DISCUSSION GUIDE

ZOOTOPIA

Release Date: March 4, 2016 (USA)
Genre: Animation, Adventure
Directed by: Byron Howard, Rich Moore, and Jared Bush
Featured: Ginnifer Goodwin, Jason Bateman, Idris Elba, Jenny Slate, and Nate Torrence
Length: 1 hour and 48 minutes
Rating: PG (some thematic elements, rude humor, and action)

SYNOPSIS

In the city of Zootopia, all mammals live in harmony, regardless of their label as either predator or prey. Judy Hopps, the film’s protagonist, travels to Zootopia to become the first rabbit to join the city’s police force. She faces discrimination and prejudice from her fellow officers because of her size and is given the unchallenging assignment of parking duty.

Tired of being underestimated and ready to prove herself, Officer Hopps convinces the police chief to let her solve one of the missing mammal cases that have been plaguing Zootopia. However, she must work along side a wily con artist fox, Nick Wilde, to solve the case. Officer Hopps and Nick head out on a hilarious and fast-paced journey to solve the case of the missing mammals and restore peace to the city of Zootopia.

While Zootopia is a film that can be enjoyed by all ages, there are several underlying social justice themes and many opportunities for rich discussion on the dignity of difference, the common good, and creating a preferential option for the marginalized, or, as this film would say, the “prey.”

CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT THEMES IN THE FILM

- Respect for Differences
- Dignity of all God’s Creation
- The Common Good
- Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Solidarity

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What did you think was the main message of Zootopia? Have a discussion about the similarities and differences amongst the group.

2. Judy Hopps comes from a small rabbit town where everyone follows the same path as their parents, but she wants to break that mold. Where is this reflected in the real world? How does culture and globalization affect whether or not younger generations leave their hometowns?

3. Can you think of a specific line of dialogue or a specific scene that spoke to an issue of inequality in our world today? Share this moment with the group and how you reacted to it. Did others have a different reaction?

4. What was your reaction to the way animals were segmented and sorted according to their biology? What about the message that some animals were reverting back to their inherent savagery?

5. Throughout Zootopia, stereotypes are both cited and disproved. Officer Hopps is stereotyped, but she also labels other creatures. Name two instances of stereotyping in the film. How do labels prevent authentic relationships that allow each person’s dignity to flourish?

6. The smaller animals, like rabbits (Officer Hopps) and lambs (Assistant Mayor Bellwether), are underestimated in the film. They are not directly harmed or overtly discriminated against, but the roots of inequality still exist. How do these two “minority” characters respond differently to the discrimination against them? What are some real life examples of underestimated leaders who either turned this discrimination into positive motivation to create equality among all people or instilled fear to get revenge on those who had attacked them?

7. The plot of Zootopia centers around the police force and their interaction with citizens. What is the current relationship with law enforcement in your community? What does this film say about racial profiling?

8. Zootopia sends the message, through the character of Judy Hopps, that if you work hard to achieve your dreams, they will come true. Do you agree with this message? What are some systemic, structural barriers to minorities, either in a specific country or in the global society, that prevent individuals from achieving their goals, even if they “work hard?”