

SESSIONS WILL INCLUDE...

JESUS

Teaching about Jesus can be difficult; how can He be shown to be relevant while still being faithful to the historical facts? It could be said that film has contributed to the invention of a 'new Jesus' and this session will seek to explore this thesis, considering the relationship between how Jesus is portrayed today and the 1st Century man, so far as He can be known. It will also show how clips of films can be used to help young people to engage with the complex issue of the nature of Jesus, his humanity and relation to God.



TRUTH AND THE NATURE OF REALITY

There is an uncompromising divide between Plato and Aristotle about the nature of reality. While Plato is firmly committed to a transcendent order (and so has strongly influenced mystics down the centuries), Aristotle is committed to science and to a 'this worldly' approach to reality. Movies today, from 'The Matrix' to 'Prince Caspian' and 'The Golden Compass', reflect an ongoing division in understandings of truth and reality. What is real? How should the universe be understood? Film can illustrate and explore complex philosophical themes and can help students think through the nature of reality as well as the nature of truth claims. In an age dominated by post-modernism and consumer culture these themes can also be used to explore a wide range of ethical and philosophical issues as well as to engage with issues in science and religion including, for instance, the claims of those such as Marx and Dawkins who argue that the material universe is all that there is.



VAMPIRES, THE SOUL AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

The issue of what it means to have a soul is central for discussions about life after death, freedom and the nature of death. Vampire

movies, along with science fiction classics such as 'I Robot' and 'Blade Runner', can be used to raise questions about these complex issues. Vampires have never been so popular! The old idea of the evil count Dracula has been replaced by more sympathetic representations of vampires. Since Buffy the Vampire Slayer fell in love with Angel the 'good vampire' (who suppressed his blood lust and went on to his own series) vampire stories have reflected society's shift from rejecting the 'different' to embracing and celebrating individuality. Today 'True Blood' portrays vampires as a persecuted minority and, though Edward Cullen in 'Twilight' is immortal and has no soul, he loves Bella and demonstrates the highest 'human' qualities of loyalty, self-sacrifice, bravery and honesty. What does it mean to be human? What is it about vampires that causes them to be cursed? This session will explore these and other pertinent questions, giving interesting and relevant material to engage students in deeper philosophical discussions.



THE NATURE OF EVIL

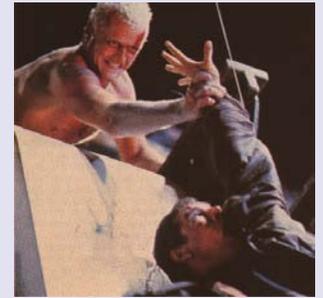
The distinctions between natural and moral evil that still dominate school text books are today recognised as too simplistic to deal with the moral ambiguities that many young people face. This session will consider the nature and purpose of evil, drawing on 'Star Trek', 'The Lord of the Rings' and 'Harry Potter' in so doing. It will also consider the adequacy of the Augustinian and Irenaean Theodicies in the light of the complexity of real-life situations, as illuminated in semidocumentaries such as 'Hotel Rwanda', 'Conspiracy', 'Copenhagen', 'Defiance' and 'Sophie's Choice'.



A GOOD DEATH?

Many RS specifications require teachers to discuss questions about suicide, euthanasia and capital punishment in the classroom and require students to write balanced and dispassionate essays about what should be very difficult, delicate topics. This session will explore how film can be used to explore these issues sensitively, avoiding students becoming

blasé and failing to grasp their real human significance while retaining the ability to discuss academic and philosophical content appropriately. Clips from films such as 'The Constant Gardener', 'The English Patient', 'The Shawshank Redemption' and 'Dead Man Walking' will be used.



A GOOD LIFE

What does it mean to live a good human life? Different ethical theories suggest different answers to this question. Whereas a Utilitarian may measure the goodness of life in terms of the 'happiness' it produces, the problems with this approach can be made clear through clips from films such as 'The Cruel Sea', 'Munich' and 'Schindler's List'. The Natural Law tradition makes a more complex assessment, relating goodness to the fulfilment of human nature, but what does this really mean? What does it mean to be human? Directors and actors have explored this theme over and over again. This session will consider how clips of films as diverse as 'The Lives of Others', 'Ice Age', 'The Reader' and 'The Devil wears Prada' can be used to encourage deep thought and meaningful discussion at the beginning or end of an ethics course or as part of a General Studies or IB Theory of Knowledge course.



The Powerpoints, notes and video resources supplied on the DVD which will be given to all those who attend the conference are only licensed to be used by the school that sends teachers to the conference or by the individuals attending should they move to a different school. Teachers will also be invited to participate in a new and innovative project to develop an online resource to support RS teaching in conjunction with CTVC in the UK.



DR. PETER VARDY

Needs little introduction. He is widely known in Australia and New Zealand where he has been running teacher training and student conferences for 12 years. He is vice-principal of Heythrop College, the specialist Philosophy and Theology College of the University of London as well as being the editor of twelve books translated in seven languages.

Some of these have been the best

selling texts for teaching Religious and Values education in Britain for many years and are also used by many Australian schools. He has been a keynote speaker at conferences for the I.B. Principals (in Hanoi) UNESCO (in Kuala Lumpur), UNHRC (in Adelaide) as well as speaking to Principals and others at major conferences worldwide.

Dr. Vardy has a particular interest in the use of film in teaching Religious and Values Education and has pioneered its use at the University of London. He runs the largest programme of student conferences in Britain in Ethics and Philosophy of Religion and the largest programme of student conferences in the field in Australia. Above all, he is an engaging and exciting speaker and comments from students at many previous conferences emphasise his widespread appeal. In particular, he combines intellectual rigour with accessibility in a way which enthuses teachers and students. Peter was the founding editor of DIALOGUE AUSTRALASIA and is a member of the Board of the Dialogue Australian Network – which brings together 430 schools across Australia and New Zealand.

Teaching RE is never easy. Many of the concepts are difficult, students often have preconceived ideas or may be resistant and we usually have to work with very mixed-ability classes. This intensive one-day in-service will describe a new approach to teaching important topics through FILM, both drawing on popular movies that your students are likely to have seen in their entirety and using clips of less well known films which provide dramatic and interesting resources in the classroom. This in-service will also provide the framework for a weekly extra curricular activity, suitable for 15-18 year olds, using films to inspire discussions of Philosophical issues.



Places at this in-service are available at \$145 each. This includes lunch and an exclusive DVD of resources.

TO BOOK

Please email or phone Wombat Education

mail@wombateducation.com

Amendments, cancellations will be accepted up to two weeks before the conference.

Registration will take place at 9.30am for a 10.00am start.

The conference finishes at 3.00pm.

Further information from

Wendy Rowe

Wombat Education

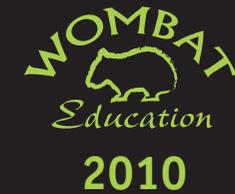
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With

Dr. Peter Vardy
University of London

**An intensive one-day in-service on
Teaching RE through Film**

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