

News Story Summary

The United Kingdom's three leading cinema chains refused to show an advertisement by the Church of England, citing fears that it would offend people. The ad was to be shown before *Star Wars: the Force Awakens*, which began on December 18.

The 60 seconds long advertisement showed Christians from all walks of life saying one line of the Lord's Prayer. The ad included a weight lifter, a police officer, a commuter, refugees in a support center, school children, a mourner, a festivalgoer, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The purpose of the ad was to promote the church's new website encouraging people to pray.

The cinema's rejection of the ad spawned some rejoicing and support, as well as much frustration and bewilderment. Church leaders, government leaders, and entertainment stars petitioned the cinemas to reverse their decision, but with no success. They point out that the cinemas aired a Hindu animation film, demonstrating discrimination only against the Christian faith. The cinemas say that the Hindu film was not an advertisement, so it was not covered by their policy against offensive advertising.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term "UK cinemas reject Lord's Prayer advertisement".)

Focus Attention

Relay information from the story above. Ask: *Why would quoting the Lord's Prayer spawn such a reaction? What is special and important to you about the Lord's Prayer?* Point out that there is boundless power in the name of Jesus our Savior. Also, the prayer serves as the model that Jesus Himself gave us of how to approach the King of Kings.

Point out that today's lesson is centered on the Lord's Prayer and Jesus' teachings surrounding how to approach the throne.

Challenge

Remind the group of the story about the ad featuring the Lord's Prayer. Ask: *How do you think the advertisement, if it had been aired, could or would have an effect on hearts of the moviegoers?* Emphasize the importance of praying with humility when approaching God. Encourage the group to join you in analyzing Jesus' instructions and example concerning prayer, and seek to find a way to make their prayers in the coming week more in line with the example set by Jesus.