

FAITH & FILM

movie based small group studies



The Chronicles of Narnia: Stone Table or Wooden Cross?

Reminders:

- If you are going to use a movie clip, ALWAYS PREVIEW IT! No exceptions! You are responsible for what you show your group! Our writers will always try to provide “clean clips” and warn you of nearby questionable words or content—but all art forms are subjective. Only you can determine what to show your group. Number one rule: watch it first.
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Goal:

To recognize the connection between Aslan’s death in the movie and Jesus’ death on the cross, as well as to view the crucifixion story from a different angle, which will perhaps give students new insight concerning Christ’s sacrifice.



Setting the Stage:

Aslan, a lion, is the central character in the Narnia series. Begin your lesson by asking your students to list several characteristics of lions. Then discuss why Lewis might have chosen this animal to play such an important role in his story.

The Chronicles of Narnia Overview:

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe is based upon the beloved novel written by C. S. Lewis, in which four London school children—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy—are sent to a professor’s country home in the midst of World War II turmoil. While there they discover a magic wardrobe that takes them to an enchanted land called Narnia, which is ruled by the White Witch, who has subjected the land to a perpetual winter. Joining forces with Aslan, the lion protector of Narnia, the children help to free the land from the Witch’s power.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is rated “PG” for “battle sequences and frightening moments.” Leaders should preview clips prior to showing them to the group. Also, it would be helpful if the leader has seen the entire movie.

Scripture:

Isaiah 53:3–7, 11–12; Mark 15:22–41; Matthew 28:1–10

Nearly seven hundred years before Jesus, Isaiah prophesied just how the world would be redeemed through Jesus. Though He was the son of the Almighty God, Jesus—the Lion of Judah—would be led to His death like a lamb going to the slaughter. Without a single word of protest, though He had done no wrong, Jesus would choose to lay down His life so we could live. And then, after His soul had been punished for the sins of the world, Jesus would once again see



the “light of life,” defeating death for eternity. How amazing that God would do this for us—that He loved us so much to sacrifice His one and only son so we could have a relationship with Him!

Movie Clip:

“Aslan’s Sacrifice” and “Aslan’s Resurrection”

DVD Time: Start the first clip at the beginning of chapter 17. End the clip when the Witch screams, “The great cat is dead!” Start the second clip at the beginning of chapter 20. End the clip when Aslan says, “And even death itself would turn backwards.”

Introduction to this Clip

These two clips show the death and resurrection of Aslan, who, in place of Edmund, voluntarily allows himself to be sacrificed on the Stone Table. Before your students watch these clips, encourage them to watch for similarities between the stories of Aslan and Jesus.

Key Comments and Principles from Clip

- “You are giving me your life and saving no one. So much for love.”
- “But when a willing victim who has committed no treachery is killed in a traitor’s stead, the Stone Table will crack, and even death itself will turn backwards.”
- When hope seemed lost, and doom and defeat were imminent, love prevailed and the true meaning of sacrifice saved the day.

What Did You See?

After viewing the clips, ask the group these questions:

- What spiritual elements did you see?



- Which words, phrases, or images were the most powerful to you? Why?
- As Aslan approached the Stone Table and was being mocked from all sides, what were you thinking and feeling?
- What reasons might Aslan have had for not fighting back?
- When the witch said, “So much for love,” what do you think she meant?
- How do you interpret Aslan’s comment, “Even death itself will turn backwards”?
- While watching this clip, which aspects reminded you of the story of Jesus’ sacrifice?

What Did You Read?

After reading the scripture for today, ask the following questions:

- What are the key elements in these scriptures?
- How does knowing that the passage in Isaiah was written seven hundred years before Jesus’ death affect your faith?
- The ripping of the Temple curtain and the breaking of the Stone Table both seem to be important related events. What is the significance of these similar acts?
- Think about the death of Jesus detailed in Mark 15. How is this account different or similar to the clip we just watched?
- Think about the resurrection of Jesus detailed in Matthew 28. How is this account different or similar to the clip we just watched?

What Does It All Mean?

Tie the movie clips and scriptures together by asking the following questions:



- After watching the death and resurrection of Aslan, whose story is very similar to Jesus', did your feelings or thoughts about Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection change at all? If so, please explain.
- Because Aslan died and the Deep Magic was satisfied, Edmund could live. All of us, like Edmund, have betrayed God by our sin. What does Jesus' death mean for us?
- Read Hosea 11:10 and Revelation 5:5: Why do you think God is referred to as a lion in scripture?
- Not only is God referred to as a lion, but He is also referred to as a lamb. How is it possible that He is like both animals?
- When Susan and Lucy encountered the risen Aslan they embraced him and then journeyed with him to adventure and unimaginable excitement, which is also what Jesus does for us today. How has your life changed since meeting the risen Jesus?

Creative Activity:

As the cross (represented by the Stone Table) has been the central theme of this week's lesson, end your time together with this powerful activity—making your own personal crosses. In advance, collect small branches, or, if your location lends itself to it, have your students go outside and find two branches to construct any size cross they wish. Provide nails and a hammer or pieces of string or rope to bind the pieces together. Encourage your students to allow the cross to remind them this week of Jesus' sacrifice and of the invitation to new life He offers them.

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