Mother Teresa presents the incredible story of a woman whose unwavering faith became the motivation for her commitment to service and her ultimately lifelong mission. In this critically acclaimed pictorial biography, Golden Globe winner Olivia Hussey illuminates the life story of Mother Teresa, who brought hope, love, and salvation to the poorest of the poor. A shrewd diplomat and an indomitable force, this selfless missionary was unwilling to accept what others deemed impossible, fearlessly fighting for the unloved and the forgotten. Her good works transcended hardships and ultimately earned her international acclaim, including the Nobel Peace prize. Filmed on location in Sri Lanka and Rome, the humble triumphs of Mother Teresa portrayed in this poignant film, are an inspiration today. Mother Teresa has been praised and approved by the Missionaries of Charity – led by Sister Nirmala, Mother Teresa’s successor.

The Discussion Guide draws out the themes in the film, touching on important topics such as God’s call, faith in action, the Lord’s providence to accomplish His purpose, the power of prayer, and the importance of humility. Each topic is complete with thought-provoking questions, related scriptures, and helpful lessons. To supplement the lessons, clips from the movie have been offered as a visual aid. These clips are available for download at www.foxfaith.com or may be shown through a specially made DVD that you can request at the same website. These clips and the guide, used in Sunday school classes, other small groups, or by parents will provide you with an opportunity to initiate discussion.

For more information and additional church resource material, go to www.foxfaith.com.
About the Film

Mother Teresa presents the incredible story of a woman whose unwavering faith became the motivation for her commitment to service and her ultimately lifelong mission. In this critically acclaimed pictorial biography, Golden Globe winner Olivia Hussey illuminates the life story of Mother Teresa, who brought hope, love and salvation to the poorest of the poor. A shrewd diplomat and an indomitable force, this selfless missionary was unwilling to accept what others deemed impossible, fearlessly fighting for the unloved and the forgotten. Her good works transcended hardships and ultimately earned her international acclaim, including the Nobel Peace prize. The humble triumphs of Mother Teresa portrayed in this poignant film are an inspiration today.

Filmed on location in Sri Lanka and Rome, this inspiring and intriguing tale offers an emotional look at a strong-willed woman whose selfless acts made her a modern day saint, recognized worldwide as a symbol of charity and goodwill. Mother Teresa has been praised and approved by the Missionaries of Charity – led by Sister Nirmala, Mother Teresa’s successor.

Lesson To Learn:

Mother Teresa felt that her work with the poorest of the poor was a directive from God. Read 1 John 3:16-17, Matthew 10:42 & 18:5. How do these verses support her belief?

Whatever successes Mother Teresa experienced, she continued to exemplify humbleness. Read Micah 6:8, Matthew 23:12, & 1 Peter 5:5-6. Based on these verses, how did she follow these commands during her ministry? Explain.

Mother Teresa felt that her work with the poorest of the poor was a directive from God. When she breaks her silence after hearing the Lord’s voice in regards to her ministry, we learn some key elements of her belief system. Her statement, “I am merely God’s pencil. It is He who writes,” is key to the humility that she exudes. Mother Teresa is not glorifying in her accomplishments, but giving full credit to the Lord.

Her achievements are many: the development of an orphanage in the slums of Calcutta, a center where the dying can receive care, and the City of Peace, Mother Teresa provided food for thousands and established ministries that expanded throughout India, Rome and other parts of the world. Certainly, she could have taken pride in her accomplishments and successes, but she did not. In every instance, she gave credit to God.

Mother Teresa is gone, but the need continues. Now is the time for all of us to do God’s work. Let us reach beyond ourselves and search for opportunities to bless others with humility and love. As Mother Teresa said, “Everything we do is just a drop in the ocean. But if we don’t do it, that drop will be missing forever.”
First of all, introduce the discussion by saying something like this: “We’re going to talk about several topics – God’s call, faith in action, the Lord’s providence to accomplish his purpose, the power of prayer and the importance of humility. We have some scenes from the movie Mother Teresa that we are going to watch and then analyze to see what we can learn from them.”

