



The Lord of the Rings Part 1

The Fellowship of the Ring

Starring:

Christopher Lee
Ian McKellen
Elijah Wood
Sean Astin
Billy Boyd
Dominic Monaghan
Liv Tyler
Cate Blanchett
Viggo Mortensen
John Rhys-Davies
Orlando Bloom
Ian Holm
Sean Bean
Andy Serkis

Directed by Peter Jackson
Music by Howard Shore

1. What this film is about:

The Lord of the Rings trilogy is based on J R R Tolkien's classic book of the same name. Each part is based on a major section of the book.

In the first part, we learn that Bilbo Baggins, one of the gentle, peace-loving creatures called hobbits, who live in a part of Middle-Earth called the Shire, has come into possession of a magic ring. This ring is the property of the Dark Lord, Sauron, whose desire is to enslave the whole of Middle Earth and bring all creatures under his evil sway. The ring, though beautiful to look at, contains much of Sauron's power and his unspeakable evil and he wants it back.

The wise and good wizard Gandalf realises that there is something bad about the ring. He persuades Bilbo to give the ring to his young hobbit nephew Frodo and urges him to keep it secret and safe until he has received advice. But Gandalf is betrayed by the wizard Saruman, who although once wise and good has become corrupted by the evil Sauron and is now controlled by Sauron's evil will. Once Gandalf hears Saruman's wish for power and urges him to join Sauron, he rejects this evil and escapes back to the Shire. He knows he cannot take the Ring himself. Frodo must do it.





Frodo now has no choice but to leave all he has known behind and carry the evil ring to Rivendell, the home of the wise healer and elf, Elrond, Gandalf's friend. He takes his trusted servant Sam and two friends, Merry and Pippin. Even on this first journey, he is pursued by Nazgul, evil servants of Sauron and feels the Ring's evil pull. He is helped by a strange Ranger, Aragorn, a king in exile, and with his help and the help of Arwen, Elrond's daughter and Aragorn's beloved, he comes, wounded to Rivendell where he thinks his task is over.

Elrond tells Gandalf that the Ring cannot stay safely in Rivendell. There is only one way for Middle earth to be free and that is to destroy the Ring completely in Sauron's own land of Mordor and in the fiery mountain where it was made. Elrond calls a Council of representatives of all the main people's of Middle Earth to decide how this can be done, but they fight among themselves until Gandalf despairs and Frodo finally steps forward saying that he will do it. Once he has offered himself and been chosen, a fellowship is formed around him to help him in his quest. Gandalf, Aragorn, the Elf Legolas, the Dwarf Gimli, the Man Boromir and Frodo's three hobbit friends are chosen.

The journey is hard and long. The Fellowship is forced into the mines of Moria which are full of orcs, twisted creatures made in mockery of the true people of Middle Earth and the servants of Sauron. Worse than this is the Balrog, a fiery demon which challenges Gandalf. Gandalf faces the demon and casts him into the abyss, but at the price of falling into the abyss himself to the horror and grief of the Fellowship. Meanwhile, Frodo is pursued by the creature Gollum, who once possessed the Ring and who has been twisted by its evil so that he will do anything to have it again.

Aragorn now leads the party. He takes them to Lothlorien, a peaceful elf home where the Lady Galadriel give shelter and advice. She delivers a warning, as she is able to see into people's hearts and see their desires.. She sees there is more trouble to come. Boromir is desperate to save his people and comes to see the Ring as a weapon which will deliver them. He cannot agree with the Ring's destruction and fails to see that the Ring is corrupting them. Frodo offers her the ring but she fights with temptation and rejects it. Meanwhile Saruman is helping Sauron by building a huge army.

Boromir snaps and tries to take the Ring from Frodo. Frodo, appalled by the effect the Ring's evil is having on his friends determines to go to Mordor alone. He sets off as the whole company is attacked by Saruman's evil forces. Merry and Pippin distract the enemy to let him escape at the price of their own capture. Sam runs after Frodo and persuades him not to go without him. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas decide to let Frodo and Sam go, and to pursue the orcs to rescue Merry and Pippin. The first part ends with this breaking up of the Fellowship as Frodo and Sam take the Ring into the unknown.

2. Major themes of the Film

Good, Evil, Wisdom, Betrayal, Friendship, Corruption, Power, Temptation, Choice, Love, Sacrifice, Destiny.

