

The Heart of the Matter Video Series

Here Come the 'Nones'... by Dr. Joe Rogers

Theme:

Addressing the education of those adults who teach is imperative considering the statistics of young people who identify as 'nones' when it comes to religious affiliation. Despite not identifying with a particular denomination, these students nonetheless search for meaning in the world. This video will explore how popular media and theology can become tools for meaningful conversation and how the use of mass media and pop culture can become a pedagogical tool for faith development.

Welcome and Pre-Video Activity:

- Create space where participants can easily interact with one another (a semicircle?).
- Offer a strong welcome that expresses appreciation for the gifts each person brings to the gathering
- Possible opening prayer could include Romans 8:26-28 (Paul's discussion of the Spirit working in all things).

Introducing the Video:

A group discussion involving asking the individuals if they have ever encountered God's presence in unlikely places (i.e, in things that weren't necessarily "church-y" or obviously "religious")? How? In what way?

The Heart of the Matter:

The Learning Goals of this video are as follows:

- An examination of who and what the 'nones' are
- What has contributed to this decline in religious observance
- How teachers in Catholic schools can respond
- An examination of theological messages in pop culture (movies, television, music, etc.)
- How teachers can use this media to engage students in seeing connections between Catholic theology and their own lives

Learning Activities - Engaging the Heart:

View one or two clips from films and/or television shows that touch upon theological themes.

EXAMPLE: Watch the clip from the 1997 film Contact and then reflect on the question that follows. (To set scene up: Jodi Foster plays a scientist who was given an opportunity to participate in a flight to make contact with an alien species. She returns with no proof that she had gone and is summoned to Congress to give an account. In this scene she is being cross-examined by a politician).

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Question: In what way is Jodi Foster's speech on what her experience was similar to our experience of faith?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWrWZaPnFzY>

Review - Gathering the Learning:

Have participants read a portion of "Gaudium et Spes" and reflect on the topic and activity just completed.

EXAMPLE: Read the following segments of "Gaudium et Spes" and discuss the questions that follow:

From paragraph 7: "On the one hand a more critical ability to distinguish religion from a magical view of the world and from the superstitions which still circulate purifies it and exacts day by day a more personal and explicit adherence to faith. As a result many persons are achieving a more vivid sense of God. On the other hand, growing numbers of people are abandoning religion in practice. Unlike former days, the denial of God or of religion, or the abandonment of them, are no longer unusual and individual occurrences."

Closing:

Watch this video for a reminder that God is always with us and speaks to us in ways we may not expect.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28iWKZaCtQw>

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE HEART OF THE MATTER VIDEO](#)

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Resources:

"The Gospel According to the Nones; Reading Scripture without religion" by Elizabeth Drescher, America Magazine, May 28, 2015

<https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/gospel-according-nones>

"Pop Theology" a website dedicated to the examination of theological issues raised in popular media

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/poptheology/about-pop-theology/>