

ACT OF GOD

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Watch *Act of God* with your small group. Allow participants opportunity to share their thoughts on images or points that particularly stood out, things that intrigued or raised questions for them.



Read Psalm 46 and Revelation 21:10-27 out loud with your group. Allow time to consider the texts and reflect on the case presented in the film.



1. Dr Bart Erhman suggests that nature isn't evil per se. Rather, the world is a capricious place. Nature is dangerous and sometimes we get in the way of it. What do you think? Is anyone responsible when natural disasters happen? How do you respond to the idea that kids with cancer are somehow fulfilling a part of some divine plan? Does God have any case to answer, or do bad things sometimes just happen?
2. In the film, Clifford Goldstein suggests even the physical world has been impacted by sin and the world itself is not the way it's supposed to be. Read Genesis 1: 24-31. What was the world like when it was created? What differences do you see now? What do you make of Genesis 3:17-19?
3. Read Genesis 1:27-31 and Revelation 11:16-18. Can you see any link between these two passages of Scripture? What responsibility was humankind given when the earth was new? Have we done a good job? Do you think humanity bears any responsibility for the apparent increase in natural disasters we are seeing today? What do you make of the statement in Revelation 11:18 that the time is coming when judgement will be meted out on those who destroy the earth?
4. Singer, songwriter and frontman for the indie folk rock band the Decemberists, Colin Meloy wrote, "...we are the inheritors of a wonderful world, a beautiful world, full of life and mystery, goodness and pain. But likewise, are we children of an indifferent universe. We break our own hearts imposing our moral order on what is, by nature, a wide web of chaos. It is a hopeless task." Do you agree with Meloy's ideas? Is it a hopeless task? Why would a believer risk breaking their heart trying to explain natural evil or fathom God's relationship to natural catastrophes?



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