



The Greatest Showman

Clip: 00:53:45 – 01:00:10

Rating: PG

SYNOPSIS

Phineas Taylor Barnum first opens a wax museum but soon shifts focus to the unique and peculiar, introducing extraordinary, never-seen-before acts to the circus stage. Some call this collection of oddities a freak show. However, when he gambles everything on the opera singer Jenny Lind's ability to appeal to a high-brow audience, he loses sight of the most important aspect of his life: his family.

The clip focuses on Phineas premiering his new show to great acclaim. At the reception Barnum takes the opportunity to gloat about his success to his father-in-law and begins to forget why he originally wanted to set up the stage show.

At this point his circus cast tries to enter the reception only to be stopped by Barnum, who has suddenly become ashamed of the people he has been spending time

with. Dejected by this betrayal, they decide to confront their harassers and sing the now-famous song 'This is me'.

DISCUSS

After watching the clip, discuss:

- What emotions do you think the circus cast members feel during the song?
- Why does Phineas suddenly turn his back on his cast? Are his actions understandable?
- Were there any lyrics that stood out as particularly meaningful or important?
- Are there people in our society who need a 'This is me' moment of recognition? Who are they and why do you think society often overlooks them?

Once you've had your first set of discussions, read together Matthew 9:35-38 (or if you wish to add context, read from the beginning of chapter 9). Once you have done that, break off into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- Based upon this passage, can you come up with five things Christians should be doing?
- Is this a realistic expectation of how Christians should behave?
- How would our local area change if some of these actions were put into practice?
- What do you think verse 37 means?

The Greatest Showman is very popular, and the suggestion of watching the whole film will, I imagine, go down very well. There is also a moving 'This is me' performance on YouTube from the cast's rehearsals. Introduced by the cast, it explains how this was the key moment in getting the film made. It's well worth a watch.

TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Leventhorpe School in Sawbridgeworth.



This is me

ARTIST: Keala Settle and *The Greatest Showman* ensemble.

SUITABLE FOR: 13+

INTRODUCTION

With its recent release to DVD, the movie of the year continues to strike a chord with all ages and its songs feature in the charts week after week. This song sees the characters stand up against the persecution they have faced because of their differences. This session uses the lyrics of that song to explore what it means to be welcomed by Jesus.

As your young people arrive, give each person a playing card, ensuring that three suits are distributed evenly. Give out only one card from the fourth suit, ensuring that you choose a confident player for this card. On the signal to begin, challenge the young people to find everyone else in their 'team', and watch what happens as they realise one player is all on their own, excluded from the rest of the group. Ask them how they feel to be alone and explain that you will be looking at this theme during the session.

Provide Bibles and ask the group to look together at Mark 2:13-17. Ask them:

- How do you think Levi and his friends felt before Jesus came to his house?
- How do you think Jesus made them feel?
- What do you think the crowd would have thought when they saw Jesus spending time with them?

LISTEN AND DISCUSS

Introduce the song, providing copies of the lyrics for the group to follow. After you have played it through once, ask the group to imagine that Levi and his friends were the ones singing this song. How could they relate to the lyrics about hiding away? How did Jesus help them "find a place"?

Explain to the group that this song focuses on the singers finding strength and confidence inside themselves to find their place "marching on to the beat I drum". Challenge the young people to consider how this is different from Levi and his friends, who found their place together with Jesus. What does this mean for us today? What does it mean for us to find a place together

with Jesus? Whose drum beat do we march to? How can we welcome and include others in that party? Remind your group that Levi and his friends became outcasts because of something they had done, the way they carried out their business, but many people find themselves on the outside through no fault of their own.

As you draw the discussion to a close, sit down together and light a candle. Invite the young people to think about those people or groups of people who currently find themselves hidden away in the darkness. Spend some time in prayer together, either silently or inviting the young people to pray aloud for those people they know who we could find ways to invite into the light and spend time with, as Jesus did.

BECKY MAY

is a freelance writer and experienced children's and youth leader. She can be found at theresourcescupboard.co.uk.