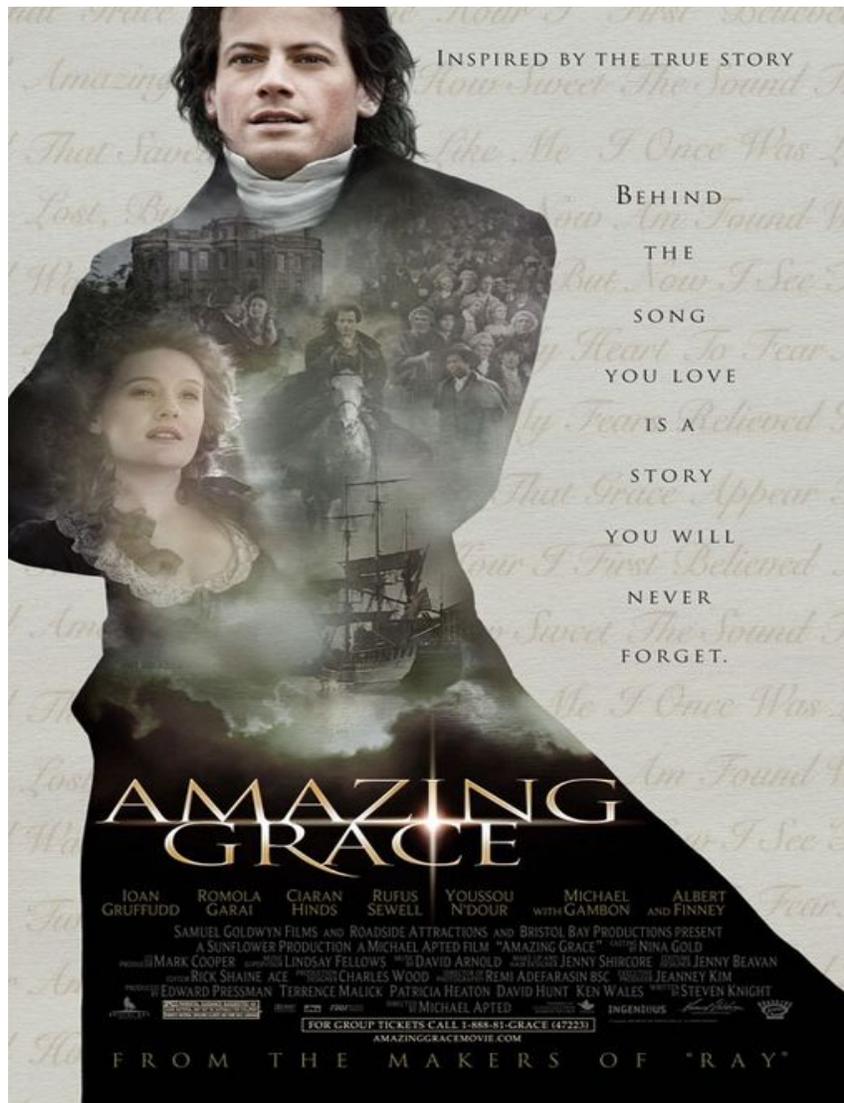


# Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace Discussion Guide



A facilitator's discussion guide for youth leaders, educators and families to accompany the movie, *Amazing Grace*. Ages 13 -18

[www.amazinggracemovie.com](http://www.amazinggracemovie.com)

*Amazing Grace* (c) 2007 Bristol Bay Productions, LLC.



Discussion Guide Developed by Liza Silverman

## ***Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace***



Dear Group Facilitator:

*Amazing Grace* depicts the true story of William Wilberforce, a courageous young man who was first elected to the House of Commons in the British Parliament at the young age of 21. Set over the course of the late 18th century and early 19th century, the film illustrates Wilberforce's 20-year endeavor to abolish the slave trade in Great Britain. After learning about the inhumanities of the slave trade from a former slave and upheld by his strong moral convictions, Wilberforce becomes determined to lead the parliamentary campaign against the trade. Despite the encouragement and assistance of his abolitionist friends and family members, Wilberforce witnesses years of fierce resistance from his fellow Members of Parliament and the defeat of countless bills. Eventually his hard work and dedication to the cause are rewarded with the passing of a bill in 1807.

*Amazing Grace* highlights important themes such as anti-slavery, dedication to your beliefs, collective action, and leadership.

