

DISCUSSION GUIDE

MIRACLES *from* HEAVEN



MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (2016)

CREW OVERVIEW

Patricia Riggen (Director)
Randy Brown (Writer: screenplay)
Christy Beam (Writer: book)

CAST OVERVIEW

Jennifer Garner (Christy Beam)
Kylie Rogers (Anna Beam)
Martin Henderson (Kevin Beam)
Eugenio Derbez (Dr. Samuel Nurko)
Queen Latifah (Angela)
Brighton Sharbino (Abbie Beam)
Courtney Fansler (Adelynn Beam)
John Carroll Lynch (Pastor Scott)
Hannah Alligood (Haley)
Wayne Péré (Ben Wexler)
Bruce Altman (Dr. Burgi)

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USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Intended for use after viewing the film, this study guide provides catalysts for biblically based discussion of various themes found in *Miracles from Heaven*. The guide features three themes from the movie and is structured in such a way that groups can choose to discuss the entire guide at once or can focus on one or two themes at a time. The guide is also an excellent resource for individual or personal study and reflection.

FILM OVERVIEW/NOTE TO GROUP

Based on the memoir of the same name by Christy Beam (played by Jennifer Garner in the film), *Miracles from Heaven* tells the incredible true story of young Annabel Beam (Kylie Rogers), who is diagnosed with a rare, incurable disorder and is later miraculously asymptomatic following a freak accident unrelated to her illness. While the harsh realities and demands of Anna's health situation impact her family as a whole, it is Christy in particular who experiences a deep crisis of faith while watching her daughter suffer. As Anna journeys from hardship to healing, Christy realizes that God has been with her all along, and she discovers the power of persevering in the face of suffering, the importance of faith and the beauty of everyday miracles.

Set in Burleson, Texas, the film begins with a Beam family Sunday: working and playing in the yard, attending church and later opening their home to host the church's monthly picnic. That night, Anna is sick to her stomach, and Kevin (Martin Henderson) and Christy wonder about the cause. Kevin tries to put his wife's mind at ease, but Christy can't shake a general sense of anxiety – about the house, the

kids, Kevin's new veterinary clinic. Christy's worry for Anna is, unfortunately, founded; in the next scene, the Beams are driving to Fort Worth to see their third gastroenterologist while Anna rests across the backseat with a bloated stomach. The doctor tells them Anna is lactose intolerant, a diagnosis that Christy questions given Anna's chronic pain and severe symptoms, but the Beams head home where they all vow to abstain from pizza (Adelynn [Courtney Fansler], the youngest, *reluctantly* makes her vow) in a show of support for Anna.

One night, Anna cries out in terrible pain. Her parents rush her to the hospital where a young, arrogant doctor tells them Anna has acid reflux, but is otherwise fine. Frustrated with the superficial diagnosis, Christy demands more tests and a more thorough examination. In the morning, Dr. Burgi (Bruce Altman), head of the hospital's pediatric department, informs the Beams that Anna has a complete abdominal obstruction and needs surgery immediately or she will die. Post-surgery, Dr. Burgi explains to the Beams that Anna has a severe motility disorder, which means her body cannot process food. Devastated by the news, the Beams begin a frustrating and painful chapter in their lives as Christy becomes Anna's nurse and advocate, and



Anna adjusts to a new normal that includes chronic pain, countless medications, tubal feeding and a distended stomach.

Though Kevin is faithful to encourage and support Christy through the difficulties they encounter with Anna's condition, Christy begins to lose her footing when it comes to her faith. Unable to book an appointment with Dr. Samuel Nurko (Eugenio Derbez), the country's foremost motility expert, after letters and multiple calls, Christy questions if God is listening. Then, fellow churchgoers confront her and suggest that Anna's healing is being hindered by unconfessed sin on Christy's, Kevin's or even Anna's part. Overwhelmed with hurt and anger, Christy refuses to attend church and throws herself into finding a solution for Anna. One night, Abbie (Brighton Sharbino) asks her mom if Anna is going to die, and Christy decides to take matters into her own hands by flying Anna to Boston in the hopes of finally seeing Dr. Nurko.

