

FAITH & FILM

movie based small group studies



I Am Sam: Children of God

Reminders:

- If you are going to use a movie clip, ALWAYS PREVIEW IT! No exceptions! You are responsible for what you show your group! Our writers will always try to provide “clean clips” and warn you of nearby questionable words or content—but all art forms are subjective—only you can determine what to show your group. Number one rule: watch it first.
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Goal:

To understand that we can rest assured that we are children of God, precious, beloved, and valuable—even when we are feeling rejected, afraid, and alone.

Setting the Stage:

Have a few mirrors available. Pass them around as you ask the following questions:

- What do you see?



- Who do you look like?
- What characteristics make you unique?

Ask a few students to share their answers. Let your students know that in today's lesson they are going to learn more about who they are—and also *whose* they are.

I Am Sam Overview:

Sam Dawson is a mentally challenged father who is doing his best to raise his daughter, Lucy. When Sam is declared an unfit parent, Lucy is taken away from him and placed in a foster home. As Sam fights to get Lucy back, he begins to realize that he needs others and that others need him. Sam's journey is full of joy, isolation, tragedy, anger, fear, and love—polar emotions all lived out with his daughter and friends. *I Am Sam* is a beautiful illustration of the important role community plays in each of our lives.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This movie is rated “PG-13” for strong language. Leaders should preview clips prior to showing them to the group. Also, it would be helpful if the leader has seen the entire movie.

Scripture:

Isaiah 43:2–4 and 1 John 3:1

We have all felt alone or rejected at some point in our lives. Perhaps you were always the last one to be picked for a team in gym class, or maybe someone you really cared about unexpectedly dumped you. Since the beginning of time, people have experienced the hurt that comes from being rejected and left alone, but throughout history, God has also been reassuring his people of his love and his presence in their lives.



In both Isaiah 43:2–4 and 1 John 3:1, we are told of God’s great love for us. In Isaiah we are reassured that there is no situation too difficult for God. Even at the darkest, lowest points of our lives, God is there with us, helping us to get through.

In 1 John, the author, John reminds us of our identity: we are children of God! When we feel completely rejected by the world, we can stand firm on the fact that we are a part of the family of God, knowing that the creator of the entire universe loves us and considers each of us his children!

Movie Clip:

“It’s Time”

Time:

DVD: start at the beginning of chapter 1; end when the scene switches to Sam feeding Lucy on the bus

Introduction to this Clip

Sam gets word that his baby is on the way, so he goes to the hospital to be there for the birth.

Bekah, the baby’s mother, is ashamed of Sam and of the situation they have gotten into. In this clip you’ll see her reaction to Sam and to the baby they have created.

What Did You See?

After viewing the clip, ask the group these questions:

- What spiritual elements did you see?
- Which words, phrases, or images were the most powerful to you? Why?
- After giving birth, what did the look on Bekah’s face tell you about how she felt about Sam and the baby?



- Sam recognizes that Lucy is his daughter and that he is her father. What does this tell you about Sam and his heart?
- What happens to Sam as he leaves the hospital with Lucy?
- Why do you think Bekah abandoned Sam and Lucy?
- Describe Sam's physical response to getting left on the corner.
- Share some of the feelings you experienced while watching this clip.

What Did You Read?

Read Isaiah 43:2–4 and 1 John 3:1.

After reading the scripture for today, ask the following questions:

- What are the key elements in these scriptures?
- Some people find it difficult to believe that they are truly loved and accepted. How did you feel when reading the passages?
- In Isaiah 43:2, does God promise that his people will be saved from adversity? What is it that God promises them?
- Isaiah 43:4 says that we are “precious and honored” in God's sight? How does this make you feel?
- In 1 John 2:28, the writer encourages us to be confident and unashamed. Why do you think he would say this before proclaiming our position in the family of God?
- What makes the love of God so valuable to us?
- What are the implications of being a child of God?
- Is it difficult to believe what these passages are saying to us about who we are? Why or why not?



What Does It All Mean?

Tie the movie clip and scripture together by asking the following questions:

- Have you ever felt abandoned or rejected? If so, describe your experience.
- How might knowing that you are a child of God help you during times of hopelessness?
- Contrast what we know of God with the character of Bekah in the story. Bekah didn't see the potential in Sam or Lucy, but later in the movie, others do. How does it motivate you to know that God does see potential in you?
- Bekah abandoned Sam and their newborn daughter, leaving Sam to figure Lucy out on his own. We also have the freedom to figure out life on our own. How does it change your life knowing that God loves you and will never leave you? If this is true, why do so many people still try to figure out life on their own, away from God?
- Have you ever felt undeserving of God's love? If so, talk about it.
- When in your life have you been most aware of God's love for you?

Creative Activity:

Ask your students to write down a few ways they can be reminded each day that God loves them.

Encourage them to keep a journal throughout the next week, documenting the ways they experience God's love in their lives.

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