Next, give a brief overview of the film. Then, play the clip you have selected. Once the clip plays, then open the floor for discussion, using the questions and scriptures that are provided, or use some of your own. To finish, you can close each session by giving the brief “Lesson to Learn” provided at the end of the topic. This will allow your members the opportunity to view the film themselves (rent or purchase) if they so desire.

Discussions:
In an effort to help you reinforce the themes and messages of Mother Teresa, we have chosen clips from the film that you can show to your group. These clips can be downloaded online at www.foxfaith.com or shown through a specially made DVD that you can request at the same website. These DVD clips are followed up with questions and scripture found in the Discussion Guide. The questions should draw your group members into a conversation about what they have just seen. It is not necessary to tackle these topics in a row, or all in one session. If you would prefer just to cover one or two, feel free. It is all up to you.

As a result of Anna’s circle of prayer warriors, Sister Amrita comes forward and confesses her duplicity. Think of a time when you or someone else has prayed fervently and God has answered. Discuss how this affected your faith.

Lesson To Learn:
The shocking news that Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity are accused of child trafficking is disheartening. As the old nun listens to the Archbishop and the official from the Indian government, she realizes that the orphanage, and all of God’s work under their direction, will be stopped if the missing child’s file is not found.

After a thorough search and the deadline quickly approaching, Mother Teresa realizes that prayer is her only solution to the problem. As a result, she enlists the help of Anna’s prayer circle that encompasses people all over the world, asking them to “storm the gates of heaven.” Once again, God is faithful to His promises, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask in prayer.” (Matthew 21:22 NIV)

Certainly, there is power in prayer. Not only does it need to be a part of our lives in time of crisis, but on a daily basis, too. The Bible promises that we can move the heart of God through prayer. The scriptures also encourage us to “pray without ceasing.” When we do this, our communication with God becomes as natural as breathing. And, life becomes exciting as we see the hand of God in our lives. If you haven’t experienced this daily walk with Him, try it. You might try keeping a prayer journal to record your thoughts and requests. It’s an experience that will bring you joy . . . and amazing answers.

Humility

Clip: God’s Servant
For all that Mother Teresa accomplished in her lifetime, she remained humble to the end. At the point where she interviews with the Father Serrano and breaks her vow of silence, her spirit of humility is evident.

Questions:
From the beginning of Mother Teresa’s ministry to the poorest of poor, we sense a spirit of courage blended with humility. Discuss the impact she has had over her lifetime, based on the film Mother Teresa.

In light of all she accomplished though her ministry, what statement during her interview with Father Serrano best exemplifies her humility and belief that her achievements were through the Lord?
NOTE: Since some of your group members have likely not seen the film, it is a good idea to provide them with the context of the clip before watching it. This can be found in the italicized text that precedes the questions and scripture references for that particular clip.

Please keep in mind that you do not have to get through all the clips in order to have a successful discussion. Also, you do not need to sacrifice a good conversation to finish the scenes. As we mentioned above, discussion times go best when you allow freedom but still provide the framework that points to lessons in God’s word.

God’s Calling

clip: I Thirst
Mother Teresa serves as a nun in Calcutta, India where there is strife between the Hindus and Muslims. As violence escalates outside the convent, she opens the gates to help a wounded man. However, this decision results in a strong reprimand. As she leaves the convent for a period of time, her true calling comes into focus.

Questions:
✚ At the train station, Mother Teresa comes face to face with a mass of humanity. What does she observe about the crowds as she moves along the walkway? How does this contrast with her life inside the convent?

✚ When the beggar reaches out to her and says, “I thirst,” how does this statement impact her in regards to poverty and need? How does she respond?

✚ Read John 4:10-14. Discuss what Christ meant about living water and never being thirsty again? What can we do to help those who “thirst” in our community, both physically and spiritually?

✚ Each of us is called to serve others in some capacity. Here are some verses that illustrate God’s command that we reach out and serve those around us; John 13:34-35, Matthew 20:27-28, & Galatians 5:13.