This discussion guide, *Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace*, is structured for use after viewing the movie and/or reading literature about the anti-slavery movement in Great Britain. The curriculum offers discussion topics and activity ideas for youth ages 13 - 18. It is provided by the National Collaboration for Youth, an organization which provides a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations. The 30-year-old organization concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities. As a result, youth empowerment and development play a central role in the discussion guide for *Amazing Grace*.



## ***Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace***



### **OBJECTIVES**

- Youth will engage in thought-provoking group discussions that allow them to think and learn about slavery (then and today), abolitionism, teamwork, leadership, advocacy, doing the right thing, and the mobilizing force of music.
- Youth will have the opportunity to extend their learning through interactive activities that address the discussion themes
- Youth will design and implement a social justice service project
- Youth will use provided tools to advocate against modern-day slavery and other social justice issues

### **Steps for Youth to Take with the *Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace* Program**

#### **Step 1) SEE THE FILM AND READ A BOOK**

**THE MOVIE:** *Amazing Grace*, a Bristol Bay Productions film, opens in theaters on February 23, 2007. Youth may also see the movie when it becomes available on DVD.

**THE BOOK(S):** *Amazing Grace* is based on the life of William Wilberforce and the abolishment of the slave trade in Great Britain. There are numerous biographies and historical books that focus on these topics. A suggested book for youth to read is *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* by Eric Metaxas.

#### **Step 2) PARTICIPATE**

Take part in powerful discussions that address themes such as:

- Anti-slavery
- Leadership
- Doing what's right
- Teamwork
- Advocating for your cause

#### **Step 3) TAKE THE LEAD TO HELP OTHERS**

Using the example of William Wilberforce's determination to abolish slavery, young people are urged to learn to take on responsibility by designing and conducting a service project. Youth are also encouraged to advocate against modern-day slavery through the *Amazing Change* movement.

Use the free, downloadable service-learning supplement to assist in the planning and managing of *Amazing Grace* service projects. Please visit [www.youthfilmproject.org](http://www.youthfilmproject.org) to download the supplement and to gain more information on the film and the book.



**Table of Contents**

<b>5</b>	Notes for the Facilitator
<b>6</b>	Anti-Slavery
<b>8</b>	Political Voice
<b>9</b>	Leadership and Teamwork
<b>11</b>	The Power of Music
<b>12</b>	Doing the Right Thing
<b>13</b>	Extend the Learning – Activity Ideas
<b>14</b>	Take the Lead to Help Others
<b>15</b>	Social Justice Service Projects
<b>16</b>	Amazing Change Campaign – Advocate to Abolish Slavery
<b>19</b>	<i>Amazing Grace</i> Post Program Evaluation



***Notes for the Facilitator:***

The discussion questions in this guide are designed to encourage youth to think deeply about the themes and messages that are conveyed throughout *Amazing Grace*. The discussion questions and activity ideas are arranged according to theme and provide youth with an open forum to express their emotions and engage in constructive dialogue with their peers.





## **Anti-Slavery**

- Why and how does ending the slave trade in Great Britain become William Wilberforce's great passion?
- Why are the other Members of Parliament so unwilling to give up the trade?
- Why did/does slavery exist in the world? What does it accomplish and for whom?
- Who were Wilberforce's abolitionist friends and supporters? What impact did they have on his outlook and decisions?
- Wilberforce's views against the slave trade are solidified when he hears the eye-witness accounts of the former slave Olaudah Equiano. Later, his friend James Stephen writes to Wilberforce from a Caribbean plantation, describing the deaths of enslaved children from boiling sugar cane. Why do first-hand accounts have such an impact?
- Wilberforce perseveres through opposition for nearly 20 years before a bill is finally passed that ends the slave trade. Why doesn't he give up? Do you think you would be capable of waiting that long?
- Imagine yourself chained to the bottom of a boat for weeks or months at a time. How would you feel?
- Do you have any family members or ancestors who were slaves or victims of genocide (the deliberate destruction of an entire people or ethnic group)? Share their stories with your group. If any are still alive, conduct an interview to learn more.
- What do you think causes some human beings to inflict such inhumane treatment upon other human beings?
- Despite all the efforts against slavery throughout history, why does it still exist today?
- The horrors of the Middle Passage, the route of shipping slaves between Africa and the Americas, are described in detail in the movie. How do these vivid images of human suffering affect you?

## Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace



- If you were living in Great Britain during the late 18th century, do you think you could take a stand against slavery? What actions would you take to abolish the trade?
- Equiano wrote a memoir of his life as a slave called, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or, Gustavus Vass, The African*. His book brought public attention to the atrocities of slavery. Have you ever read the memoir of an individual that brought attention to certain injustices? If so, describe the book.
- Why is John Newton haunted by the memory of 20,000 slaves?





