

## News Story Summary

Many insiders in the film industry have labeled 2014 as the unofficial “year of the faith-based film.” In April alone, at least 4 films with varying ties to the Christian community were in theaters at the same time: *Son of God*, *Heaven is for Real*, *God’s Not Dead*, and *Noah*. Just last month, theaters around the country have shown such films as *23Blast*, *The Song*, *Left Behind*, and *MissionAir*.

While some films have been labeled “faith-based” strictly because of a title or a reference to something in Scripture, many of these films present a solid message of faith and describe in detail what it means to trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. However audiences are cautioned to do their homework before going to the theater. Know the difference between a wholesome movie, a movie based loosely on a character in the Bible, and a movie that boldly proclaims the truth of faith found only in Jesus Christ.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term “Faith-based films 2014.”)

## Focus Attention

As group members arrive, start a conversation about recent movies they may have seen that Hollywood would label “faith-based.” (Answers may include some of the titles above as well as *Mom’s Night Out*, *When the Game Stands Tall*, *Love Comes Softly*, and so forth.)

*Ask: How would you explain to the average man-on-the-street what exactly constitutes a faith-based film?*

After brief discussion, relay some of the information you learned from your Internet search about the various interpretations of what a faith-based film can be. Stress that many filmmakers are anxious to jump on the bandwagon with the label “faith-based” because of the popularity of this genre.

*Comment: Along with popularity, comes revenue! While the world may see any movie with a biblical reference in its title as faith-based, the truth comes out when you watch the movie and see whether or not it really portrays the faith of Scripture.*

*Continue: Today we will look at what many people have labeled as “The Hall of Faith,” the eleventh chapter in Hebrews. Take note of the actions by which these biblical people demonstrated their faith. See how God responded to each one. Examine your own faith-walk as we focus on at least three examples of what a real faith-based life might look like in our world.*

## Challenge

Recall the earlier discussion about faith-based films.

*Ask: Can you think of an example in a film you've seen where the gospel was clearly presented or where a character unashamedly exemplified a life of faith regardless of what was going on around them? (Two examples would be Josh Wheaton's presentation during class or Professor Radisson's acceptance of God's gift of salvation in the movie *God's Not Dead* or the presentation of the gospel by Caleb Holt's dad in *Fireproof*.) What other examples from these movies demonstrate true faith in action?*

*Say: Real faith is trusting God with our life, including our future. Real faith leads to actions that demonstrate truth in God. When we act on our faith in God, it pleases Him.*

Direct members to bow their heads and consider these questions as they pray:

- *Do you know for sure that your faith rests in Jesus Christ? If not, pray and accept Him now.*
- *If you were listed in God's "Hall of Faith," what lesson would your life be exemplifying?*
- *What's one area of your life where God is calling you to take action, to move from being simply faith-based to faith-led?*
- *In what areas does your faith in God need to be stretched to become all God desires for you to become?*

Close the time of silent reflection and prayer by simply saying: *Amen!*