

Dear Friend,

As a life-long C.S. Lewis fan, and a pastor for twenty-five years, I am excited not only about the wholesome entertainment value of the second film in the Chronicles of Narnia series, but also about the tool the film can be for churches and ministries. I've been told that the awareness level of *Prince Caspian* is running over 95%, which means that over 9 out of 10 people you run into, whether in church or on the street, know about the movie. What an incredible opportunity to use something as much fun as a great film to enhance your ministry!

I have been asked to point out several of the most relevant spiritual themes in the film that might be used for messages, discussions, small group interaction, or other creative ideas.

Message One: *The return to faith.*

When Lewis was asked about the main themes of the Chronicles, he used the phrase "return to the true faith" to describe *Prince Caspian*. One year after their return to England from Narnia, the Pevensie children are "drawn into" Narnia again (another Lewis phrase.) They discover that 1,303 Narnian years have elapsed, and that the current rulers of Narnia - the Telmarines - believe the stories about talking animals and Aslan are nothing but fairy tales. They also discover that Caspian the 9th has been murdered by his brother, Miraz, and Caspian the 10th has been forced into exile by the usurper Miraz. Thus, the battle to defeat Miraz and restore the throne to its rightful occupant is also a battle to bring the truth of Old Narnia and Aslan back.

In some ways, Prince Caspian is the most "modern" of the Chronicles. We live in a world that has many parallels to the Narnia the children enter. I'm sure Lewis had this in mind when he wrote the book. We live in a world where most people think the Bible is full of fairy tales and question whether Jesus ever lived, not even having any understanding of whether he died for humanity's sin and rose triumphant from the dead. So the film can be a springboard to discuss these parallels.

Message Two: *We walk by faith, not by sight.*

One of the classic scenes in the book involves the first sighting of Aslan by Lucy when the children return to Narnia. As the children work their way from Cair Paravel to Aslan's How, they lose their way. Lucy sees Aslan. He communicates to her that they are to follow him. But none of the other children, nor the dwarf Trumpkin, see Aslan. Lucy's route seems counter-intuitive to everyone, except Edmund. (Remember, when Edmund didn't believe Lucy in the first story - bad things happened!) A decision is made to ignore Lucy's vision, and everyone, including Lucy, head off in the direction that seems best to them. (A little like the last verse of Judges!)

After their decision proves to be disastrous, Lucy has her second encounter with Aslan. When she complains that the others wouldn't listen, Aslan confronts her about her own unwillingness to go against the majority and follow him anyway. What a great message about faith! Lucy finds herself once again facing her brothers and Susan and announcing

that even if they don't follow her, she is going to follow Aslan. Reluctantly, the group follows, and one-by-one, as they step out and follow, they begin to see Aslan. It is a powerful image of the biblical truth that we walk by faith, not by sight, and that sometimes it is only as believe that we truly see. One of the mottos Outreach is using in their materials for the film is "Believe and See." Another great message to use in utilizing the film for ministry!

Message Three: *Three kinds of "people."*

Continuing with the theme of faith, Lewis creates a number of characters that model different kinds of faith. Three prominent characters that can be used to teach the lesson of faith through the film are Trumpkin, Trufflehunter, and Nikabrik. They are models of three kinds of people that we can find everyday in almost every situation and circumstance. Trumpkin the Dwarf is the resident doubter. He doesn't know what to do with the old stories. At first, he doesn't know what to do with the "kings and queens of old" who show up at the summoning of Susan's horn, but are children. Trumpkin "follows the facts." His faith begins to grow. He eventually comes to full faith when he meets Aslan. This event takes place earlier in the book than in the film, but he is a great character. Many people in the world are a great deal like Trumpkin.

Nikabrik the Dwarf is the hard-core unbeliever. If he had his way, they would have put Caspian to death when he, Trumpkin, and Trufflehunter first rescued him. Nikabrik is also like a great many people in the world today. He doesn't believe in Aslan, but he does believe in the power of the supernatural. When the Pevensies and Caspian face defeat, he suggests using the power that kept Aslan at bay for a hundred years; i.e., the power of witchcraft.

At the opposite side of the faith spectrum we find Trufflehunter the Badger. He is a true believer. He has complete faith that Aslan will show up and win the day. In the end, he is the one who is correct. His faith doesn't waver, and he becomes a source of encouragement and motivation when things look bleak. The three characters can be a great illustration of faith in the modern world.

Message Four: *Fight the good fight.*

Of all of the Chronicles, *Prince Caspian* is by far the most militant. As a professor of Medieval Literature, Lewis was an expert in the fields of medieval warfare and chivalry. Having fought and been injured in World War I, and writing the Chronicles shortly after the end of World War II, Lewis believed there was a place for going to battle for the cause of good against evil. Prince Caspian involves a number of battles. Both in the book, and in the film, the forces of good are not always victorious. Lewis had a very realistic assessment that spiritual warfare is not easy. It is much like the great battles and wars of history where steadfastness and persistence are required to win.

This is a good model of the reality of spiritual warfare we are given in the New Testament. Caspian can be used to teach the lessons of the reality of war, the necessity of wearing the "full armor," and the ultimate victory that only can be achieved by "Aslan."