## **Political Voice**

- William Wilberforce entered the British political scene at the incredibly young age of 21. Do you have an interest in politics? Have you ever held an elected position in your school or club? If so, describe your experience in that role.
- Do you have a desire to be a politician one day? Why or why not? If so, how would you get elected? Describe your platform.
- If you were a member of Congress (the House of Representatives or Senate), the American equivalent of the British Parliament, what present day issues would you take a stand on? Why?
- Wilberforce, along with the efforts of other abolitionists, collects 390,000 signatures to support his cause against slavery. What effect do signatures have? What do they represent?
- Have you ever signed a petition? Why did you do it? Have you ever started your own?
- The U.S. Bill of Rights protects the rights and freedoms of all citizens, residents and visitors on United States territory. What freedom in your daily life are you most appreciative of? Why?
- In *Amazing Grace*, the issue of slavery is a very heated topic because many Members of Parliament feel that the British economy is dependent upon the shipping industry. For these men, how are money and material possessions more important than human lives? Is this justified?
- What is “social justice”? What current-day issues fall into this heading?
- Many leaders work their entire careers for a cause, but never live to see the outcome of their actions. Many of the abolitionist leaders in *Amazing Grace*, such as William Pitt and Equiano, die before the slave trade is abolished. Can you think of other leaders who passed away before their work was finished? How did their legacy survive?



## **Leadership and Teamwork**

- Wilberforce is ultimately successful because of the joint efforts of many men and women. Do you think teamwork is an essential component of political success? Why or why not? Give examples of other issues or causes that were successful as a result of collaboration and partnerships.
- Is it possible for a young person in the U.S. to become a political leader like Wilberforce? Why or why not?
- Provide examples of significant leaders in the United States who led the fight against slavery?
- Can you draw parallels between Wilberforce and other famous activists or leaders? If so, offer examples.
- In the movie, Wilberforce visits John Newton, the man who wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace”. Why does he seek his counsel and advice? How does Newton influence Wilberforce’s efforts?
- Wilberforce befriends other abolitionists that share his determination and will-power. Why is it important for like-minded people to come together towards a common cause?
- Wilberforce evolves into a great leader and hero. Is there a historical figure that you admire? Why do you look up to him or her? What cause did he or she champion?
- Similarly, is there a current-day leader who you have a high regard for?
- What are the characteristics that an effective leader should possess?
- Wilberforce’s wife, Barbara, shares his commitment to the anti-slavery cause. Why is family support important during long struggles? Give examples of other leaders who were encouraged by the support of their family members during political or social justice campaigns.

## *Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace*



- Describe the friendship between William Wilberforce and William Pitt the Younger (the future Prime Minister). How does their relationship evolve over the years?
- John Newton becomes a mentor to William Wilberforce. Do you have a mentor, someone who guides you in a certain subject area or interest? What are the qualities of a good mentor?
- Are you a mentor for someone else? How do you advise and provide support to that person? Describe the relationship.





## **The Power of Music**

- The song, “Amazing Grace,” became one of the most famous hymns throughout history. How do you feel and what do you envision when you hear it?
- The hymn “Amazing Grace,” has been utilized in many different forms – in places of worship, during anti-slavery and civil rights protests, in popular recordings by famous musicians and in funeral bagpipe processions. Why do you think the song is so versatile? How does it impact you?



- Is there a song, poem or hymn that has a powerful effect on you? Share it with the group and explain its importance.
- How is music a commanding force for change? Give examples of popular songs that have served as the backdrop to social movements in the United States.
- What genre of music (i.e., rap, rock, jazz) is your favorite? Why?
- When you listen to a song for the first time, do you focus on the lyrics or the music/beat? Why?