The director’s offer to provide a free pass to anywhere in the world can be seen as God’s helping hand extended to Mother Teresa. Upon her arrival at the Vatican, God intervenes again. Just when it seems that the paperwork for the City of Peace will be delayed, a sudden phone call from Pope Paul VI ushers Mother Teresa into a face-to-face meeting where he signs the necessary papers.

From this true story we can see how our omnipotent God has a plan and accomplishes it through individuals who grasp His vision. Mother Teresa did it for the poorest of poor in Calcutta. But, there is still much to be done today, whether it is in our own hometown or abroad. Why not seek out the purpose that God has for you. Is God calling you to serve? What are ways that we can seek to do his will here in our hometown? Are we making the most out of every opportunity to be a servant to the people around us? If you ask, He will surely answer and provide the means to accomplish His plan through you.

Power of Prayer

clip: Accusation
Throughout Mother Teresa’s ministry, she comes to God in prayer for decisions, needs, and solutions. As a result, the work she does is blessed exceedingly. However, the path is not without challenges. When they occur, Mother Teresa calls out to God for help. One such time is when the orphanage is falsely accused of a wrongdoing that could stop her work with the children.

Questions:
✚ Father Van Exem and Mother Teresa are called before the Archbishop. What terrible accusation does he bring to their attention? What is Mother Teresa’s reaction to the inspector’s news that a child is missing? Why does she refuse to cast suspicion on any of her helpers?

✚ After searching for the file of the missing child, to no avail, what action does Mother Teresa take to help locate the information? What does this demonstrate about her belief in the power of prayer?

✚ Read the following that God gives us about prayer: John 5:14-15, Psalm 86:6-7, & Psalm 6:8-91. Discuss your thoughts about moving the heart of God through prayer.
Once Mother Teresa has exhausted every human means possible, what happens that demonstrates God’s providence? Read Psalm 37:4 to see what God promises when we are close to Him. What does it mean for us to “delight ourselves” in the Lord?

The trip to Rome provides a meeting with a high official who advises Mother Teresa that the process will be slow. This prompts her to ask him for a meeting with Pope Paul VI, which is met with laughter. When the telephone rings, how is God’s providence illustrated once again?

What are some examples in the Bible where God provided for his people? Read the following verses and discuss the power and abilities of God: Nehemiah 6:15-16, Joshua 6:20-21, 1 Chronicles 11:4-5. What does the Bible say about times of trouble? Read Psalm 46:1.

Lesson To Learn:
Mother Teresa wants to build the City of Peace for those who have lost everything. The purpose of the ministry is to provide hope for the hopeless and to make life better for the poor. It is a project that can only be accomplished through God’s blessing and provision.

Even though the project is faced with challenges, Mother Teresa continues to believe that the Lord has given her this vision of what she and the Sisters of Charity can do for the needy. However, work stops when certain documents have not been filed with the City of Calcutta, documents that require approval and signatures from the Vatican in Rome.

Not being one to move slowly, Mother Teresa plans to travel to Rome, but the tickets are too expensive. She offers to work as an airline hostess; to clean or do whatever she and the other nuns can do to obtain the tickets. But, to no avail. All the while, Mother Teresa behaves as a Christian. She doesn’t become angry with the ticket agent, or badmouth the airlines. She remains at peace, knowing that if God wants the City of Peace to be built, it will happen.

Then, God intervenes with the coincidental meeting of her former student from the slums – a student who is now the director of sales for the airline company.

Lesson To Learn:
Life inside the convent has been sheltered, isolated from the poverty and political unrest within the city of Calcutta and India itself. When conflicts arise between opposing religious sects, the Catholic nuns maintain a degree of separation in order to preserve the perception of neutrality.

When Mother Teresa opens the gates of the convent to help a wounded Hindu, she listens to her heart rather than convention. This is the first whisper of her calling from God to help those in need. Then, when she finds herself confronted with poverty at the train station, her whole being is moved through the encounter.