Excerpts from the film to watch:

The confrontation between Saruman and Gandalf





The formation of the Fellowship
The sacrifice of Gandalf in the Mines of Moria
Boromir's attempt to take the Ring from Frodo
Galadriel's look into the hearts of the Fellowship
Galadriel's temptation and rejection of evil
Boromir's confession, absolution and death

Some general issues for discussion:

How do we know what is good and what is evil?
What temptations do people face today?
How can we tell what is corrupting our lives?
What are the marks of a true Friend?
How do we make the hard choices?
How do we carry difficult burdens and help others to carry them?

3. A game to play

The game of the gift

You will need either a children's play sword or similar knife/dagger etc, preferably bloodstained, or a ring to represent a magic ring. Do not use a real knife that could hurt someone or a valuable ring that could get damaged or lost.

The purpose of the game is to interact with an object in a way that opens up some of the themes and issues in the film.

How to play the game:

You must choose whether you want to use the ring or the sword.
You must treat the sword or the ring as a gift. Sitting in a circle, each person must present the word/ring to their neighbour with the words 'This is a gift'. The receiving person must accept the gift, thank their neighbour and say how they feel about the gift and to what use they might put it. After this, the gift is passed to the next person.

Other ways of playing the game:

As role play, taking on characters from the film
As mime, interacting with the object without words

Rules of the game

You must accept the gift. You can't reject it or give it back or refuse to pass it on. There are no right or wrong 'answers'. Each person's response is to be respected.

Conclusion of the game





Discuss how playing the game made you feel. What is it like to 'play' with something nasty, scary, violent or unpleasant? What is it like to play with something powerful? What kinds of response came out? Was anything avoided?

What might this game mean to:

- A terrorist?
- A person on the verge of committing suicide?
- A victim of abuse?
- A member of a street gang?
- The President of the United States/The Prime Minister?
- A little child?

What would you do with their responses to this game?
Are we sure what the Church teaches about some of the issues raised by this film?
How can we help others learn about the Christian view of some issues in this film?

4. Passages from scripture:

The confrontation between Gandalf and Saruman
Corruption and betrayal
Matthew 23. 25-28
Mark 14.43-50

The formation of the Fellowship
Vocation and responding to God's call
Matthew 10.16-22
Mark 9.33-37

The sacrifice of Gandalf in the Mines of Moria
Sacrifice
Judges 16.23-30
John 15. 12-17

Boromir's attempt to take the Ring from Frodo
The seduction of power
1 Kings 21.17-21

Galadriel's look into the hearts of the Fellowship
God knows the secrets of our hearts
Psalm 44. 20-22
Romans 2.12-16
Hebrews 4.12-14

Galadriel's temptation and rejection of evil





Temptation

Genesis 3.1-7

Matthew 4. 1-11

1 Corinthians 10.13

Boromir's confession, absolution and death

Confession and forgiveness

Psalms 51

Luke 15.11-32

Can you find news stories or other illustrations from modern life which fit these scenes?

Eg The overthrow of a corrupt government; betrayal by a trusted person such as a teacher or a police officer;

The work of mission or development agencies in trying to transform people's lives;

The sacrifice of a parent for a child; battling the evils of disease or famine;

The misuse of power by governments or multinationals, even for 'good' reasons;

The role of conscience in a difficult issue, perhaps a medical decision affecting someone's life or death;

The way a person has repented of evil done in their lifetime and whether they have been forgiven.

Can you find examples from your local community or wider local area?

5. What the Church teaches

Temptation

The Holy Spirit makes us discern between trials, which are necessary for the growth of the inner (person) and temptation which leads to sin and death (Catholic Catechism, p 606)

God does not want to impose the good, but wants free beings...There is a certain usefulness to temptation. No one but God knows what our soul has received from him, not even we ourselves. But temptation reveals it in order to teach us to know ourselves, and in this way we discover our evil inclinations. Origen De Orat. 29

Confession

The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission (a person) looks squarely at the sins (that person) is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens (his/her self) again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible. (Catechism p 327)

Forgiveness

There is no one, however wicked or guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided (that person's) repentance is honest (CC p 224)





World church perspectives and stories

Why it can be difficult...

What have we learned?...

Making connections to those inside and outside the Church

Where are people being tempted to turn from good to evil ways by promise of power or money, or because they are too weak to withstand exploitation by others?

Who are using dubious means to try to do good and what are the effects?

Who needs forgiveness and are we willing to forgive?

6. Prayers and reflections

Lord,
The world is a beautiful creation
Brought into being by you
Sustained by you
Loved by you.

We have broken and hurt your world,
We have hurt its created life,
And left it in pain

Teach us to be agents of your healing power
To bring the light of Christ into the darkness
To bring the hope of restoration

Amen

