

“BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA”

This Walt Disney/Walden Media movie is based on the Newbery Award winning book by Presbyterian author, Katherine Paterson. It is a story about friendship and imagination. Tired of being bullied at school and neglected at home, Jess and Leslie escape into the woods, where Leslie helps Jess envision the animated kingdom of Terabithia.

It is rated “PG” with a playing time of 96 minutes. There are several themes running throughout the movie that should lead to some good discussions.

Jess and Leslie, at first don’t appear to be likely friends.

- What do they have in common?
- What are some things that make them “odd” to others?
- Have you ever felt like an “outsider” (“odd”)?
- Were you ever the “new kid”?
- What does it feel like to be “different”?
- Where do you receive affirmation (friends or family)?

Why are some kids (people) mean?

- Is there a difference between mean kids and mean adults?
- How do we reach out to mean people?
- How does God ask/expect us to treat others?
- How do we stand up for something we know is right?
- How do we stand up against the wrongs we see?

Jess and Leslie are both gifted artists.

- How do we find our gifts?
- How do we nurture our gifts?
- How do we help others find and nurture their gifts?

In our “hi-tech”, video game, text messaging world – what happens to imagination?

When they are in the tree house, Leslie tells to Jess to “close your eyes and keep an open mind.”

- What is she encouraging him to see?
- How does this help them outside of Terabithia?
- What are we all looking for in life?
- It is often said that “seeing is believing”, but for the disciples of Jesus Christ isn’t it “believing is seeing”?
- Does the Kingdom of Terabithia point in any way to the Kingdom of God?
 - o What did Leslie and Jess find in Terabithia?
 - o How did going there help them?
 - o What does the Kingdom of God offer us?
 - o How do we live into being the Children of God?

Leslie dies. Talk about some of the emotions that Jess has to go through.

- What do you do when a friend moves away?
- What happens to you when someone you love has died?
- How do we deal with the pain?
- How do we move through the pain?
- What have your relationships/friendships brought you?

In the end, Jess builds the bridge to Terabithia and takes his sister across.

- Who has helped you through the hard times?
- Who has mentored you? What did they do for you? How did they help?
- Who are you mentoring?
- How can we, as a community of faith, be a bridge for others?