

BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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FROM THE PRODUCER OF  
LIFE OF PI AND THE BLIND SIDE

# THE SHACK

IN CINEMAS FROM 25 MAY

YOU'RE NEVER AS ALONE AS YOU THINK.

## Further exploration of the themes in THE SHACK

1. If you read *The Shack*, how does the movie compare with the book—especially with regard to its message about God?
2. What is the movie's overall message about God—his nature and character?
3. What is "the Great Sadness" referred to both in the book and movie? Whose sadness is it? What causes it—beyond a specific event?
4. This question could be interpreted as belonging before the previous two questions, but here it is: What is the overall theme and message of the movie?
5. How would you describe the main character's (Mackenzie Phillips's or "Mack's") religious life in the early part of the movie? How deep is it?
6. The movie revolves around a tragic event. What does it do to Mack and his family? That is, how do they respond emotionally—especially in terms of their personal feelings and thoughts about their own roles in it and God's?
7. Does how God is portrayed in the movie bother you? Why or why not? Are you supposed to take it literally? (If not, how are you supposed to interpret the depiction of God?)
8. According to the movie, what is the real cause of Mack's Great Sadness? (In the book, anyway, his "Great Sadness" refers to more than an emotional feeling or state of mind; it refers to something deeper in the human condition.)
9. The movie, like the book, contains and communicates a certain theological perspective about evil, tragedy, innocent suffering, humanity, and God. A pivotal point in all that seems to be a certain perspective on free will. What is it?
10. According to the movie (and the book), what is the purpose of free will? What good does it serve? Why has God given it to humans? What are we supposed to do with it?
11. Perhaps the most poignant scene in the movie, which is also in the book, is Mack's confrontation with "Wisdom" in a cave. What message does Wisdom (an aspect of God) give Mack about himself?
12. If we view the book and the movie as a kind of parable, whom does Mack represent?
13. There is a word in philosophy and theology for any attempt to explain why there is evil and innocent suffering in a world created and ruled over by an all-good and all-powerful God: theodicy. What is the movie's theodicy?
14. What is the "turning point" for Mack—in the story? At what point, and why, does "the Great Sadness" fall away?
15. Inevitably, viewers will have widely varying emotional responses to the story—depending partly, anyway, on their own experiences of tragedy. What do you think about the movie's message—about God, the human condition in this world, tragedy, evil and innocent suffering, forgiveness, salvation, etc.?