

At THE MOVIES

Life Group Leaders Guide

Directions

This packet contains the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group during our *At the Movies* series. Everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose* and *Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get background information and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group. The curriculum was designed with your freedom in mind. Read through the curriculum and decide what will work best for your group. SOAP the passages with the group, use only certain questions, write your own questions, or use the curriculum verbatim. As the leader, you know what will point your people to Jesus.

Series Overview

From thrilling fight scenes that keep us on the edge of our seat to love stories that bring us to the verge of tears, movies have a universal touch that brings all of us together. At The Point, we want to harness that. We want to pair the captivating box office stories with the truth and relevance of scripture to point all people to Jesus. Enter *At the Movies*! Over the next four weeks we will be taking 4 major box office hits, utilizing their theme, and pairing them with scripture. This series will not only be entertaining and relevant but a great starting point for many people to make their way back to God. This series will coincide with some strategic outreaches to help our people invite friends, family, and neighbors to our church. So, grab some popcorn, find a comfy chair, and get ready for the show! This is going to be epic!

Life Group Overview

During the *At the Movies* series our life group curriculum will cover stories in the bible that share the same overarching story as the movie and scripture that was mentioned from stage. Unlike previous studies, we will try our best to keep the study focused around one major story or passage. This not only will allow the story theme of the series to seep into life group but will also make SOAPing the individual passages in group easier for life groups that want to go that direction.

Church At The Movies Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon	Topic of life group
Week 1	7/16	<i>Rogue One</i> : The book of Esther	Ruth 1:1-18
Week 2	7/30	<i>Beauty and The Beast</i> : 1 Corinthians 13	Acts 9:10-19
Week 3	7/23	<i>The Conjuring</i> : Luke 8:26-39	Genesis 3:1-7 & Matthew 4:1-11
Week 4	8/6	<i>Hacksaw Ridge</i> : Daniel 1	Daniel 3:8-30

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

At The Movies - Week 2 - Acts 9:10-19

Purpose of Study

This past weekend we got to see how the bible defines true love. The love we discussed is different from the love the world gives and looks for, it is a self sacrificing servant based love for the good of another. In this study, we will carry that idea further with a story in Acts. In this story we will see someone choose love over personal preference and fear, and in the end, it makes all the difference.

Flow of Study

Optional Icebreaker: Can you remember a time where you were asked to do something that terrified you? What was it? How did it work out?

Move #1: Since the sermon series and life groups are covering the same topics, it might be a good idea (both for content and time) to begin the discussion with some unpacking questions from this Sunday's sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the sermon this weekend?
2. What is one thing from the sermon that you want to apply this week?
3. Why do you think understanding true love (1 Corinthians 13) is so important for the believer?

Move #2: We will begin our study by getting some background and then reading through the passage and talking through the things that stand out to us. The goal of this move is to dissect the passage and place ourselves in the story and then apply this same type of love to our lives.

Background: The book of Acts is a book of the beginnings of the church after Jesus had resurrected from the dead and ascended into heaven. This book is full of stories from the early church that show how through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a small group of believers can be used to do the extraordinary. One of the main characters of our story is Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a Pharisee that received special joy from hunting down and terrorizing the early church members. Earlier in this passage (Acts 9:1-9), Saul was in the middle of a journey to Damascus to persecute and imprison Christians there. Along the way, Saul meets the risen Jesus and is converted to Christianity. During the conversion, Saul was blinded by "a light from heaven" and had to be brought by hand to the city of Damascus by the people he was traveling with. It is here that the newly converted and blind Paul will come in contact with love through one of his new Christian brothers, one of the people he was traveling to persecute. For that Christian brother, loving Paul is scary and dangerous.

Read Acts 9:10-19 (NIV)

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen

instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” ¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Look at Ananias’ response to the Lord calling him in a vision (verse 1). How is this the only proper response for the Christian? Is there a difference between “yes” and “yes, Lord?”
3. Reread verses 11-12. How would this backstory be helpful for Ananias?
4. Reread verses 13-14. What do you think is the importance of Ananias beginning with the phrase “Lord?”
5. Reread verses 15-16. How is this future story helpful for Ananias?
6. During the whole story Saul is blind and helpless. Ananias is probably not the only one nervous in this situation. Why do you think Saul would be terrified?
 - a. **Hint:** a leader from the people he persecuted has come to see him.
7. In verse 17, Ananias begins his ministering by calling Saul, “brother.” Can you imagine what this would be like for Saul to hear this?
8. Have a group member reread the passage from this weekend (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). What aspects of love from that passage are seen by Ananias’ actions in Acts 9?
 - a. **Hint:** one example could be “keeps no record of wrongs.” Ananias definitely did not allow Paul’s recent past to keep him from loving Paul.

