshua studies a seemingly impossible shot and says, "I know I am going to make this shot, I just don't know how. I need a little help." He then uses the plastic triangle used to rack the balls, to balance the cue stick and make the shot. Faith is knowing and believing something inside of you without necessarily knowing how it is going to happen. [Heb 11:1] For example, when we get on an airplane we know or believe that it will take us where we want to go. We don't know that for certain, we don't know the route, nor the exact time it will take. But, nonetheless we board the plane, take our seat and wait for it to happen. That is faith.

Question #3:
Why do we need "faith" in our lives?

Possible Answers:
- Without it we are missing that which endures forever.
- Without it how will we ever experience the mystery of this universe?
- Without it we have no hope. Faith is an everyday experience that gives us something to look forward to in this life and the after life. Regardless of people's beliefs on what happens when we die, it is all based on faith.
- With faith it is possible to experience God.

Question #4:
How do you think we put faith into action?

Possible Answers:
- Most people want an experience with God before they will place their faith or in Him believe He exists. God wants us to place are faith in Him so we can experience him and know that He exists. [John 20:29]
- We get faith by believing in something we cannot see. [Jesus]

Summary of faith:
- Faith is, "Believing in what we cannot see…"
- Faith is where our spiritual journey begins.

Question #5:
What does "hope" mean to you?
- If I wish hard enough it will come true?
- Wishful thinking?
- A positive mental attitude?
- Holding on to a promise?
- Other
- How does *Joshua* define hope? In the opening scenes of the movie, Joshua runs into a young guy named Kevin who is walking out on an argument with his dad. What are they arguing about? [Music]. Later in the movie, Joshua takes Father Pat to an unusual church called "Lost and Found." We again see Kevin. He is playing his guitar in the band and sharing with hundreds of people about his changed life.

Possible Answers:
- The change that Kevin experience is hope. A hope for acceptance, a hope for fulfillment, a hope for companionship, a hope for what is real.
- If faith is believing in what we cannot see, hope is gaining what we cannot lose. Coupled with faith, we gain the hope of a relationship with God now and forever and we cannot lose that hope. [Romans 8:38]

Question #6:
Why do we need "hope" in our lives?

Possible Answers:
- Without hope we are hopeless. To be hopeless is to be aimless, purposeless, depressed, and self-absorbed. [Proverbs 13:12]
- Hope provides motivation, contentment, and charity. Joshua created hope for the Baptist church by simply starting to rebuild. Once he started they too believed it could be done, so they joined him. Their hope was alive and real.

Question #7:

• According to the movie, who brings "hope" into people's lives?

Answer:

• When the name "Joshua" is translated from Hebrew to Greek, it becomes the name "Jesus."
• Jesus is hope.
• Hope for a fulfilling life now. [John 10:10]. Father Pat for example.
• Hope for physical healing. The blind girl in the revival tent meeting.
• Hope for emotional healing. Maggie and the loss of her husband.
• Hope for the future. [1 Peter 1:3]. Joshua's message to the Pope.

Summary of hope:

• Hope is, "Gaining what cannot be lost…"
• Hope is where faith leads.

Question #8:

What does the word "love" mean to you?

• Sex?
• Scratch my back, I will scratch yours?
• Emotional Connection?
• No matter what?
• I wish I knew.
• Other
• How does *Joshua* define love? Father Tardone is afraid to love. He is afraid to open his life up to others out of fear of rejection, out of fear of being weak and out of his perception that the clergy is to be set above others. In his final confrontation with Joshua, his heart is set free. How does this happen?

Possible Answers:

• By the touch of Joshua, Father Tardone experiences love. His "spiritual eyes" are open and he sees Joshua for who he is; he is love. [I John 4:8]
• He also sees love as Joshua does. It was an overwhelming experience for him. When we give love and receive love it is overwhelming at times.

Question #9:

How do we obtain this kind of love?

Possible Answers:

• Love should not be confused with infatuation or with lust. Here is how we will recognize love: [I Corinthians 13:4-8]
• We receive love by pursuing relationships with those who know what love is, and by those who can give and receive love.
• We receive love from God even before we ask for it, need it or want it. [John 3:16, I John 4:10]

Question #10:

How do we give this kind of love?

Possible Answers:

• Love is not just an emotion that we feel or words that we say. It is action. [1 John 3:18]
• We receive love by giving love. Sometimes it will be misunderstood. Maggie confused Joshua's love for a romantic love instead of a love that transcended romance.

- According to John 15:13, what is the greatest measure of love? Who would you be willing to die for? Who would die for you?
- Our love will be the way people know we are Christ-followers [John 13:35]

Summary of love:
- Love is "giving something that can be seen."
- Love is the result of faith and hope.

Conclusion:

Joshua's purpose for coming:
1. Stretch people's beliefs to believe in what they cannot see… FAITH
2. Heal people's wounds to gain what they cannot lose…HOPE
3. Restoring people's purpose by giving what can be seen…LOVE

Questions For Further Discussion:

1. Why do you think Joshua chose to visit Auburn?
2. Why do you think Auburn needed Joshua to visit?
3. What did Joshua do for the people of Auburn?
4. Do you think that the story is believable?
5. Is it believable in light of Hebrews 13:2?
6. Which character in the movie do you identify with the most?
7. When Joshua said, "Sometimes you have to tear something down in order to build it back up again," what do you really think he was referring to?
8. Besides teaching him guitar, how do you think Joshua helped Kevin?
9. Which, if any, church experience do you have?
10. Do you think the Bible is a book about fearing God or loving God or both?
11. Why do you think Father Tardone was so mistrustful of Joshua?
12. What do you think Father Tardone learned from Joshua?
13. Why do you think Father Pat doubted himself so much before Joshua arrived?
14. What do you think Joshua taught Father Pat?
15. Have you had a crisis of belief where you doubted God's existence, God's love, or God's plan for you?
16. Like Maggie, do you feel your life is a mess or collection of broken pieces that make something beautiful?
17. What do you think it would take to see real change in our world?
18. How do you think your community would change if Joshua visited you?
19. Do you think your life and reactions to people and things would change if Joshua were in the room with you?