## **Doing the Right Thing**

- William Wilberforce is undeterred in the face of opposition because of his strong moral and religious convictions. Do you have a passion or cause? If so, explain. What or who inspired you to take action? What have you done or hope to do to advocate for this cause?
- Describe a television program, documentary, movie, play, lecture or conversation that had a dramatic impact on your views regarding a real-life issue. Why do you think it had this effect?
- At the beginning of the movie, Wilberforce is conflicted between his religious obligations and political aspirations. Have you ever been torn between two different interests or sides to an issue? How did you resolve the conflict? How does Wilberforce make his decision?
- Wilberforce changes how thousands of people in Great Britain view slavery. Have you ever experienced a change of view regarding a certain issue? If so, how and why did you change your perspective?
- Wilberforce suffers from life-long ailments that often jeopardize his ability to work. Do you know of someone who accomplished a great deal despite his/her sickness or disability? Describe this person.
- At the beginning of the movie, Wilberforce witnesses the beating of a horse. He gets out of his own coach to confront the man doing the whipping. Why do you think Wilberforce has such a concern for the humane treatment of animals?
- Doing the morally right thing is not always the popular thing, as depicted in *Amazing Grace*. Have you ever been met by opposition while trying to do the right thing? Provide an example.



## **Extend the Learning - Activity Ideas**

- Do some research and create a timeline of worldwide slavery issues and anti-slavery efforts. Include key leaders and events. Display your timeline in a community center, library or school to show that slavery is still a worldwide concern and needs to be addressed
- Using the lyrics of “Amazing Grace” (the song) as inspiration, write your own anti-slavery song or poem; read or perform it for others
- Organize a community or school exhibit of student artwork and writing that raise awareness about slavery or other social justice issues
- Seek out immigrants in the U.S. who have endured slavery in their pasts; learn about the hardships they encountered and how they gained their freedom; if possible, conduct interviews and share their stories with others
- Write a short story from the perspective of a slave who is chained on the bottom of a boat for months at a time
- Conduct interviews with survivors of slavery or genocides. Examples include the Holocaust and the events taking place in Darfur, Sudan. Compile the stories into a booklet.
- Split your group into two sections and engage in a mock parliamentary debate about slavery as if it were still the late 18th century in Great Britain.





## **Take the Lead to Help Others**

This section allows youth to explore actions they can take as individuals and in groups to reach out to others in need of support. The activities are designed to heighten youth awareness of how they can have immediate as well as a lasting positive impact on the recipients of their generosity.

As young people develop throughout the teenage years of 13-18, they benefit greatly from experiencing their own personal power, capabilities and talents. Parents, educators, youth leaders and child development specialists know that the best way for youth to learn responsibility is to take on responsibility. This process is captured in both the book and the movie, *Amazing Grace*, through the actions of William Wilberforce, who became an elected official at the young age of 21. Although he is one of the youngest Members of Parliament, Wilberforce takes the lead with his campaign against slavery and other social justice issues.





## **Social Justice Service Projects**

Dear Young People:

Think about a service project that your group would like to do that addresses an area of social justice of importance to your community. In addition to advocating against slavery, Wilberforce also tackled other social justice issues such as animal rights, improving healthcare, eradicating homelessness and prison reform. Think about your skills, talents or academic strengths and how you can assist people or animals that are underserved or need your support.

**Look for ways to work in cooperation with adults.**

- ✓ **Plan and conduct your project with the guidance and support of an adult partner.**
- ✓ **Read some of the tips for working well with adults below.**
- ✓ **Have your adult partner(s) read the tips for adults.**
- ✓ **Brainstorm your project ideas and plan the steps to carry it out. Use the F.I.L.M. service-learning supplement, available at [www.youthfilmproject.org](http://www.youthfilmproject.org)**
- ✓ **Then, get to work!!**

**Here are a few ideas—but, it is very important for you to organize your own ways to take the lead!**

- Volunteer at a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen or organize a clothing drive in your school or community center
- Visit and play with animals at a local animal shelter; encourage community members to adopt pets from the shelter
- Do research about inexpensive health coverage options for low-income people; hand-out flyers and hang posters that provide medical emergency information and community resources
- Organize an interfaith/ multi-cultural event in which different congregations and community organizations come together for dialogue and celebration

**Visit [www.youthfilmproject.org](http://www.youthfilmproject.org) to download the free service-learning supplement!**



## **Amazing Change Campaign – Advocate to Abolish Slavery**

Dear Young People:

In addition to service projects (see the Service-Learning Supplement) – you can also be a powerful champion for change.

The Youth Policy Action Center at [www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org) or **1-866-MOBILIZE**, provides lots of tips and information for youth who have seen something in their community or heard something on the news that they wish to change. The Center gives young people the same “tools” used by professional lobbyists to work to change laws.

In *Amazing Grace*, William Wilberforce and his fellow social activist friends are determined to see an end to the atrocities of the slave trade in Great Britain. He works tirelessly for years to collect evidence of the crimes of the slave trade and collects thousands of signatures to support his cause. In addition to being the leading British advocate against slavery during his time, he also engages in other measures of social reform, such as preventing cruelty to animals.

