

Trinity Family Film Guide
(For use by Families or in Small School/Church Groups)

Mary Poppins Returns: The Light of the World

With the help of *Mary Poppins Returns*, we will be refreshing our perspective to enjoy the light of the world. In ourselves, in each other, in the wonders of the world around us, Mary Poppins reminds us there is plenty of light in the midst of whatever darkness we may perceive. In the words of the film itself, “Hold on tight to those you love, and maybe soon from up above you’ll be blessed so keep on looking high.”

Duration: 3-4 hours with activities. Can be split into multiple segments as needed.

Materials Needed: Snack, lanterns, flashlights, candles, balloons for everyone, permanent marker, and silly eyeglasses.

Recommended Movie Snack or Meal: For the Pre-Movie Exercise below, have everyone make their own food art to eat during the movie. Pretzel sticks are great. Peanut butter or cream cheese to act as glue are very helpful. Simply provide a variety of “building” materials to create a picture.

View it with a Twist (optional): Try watching this one in a dark room with lanterns or candles spaced around the room for ambience.

Note to Parents/Adults about Film Guides:

Movies are a great way to relax and spend time together as a family/group. With a little intentionality, we can make them a special place of connection and growth, as well as a joyful viewing experience. Every Family Film Guide focuses on one theme and seeks to walk adults through engaging their family/group in a growth experience around that theme. For some families/groups, these conversations might seem scary and even awkward, but take courage knowing you are setting the norm of connection and a learning heart in each of your children. If your kids seem too young or too “cool” to participate in some of these things, then at least let them see you participating. They will catch on or warm up. Also, make sure not to underestimate them. Give them plenty of opportunity to participate.

Parental Warning for *Mary Poppins Returns*: (Discretion Encouraged Before Showing to Young Children)

There is one potentially frightening scene when Mary Poppins and the children go into an animated animal land. There, a wolf, weasel, and badger attempt to kidnap one of the children, and the other two are forced to rescue him. It is intense and particularly frightening as the children are alone.

Before Starting:

Make sure you have read through the entire guide before starting the movie. Gather your supplies and your courage before starting. If you feel rushed going into it, slow down and just pick one or two activities to do. Then just enjoy the movie. It is better to do something well than to stress or rush through the whole thing. Plan further ahead for the next one if necessary, but **don’t forget to enjoy this special time with your kids!**

Pre-Movie Exercise:

Introduction: As adults, introduce the movie (with whatever disclaimer you might want to make for potential scary scenes) with the theme of “Light of the World.”

Share: If possible, especially with young children, start this activity by taking them to a completely dark room without windows. Turn all the lights off and then strike a match, flick on a flashlight or something.

Ask: Who is the person or people in your life who bring light to you in dark times? Share a story of one time they helped you see more clearly.

Just for Fun: Food Art

Step 1: Give everyone a large plate, and the task to create a picture of food that represents the person or people they described. Have fun and share your creations!

First Intermission:

(33 minutes, 9 seconds—after bath excursion, beginning chapter 6)

Practice: Some stuff and Nonsense

Introduction: Later in the film, Michael (the kids’ dad) says that Mary is “filling the children’s heads with stuff and nonsense.” What he doesn’t understand is that imagination and story are powerful tools to remind us what is important in life, as well as provide hope and laughter when they are hard to come by. Mary Poppins once again rescues the Banks family with adventures, wonder, and love. As a group/family you are going to imagine and act out your own such story.

Step 1: Ask the group for a random noun and a crisis or accident that could happen to someone.

**Coming up with a few options and voting on a favorite works well.*

Step 2: Now have each individual quietly think of an adjective and a person/animal/character. Each person gives their made up character to the person to their right as their assigned role for the story (i.e. silly monkey, overweight Willy Wonka)

**With Younger children, it works well to simply pick two characters and tell the story together.*

To get in some movement too, a walk works well as you won’t be acting out the story.

Step 3: Pick one or two people to be the heroes of the story. They are going to go on a quest to attain the noun you chose earlier, but they have experienced the crisis or accident that you earlier chose as well.

Step 4: Enjoy imagining and acting out a story, staying in your assigned characters, and helping the assigned heroes achieve their quest, and overcome the crisis which has happened to them. How are the other characters going to provide light in a dark situation? Enjoy!

Remember the goal of seeing more clearly the “light of the world.” Don’t get caught up trying to win a Tony.

Second Intermission:

(1 hour, 15 minutes, 54 seconds—just after cousin topsy, beginning of chapter 11)

Activity: Upside Down Faces—(Goal): Silly fun, and refreshing reminder of the importance of perspective.

Instructions: You will need some form of eyeglasses, the sillier the better.

Step 1: Using a bench or chair, have one person lay on their back, with their head hanging over the edge. Place glasses on top of their chin and cover the rest of their face, as well as neck and torso with two different blankets. It should look like a funny little face. Have them talk. If it's funny, you did it right.

Step 2: Pick a song or part of song, (with music or acapella), and have the funny face person sing it. Meanwhile, everyone else should dance along.

Step 4: Repeat for everyone.

Third Intermission:

(1 hour, 38 minutes, 40 seconds—Right as they say “Goodbye Old Friend” and leave their house)

Share: Goodbye Old Friend

Introduction: Have everyone imagine if they needed to leave their house. Instruct them to think of favorite memories they would recall from their time there.

Step 1: Turn off all lights in the room. Place a flashlight or lantern in the middle of the seated group.

Step 2: When ready, someone can grab the light, flip it on, and tell the story of one of their memories.

Step 3: When they are done sharing, they should yell out “Trip a Little Light Fantastic.” This means to dance. Everyone in the group should jump and bust a celebratory dance move, before returning to their seat.

Step 4: Return the light to the middle, turn it off, and wait for someone else to seize it and share their story.

Post-Movie Exercise:

Activate: Courage in a Balloon

Introduction: Michael, the father, closes the movie saying, “I never thought I’d feel this much joy and wonder again. I thought that door was closed to me forever.” Mary Poppins brought fresh vision, perspective, and light to Michael, which opened up a new door for him. When we allow other people, and God to speak words of light to us, the same happens in our life. Today, we will receive a word with the help of Mary Poppins and others to encourage us on our journey.

Everything is possible, even the impossible.

A cover is nice, but a cover is not the book.

Are you sure this is quite safe? Not in the slightest.

Today or never, that’s my motto.

Look at things from a different perspective.

Too focused on where you’ve been, to know where you’re going.

Set-up Step: Blow up at least the number of balloons as there are people participating, preferably more. Write one phrase on each of them from the following list. Use them all, and repeat as necessary:

Step 1: Have each person blindly select a balloon, and read the phrase written upon it.

Step 2: Going around the group have each person share what the phrase means to them and how it encourages them. Then give everyone else the opportunity to share further encouragement for that person around the phrase or beyond it.

(Note: Don’t make it fit if it doesn’t. The goal is to practice using words of light to provide strength in our life)

Step 3: Repeat with everyone in the group/family.

Family/Group Statement:

Step 1: Say the following out loud as an entire group (the louder the better):

“We hold on tight to those we love,
and surely soon from up above
we’ll be blessed.
We’ll keep on looking high!”

Step 2: Thank yourself (from us) for making your family/group movie time “A Trinity Family” movie time!

Created by: Andrew Wiens and A Trinity Family

A Trinity Family is here to help you make the most of your moments and to seize the days you have to influence children.

ATrinityFamily.org