Move #3: Now that we have dissected the story Saul and Ananias. Let’s ask some closing questions to see how the story applies to our life and culture today.

1. Nowhere in the passage is the word “love” mentioned, however, it is shown. Why do you think this is a passage chosen to describe the topic of love?
 - a. **Hint:** Love is so often described in our culture as something that is feeling based, however, this is seen nowhere in Ananias’ love for Paul. Instead we see sacrifice and purposeful discomfort as on outpouring of love.
2. Luckily, in America there is not a ton of people tracking Christians down to imprison them, however, that does not mean that this passage does not relate to us at all. In what ways does the story of Saul and Ananias relate to you? Who are the people in your life that are difficult and dangerous to love?
3. The Lord encourages Ananias before going by showing that He has been working on Saul and has laid a framework for Ananias to build on. Is this true for the people we are called to love boldly? How can we keep that in mind in times when we do not have a direct “vision” from God regarding it?

4. Ananias was given assurance by God before he went (verse 12 and 15). What assurance has Christ given us as believers to go and love people boldly like Ananias did?
5. We find out later, when Saul (now Paul) shares about his conversion that Ananias was the perfect candidate to be used by God to reach Paul. Read **Acts 22:12** (seen below). How was Ananias “custom made” to love Paul?
 - a. **Hint:** Paul was a devout Jew and Ananias was respected by all the Jews. They actually would have had a lot in common.

¹² “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

6. Technically, Paul sharing his testimony in Acts 22 happens around 25 years after the moment we read about in Acts 9. What does this show us about the power of Ananias’ bold choice to love?
 - a. **Hint:** It radically changed Paul’s life so much so that he is still talking about it 25 years later. Also, this has led to more fruit than Ananias probably thought it would when he made the tough decision to love boldly.
7. Who are the people in your life or this world that you have been “custom made” to love boldly?
8. What is something that stood out to you tonight that you are going to take with you?

Prayer: End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

Acts 9:10-19

- Ananias’s protest is understandable, considering all that Saul had done to the “saints in Jerusalem” and had been planning to do in Damascus (vv. [13–14](#)). But his willingness to obey immediately, after the Lord’s explanation (vv. [15–16](#)), is commendable. So is his magnanimous act of “placing his hands on Saul” and addressing him as “brother Saul” (v. [17](#)). (Fernando)
- Ananias obediently made his way to the street called Straight (which is still one of the chief thoroughfares of Damascus) and entered the house of Judas. There, without delay, he fulfilled his commission, laying his hands on the blind man and addressing him in terms of brotherly friendship. The form of the name “Saul” in the original text at this point—the same form as was used by the heavenly voice which Saul heard on the way—suggests that Ananias spoke in Aramaic. In his later speech to the Jerusalem populace from the top of the steps connecting the temple precincts with the Antonia fortress ([22:14–16](#)) Paul gives a fuller account of what Ananias said to him; in his speech before Agrippa ([26:16–18](#)) he includes Ananias’s communication in what was said to him during the heavenly vision....so Ananias enters and leaves the narrative, and we know nothing more of him. But as Saul’s first friend after his conversion, the first follower of Jesus to greet him as a brother, as well as the one who faithfully bore the Lord’s commission to him, Ananias has an honored place in sacred history, and

a special claim on the gratitude of all who in one way or another have entered into the blessing that stems from the life and work of the apostle to the Gentiles. (Bruce)

- Salvation is a gift of God; we do not deserve it and it is freely given to us by God, who takes the initiative by seeking us and bringing us to himself. In other words, we have no grounds for feeling superior to anyone. This truth we must demonstrate in an age when Christian belief about full assurance of salvation is considered arrogant by pluralists, who see the pursuit of salvation as something generated from within. Another significant inference from the fact that God takes the initiative to save the least likely people, such as Saul the persecutor, is that we cannot pronounce anyone hopeless as far as conversion is concerned. As we face irreligious people or the followers of New Age thinking or any other religion, we may think that they are impossible to bring to Christ. As Paul said in [1 Timothy 1:16](#), the fact that the worst of sinners could be converted is a sign that the least likely people can be saved. Such realities should encourage us to dream about, pray for, and work toward the conversion of resistant people and enemies of the gospel. (Fernando)
- To go to Saul (in speaking about Ananias) would be tantamount to giving himself up to the police. It would be suicidal. (Stott)
- Ananias addressed him (Saul) as “Brother Saul” or “Saul, my brother.” I never fail to be moved by these words. They may well have been the first words which Saul heard from Christian lips after his conversion, and they were words of fraternal welcome. They must have been music to his ears. What? Was the arch-enemy of the church to be welcomed as a brother? Was the dreaded fanatic to be received as a member of the family? Yes, it was so. (Stott)