*Amazing Grace* opened in theaters on February 23, 2007, in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the abolishment of the slave trade in Great Britain. However, slavery is not a thing of the past. There are still an estimated 27 million slaves throughout the world today, suffering from inhumane treatment and robbed of their freedom. Modern day slavery takes on many forms including brutal child labor, entire families working long days on plantations, women and children being forced into prostitution, and children being kidnapped and forced to fight in a rebel’s army. Such people do not have free will and are incapable of leading fulfilling, decent lives. These people deserve a voice to advocate for their freedom!

The *Amazing Change* is a campaign, inspired by the movie, to abolish modern day slavery and permit adults and children throughout the world to live in freedom. You are encouraged to visit the *Amazing Change* at [www.theamazingchange.com](http://www.theamazingchange.com). There, you can raise your voice against modern day slavery by participating in any or all of the following efforts:



- **Become an abolitionist! Sign the petition to end modern day slavery**
- **Educate yourself about slavery, then and now, and raise awareness**
- **Join the *Amazing Change* “myspace” page and post *Amazing Change* posters on your Myspace pages**
- **Schedule a seminar about modern day slavery for your school or youth center**
- ***Loose Change to Loosen Chains* – use your spare change to free slaves**
- **Create a Clapham Circle - William Wilberforce was part of a group of friends and neighbors called the Clapham Circle. They met regularly to discuss ways to advance the cause of abolition. You can form your own Clapham Circle. Have weekly meetings with friends or neighbors in your community to discuss the issue of modern day slavery. Download tools from the *Amazing Change* to facilitate your discussion.**

Another on-line anti-slavery resource is [www.iabolish.org](http://www.iabolish.org), the website of The American Anti-Slavery Group. They are a U.S.-based non-profit dedicated to the abolition of modern day slavery.

In addition to becoming an advocate against slavery, you also have the power to speak out against other social justice issues that are important to you. Below are examples of issues that William Wilberforce was passionate about:

- Health Care Reform
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Prison Reform
- Ending Homelessness





**FIVE KEY STEPS FOR BEING A CHAMPION FOR CHANGE**

(adapted from the Youth Policy Action Center)

[www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org) or 1-866-mobilize

1) **PICK AN ISSUE.** Maybe like William Wilberforce in *Amazing Grace*, you will realize that if you don't take a stand, no one will. Be sure you are clear on **WHAT** you want to change.

2) **STUDY UP.** Even though studying is not everyone's idea of fun time, putting in a little time to really understand an issue and **WHY** it matters, is important. You want to be able to convince your friends, adults and elected officials that what you say matters.

3) **FIND ALLIES.** You don't have to run a campaign by yourself. Chances are there are others who are interested in the same issue – and want to help. Find them.

4) **DEVELOP A STRATEGY.** While most of us experience the world broadly (we like or don't like our school, we do or don't feel safe in our neighborhoods), simply saying we want to improve the schools or our neighborhoods is not enough to get an elected official to do what we want. **FOCUS** on what specifically you would like elected officials to do. And, **FOCUS** on the right officials for your cause.

5) **LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN.** Send messages. Public officials keep track of how many messages they receive on specific topics. **WRITE, CALL** and **USE THE MEDIA.**

# Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace Discussion Guide

Facilitators of the *Amazing Grace: Rise Up With Courage and Grace* program - Please take a few moments to answer the questions below. It should only take about 5 minutes. One you have submitted the survey you will be entered to win a copy of the DVD, a book and an activity guide. Good Luck!

Organization:

City/State:

Contact Name:

Contact Email:

Organization Website:

Approximately how many youth does your organization serve? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you classify your organization?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Based         | <input type="checkbox"/> Library or Museum            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Based          | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After School         | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Based              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of School        | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

Approximately how many youth completed one or more steps in the *Amazing Grace* program? Steps include: See the Movie and Read a Related Book, Lead Discussions from the Discussion Guide, Complete a Service Project? \_\_\_\_\_

(5)

Useful and appropriate for my organization

(4)

(3)

Moderately Useful

(2)

(1)

Not at all useful or appropriate for my organization

Comments

Please give us any additional feedback and/or suggestions you have to help us improve our future F.I.L.M. programs.

May we contact you for additional information?

- Yes  
 No

If yes, what is the best way to contact you?

Return to F.I.L.M. Evaluation 1319 F Street NW Suite 402, Washington, DC 20004 or fax to (202) 393-4517