

Movie Discussion Guide: *The Sound of Freedom*

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit.

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The Catholic Church’s Fight Against Human Trafficking

The recently released movie, *The Sound of Freedom*, has hit a nerve, touching as it does on sensitive subjects of sexual slavery and child exploitation. It forces all of us to pay attention to the grave evil of human trafficking, challenges us to better understand the scope of the problem, and calls on us to reflect on what we can do both as individuals and as part of a Church to put an end to it. The Catholic Church has long recognized the threats associated with human trafficking and taken efforts to educate the Catholic faithful on this ongoing problem and with your help will continue to do so.

At the Second Vatican Council (1961-1965), in its Pastoral Council of the Church in the World, [*Guadium et Spes*](#), the Catholic Church, stated that “slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, [and] disgraceful working conditions where [people] are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons” are “infamies” and “an affront to fundamental values . . . values rooted in the very nature of the human person.”

In a letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the conference on [*“Twenty-First-Century Slavery—the Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings*](#),” Saint Pope John Paul II stated that human trafficking “constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. In particular, the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and human rights.”

More recently, in his Apostolic Exhortation [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#), Pope Francis wrote, “How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: ‘Where is your brother?’ (Gen. 4:9). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labor? Let us not look the other way.”

These notable examples exemplify the way in which the Church’s view of the human person informs its engagement the human trafficking; multiple other examples could be provided. Church teaching affirms the dignity and worth of the human person and the sanctity of all human life. Everyone is created in the image of God, loved

immeasurably, endowed with inherent worth, and deserves the right to be protected. As Catholics, our obligation to combat trafficking through prevention, denouncing, solidarity and commitment. The need to educate reaches no limits when perpetrators of trafficking thrive on the indifference of individuals on the matter. We each have a responsibility to fight against the violation of human dignity, the degradation of individuals, and the injustices that affect individuals globally.

You can learn more about what the Catholic Church in the United States is doing in the arena of human trafficking at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' [website](#).

Summary

"The Sound of Freedom" is a 2023 film based on a true story. The movie follows the story of Tim Ballard, a former Department of Homeland Security Investigator agent. After rescuing a boy, Miguel from being sexually exploited and later smuggled from Guatemala to the United States, Tim learns that Miguel's sister is still being held captive by the same child traffickers in South America. Tim decides to quit his job, 10-months away from his pension from the Department of Homeland Security and embarks on a mission to save her in the jungles of Colombia. Tim Ballard later forms a nonprofit organization called Operation Underground Railroad to rescue children from sex trafficking around the world. The film depicts his dangerous and emotional journey as he and his team work undercover to free innocent lives.

Themes to Reflect On

1. Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery:

Discuss the portrayal of human trafficking in the movie. How did the film depict the harsh realities faced by victims? What can we learn about conflict areas, and improve them so victims are less vulnerable to this crime?

2. Heroism and Sacrifice: Explore the concept of heroism as depicted by Tim Ballard and his team. How did their actions promote justice? Sometimes we must make sacrifices in both our personal and professional life in the pursuit of justice. How can we do this in small or big ways to fight the crime of human trafficking in our world?

3. Good vs. Evil: Examine the film's representation of the battle between good and evil. How are these themes illustrated through the characters, plot, and their actions? Discuss the moral dilemmas faced by the characters.

4. Empathy and Resilience: Reflect on the emotional resilience displayed by both survivors and the rescue team. How did empathy play a role in their actions and reactions? What emotions did this film evoke? What role do we have to protect the human dignity and life of other victims and perpetrators?

5. Collaboration and Unity: As Pope Francis calls all Catholics to unite and combat the issue of human trafficking, reflect on how the characters worked together as a team to combat human trafficking. Discuss the



significance of collaboration and unity in the Church and as a society, in the role of addressing global challenges.

Discussion Questions

1. What impact did the film have on your understanding of human trafficking? Were there any moments or scenes that particularly resonated with you? Were you surprised by some of the events that occurred?

2. Analyze the character development of key figures in the film, such as Tim Ballard and the survivors. How did their experiences shape their personalities and choices? How can we take these developments for our personal life, and work towards fighting injustices in our world?

3. The movie highlights the global nature of human trafficking. These pose serious challenges at the international level. Human trafficking occurs within every country, and in every city. What are some ways to address and learn about these issues in our own cities, neighborhoods, schools, and backyards?

4. Consider the role of awareness and advocacy in combating human trafficking. How did the film portray the power of spreading awareness and inspiring action? How aware is your community on this issue of human trafficking? How can you bring this awareness to at the local level, beginning with your home?

5. Were there moments of moral ambiguity or difficult decisions in the film? How did the characters navigate these situations, and what were the consequences of their choices? What decisions can we make today that can result in good outcomes to prevent human trafficking?

6. The movie highlighted one specific example of human trafficking. Do you know of other examples? Can you explain some of the differences between the different types of human trafficking?

7. What stereotypes did the movie include? What real-life examples did the movie include? Many cases within our own cities, borders and countries have different recruitment tactics used by perpetrators depending on the vulnerabilities of victims. Do you know of other examples occurring where you are living?

Take Action!

1. What are some of the things that you can do in your local parish or school that will help to raise awareness of human trafficking among your peers?

2. What are some of the ways in which you can urge local, diocesan, and national Catholic leadership to engage this issue more intentionally? What are some of the networks with which you are involved that will help you to get work out more effectively?

3. What are some organizations, either locally or nationally, that are engaged in the fight against human trafficking and how can you get involved with their work?