

# Nativity! Activity!

The 2009 partly improvised film *Nativity!* starring Martin Freeman and Ashley Jensen, is an excellent film for all ages. Based around a class at St Bernadette's Catholic school and their attempt to put on a school nativity, it covers many themes and ideas as well as helping to tell the Christmas story.

Why not have a film night with your group, or a Sunday afternoon church event? We have created some discussion cards on 5 themes found in the film to help get you and your group (whatever age they may be) thinking, talking and reflecting together.

Themes for discussion:

- Lying
- Forgiveness
- Self worth / success / talent
- Other people's expectations
- The spirit of Christmas



## **Lying - Questions:**

- Which characters told lies? (including Mr Maddens lying about Hollywood, Mr Poppy lying about Cracker the dog, Jenifer lying about her job, the headmistress lying about who Mr Poppy was. Were there any other liars?)
- What was the worst lie in the film? Why?
- Have you ever told a lie that has just grown and grown out of control? What happened in the end?
- Mr Maddens asked the priest if there was a difference between small white lies and big lies – what do you think?
- Can you think of a time when someone has lied to you? How did it feel then? How does it feel now?

## **Forgiveness – Questions:**

- Which characters showed forgiveness? (including Mr Maddens inviting Mr Shakespeare onto the stage, the children forgiving Mr Maddens, Mr Maddens forgiving Mr Poppy and vice versa. Were there any other signs of forgiveness?)
- How easy is it to show forgiveness? Why do you think that is?
- How did the characters behave after they had been forgiven?
- Is anyone beyond forgiveness?

### **Self Worth / Success / Talent – Questions:**

- Which characters had moments of self doubt or were worried about what other people thought? How did they show this? (most of the children said they were scared to go on stage, the class believed they were useless and would lose to the other school, Mr Maddens worried what Jenifer would think, Mr Shakespeare worried that he wouldn't get another 5 star rating, the Headmistress was afraid she wouldn't leave a positive legacy for her and the school, Mr Poppy feeling he'd let his aunty down. Was there anyone else who doubted their ability?)
- Can you list some of the talents that the characters had? Which of these are obvious talents and which are more subtle?
- Is it easier to list the things that someone else is good at, or the things that you are good at?
- Which role would you liked to have played in the Nativity?
- Who in the film was most successful? Why? How is success measured?

### **Other People's Expectations – Questions:**

- What did people (Mr Maddens, Mr Poppy, the Headmistress, their parents etc) expect from the children?
- What did the children expect of themselves?
- What did Mr Maddens think that people wanted of him?
- What are the effects of someone having high expectations of you?
- What are the effects of someone having low expectations of you?
- Do you think people begin to live up/down to other people's expectations of them? Can this be both positive and negative?
- Did either school have the right level of expectation for their children?

### **Christmas Spirit – Questions:**

- What do you want for Christmas?
- If you could have a Christmas wish for someone else, what would it be?
- Why were there no decorations in Mr Maddens house? What does this tell us about Mr Maddens?
- Do you think it is unusual?
- At what point did Mr Maddens begin to like Christmas again? What had changed?
- How could you spread the Spirit of Christmas to others?
- By the end of the film, what was most important to the characters? (Mr Maddens, Mr Poppy, Jenifer, the Headmistress, Mr Shakespeare, the critic, the mayor, the Hollywood producer, and the children)