The very words, “I thirst,” uttered by the dying beggar are symbolic of the mass of humanity in desperate need. It also references the intense spiritual need of the people. As a result of this experience, Mother Teresa re-evaluates her work as a nun and asks God for answers. In her heart of hearts, she hears His call to serve those in need.

God has called each of us to serve Him. In our community and the world at large, there are hurting people. They may be hungry, abused, or in need of clothing and housing. It is our responsibility to answer the call to love these individuals with our time and resources. Why not look for an avenue to make a difference in the name of Jesus? The blessings that come from reaching out to others cannot be overestimated.

Faith in Action
Clip: Courage
Clip: Mercy
Not everyone is happy that Mother Teresa is in the streets of Calcutta. The rich do not like the reputation that her work with the poor brings to their city, and her actions and beliefs clash with their culture and traditions. In the slums, those with opposing religious beliefs do not appreciate her being in their midst. Still, this determined woman moves forward with God’s work, dependent on His providence and protection.

Questions:
Mother Teresa wants to provide a place for those who are dying on the streets to receive care. What is the reaction of the locals when she chooses a location that had previously been a temple for a goddess? Why are they troubled by her presence?
so bold in her mission and service for God? Read Psalm 27:1. How do these verses apply to your life and your faith? Why should we not fear opposition when we are doing God's will?

Later, as the nuns minister to the dying in the new center, opposition outside raises its angry voice again. What does Mother Teresa say and demonstrate about her faith that turns the opinion of the leader? Look up another promise from the Bible in Proverbs 16:7.

Lesson To Learn:

On the streets of Calcutta, it is common for many to die alone and unloved while passersby remain untouched by the suffering and loneliness of the poor. Mother Teresa is deeply troubled by their plight and believes that God has given her a vision to build a center, a place that will provide care and refuge for those in need. The place she chooses has religious significance for the locals. Because of this, anger and rebellion arises. However, Mother Teresa has such a strong faith in God's plan, that she pays cash up front for the site. In her heart, she believes in the Lord's promise "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him." (NIV) God's protection is evident when Atule, whom she courageously defended against leg amputation years earlier, walks on the scene just as Mother Teresa is threatened with a knife. His presence scatters her enemies and provides her with safe passage. Certainly, God's timing is perfect.

Later, when confronted with an angry citizen who enters the center, Mother Teresa speaks boldly about her faith and purpose. She sets aside fear and proceeds to demonstrate God's love as she tends to a dying man. This example of love in action changed the heart of her enemy.

Today, we must ask ourselves what our actions say to those around us and throughout the world. Are we demonstrating our faith through love? When there is a need are we the first to step up and serve, or do we shrink back because we are afraid of the sacrifice? We only have to consider the Hurricane Katrina victims or those in faraway countries who have been devastated because of situations out of their control, to realize that we are even brothers of mine, you did for me." Let's obey Jesus Christ's command to love others by putting our faith into action without fear of what it may cost.

Even though an angry crowd has formed outside the building, Mother Teresa believes that the Lord wants her to move forward with the purchase. What action does she take with the landowner that shows her complete faith in God? What would be your reaction in this same situation?

As Mother Teresa starts to leave, an irate man pulls out a knife and threatens her. What occurs that provides protection for the nun? Discuss God's promises to watch over us in times of trouble. Read Psalm 91:3-7, Psalm 56:9 & 2 Thessalonians 3:3. Why is Mother Teresa commanded to make a difference. The scriptures say, "…I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Let's obey Jesus Christ's command to love others by putting our faith into action without fear of what it may cost.

God's Providence Clip: Perfect Timing Clip: Signed! Building the City of Peace is another vision that Mother Teresa has for the poorest of poor. But, the Calcutta Building Commission stops the project because of documents that haven't been filed – documents that will require the Pope's signature without delay. For this to happen, it will take an act of God to hurry the process and provide the means to fly to Rome.

Questions:

In order for the City of Peace building project to move forward, Mother Teresa must fly to Rome. What is her response when the ticket price is too high? How does she show a servant's attitude throughout the process?