In Boston, Christy makes an emotional plea to the receptionist in Dr. Nurko's office, but cannot secure an appointment. At a loss as to how to proceed, Christy and Anna stop at a restaurant and meet a fun-loving, outgoing waitress named Angela (Queen Latifah), who offers to be their very own Boston tour guide. While at the museum with Angela, Christy receives word that Dr. Nurko has an opening. The next morning, Dr. Nurko confirms Anna's condition and tells Christy of a drug that might improve Anna's quality of life, but that will be expensive and require checkups in Boston every six weeks. Back home, Christy meets with Pastor Scott (John Carroll Lynch), who addresses her doubt and tells her that walking with God feels a lot better than walking without him. On the heels of this conversation, the Beams begin another new chapter: Christy and Anna make regular trips to Boston while Kevin tries to manage things on the home front.

During a particularly rough trip to Boston, Anna confesses that she wants to die. Her tailspin and ensuing standoff with

Christy are halted only by a surprise visit from Kevin, Abbie and Adelynn. Once back home, Abbie challenges Anna to climb an old, massive tree in their yard. The branch holding the girls cracks, and Anna falls 30 feet down the middle of the hollow tree. An emergency rescue ensues, and Christy clings to the tree trunk, praying the Lord's Prayer as more family and friends join her. Anna is extracted and flown to the hospital, where an astounded doctor declares her well. Following the fall, Anna is asymptomatic regarding her motility disorder – her belly is normal; she is off medication. Dr. Nurko confirms her "spontaneous remission." Later, Anna shares with her parents that she experienced Heaven while in the tree and that God told her she would be healed. Christy returns to church to share Anna's story and to encourage others to look for the everyday miracles that demonstrate God's love and presence.

THEME ONE: SUFFERING

Guiding Scripture: Romans 5:3–5 (NIV): Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 34:19 (NLT): The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.
- Isaiah 43:2 (NIV): "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."
- John 16:33 (NIV): "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- Romans 5:3–5 (NIV): Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
- Romans 8:18 (NIV): I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- Romans 12:15 (NIV): Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
- 1 Corinthians 12:25–26 (NIV): So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.
- 2 Corinthians 4:8–10 (NIV): We are hard pressed



on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

- Galatians 6:2 (NIV): Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:32 (NIV): Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
- James 1:2–4 (NLT): Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.
- 1 Peter 3:8 (NIV): Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.
- 1 Peter 5:10 (NLT): In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Advocating for Anna (00:14:32–00:17:48)
- The Diagnosis (00:19:18–00:22:13)
- Unsolicited Advice (00:28:40–00:30:10)
- A Mother's Plea and a New Friend (00:33:15–00:39:30)
- Lowest Point (01:06:13–01:08:33)
- A Surprise Visit (01:10:02–01:12:43)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Miracles from Heaven paints an honest portrait of how suffering can manifest itself in our fallen world – enduring a chronic illness, watching a loved one suffer, wrestling with doubt and searching for hope in a seemingly hopeless situation. Yet, the film also – and overwhelmingly – explores the byproducts of suffering, and those often include precious, indispensable lessons in finding beauty, growing in grace, extending and receiving compassion, persevering amidst hardship and recognizing suffering as a unique opportunity to draw closer to a loving God.

Kevin and Christy Beam aren't anticipating such a rare, debilitating disorder to present in their daughter, but they also realize that her persistent, severe symptoms indicate something other than lactose intolerance. On the night of one of Anna's direst medical emergencies to date, the Beams advocate for the truth, and find themselves reeling when they finally receive an accurate diagnosis – one that ushers in a period of suffering not only for Anna, but for all the Beams.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Advocating for Anna (00:14:32–00:17:48)

The Diagnosis (00:19:18–00:22:13)

- In the first of these two Scenes to Review (*Advocating for Anna*), how do Christy's frustration and anger compel her to action and advocacy on Anna's behalf?
- Thinking through both of these scenes, in what ways is Anna suffering? In what ways are Christy and Kevin suffering? How does each of these characters handle the situation?
- In your own words, describe Anna's condition. Why is the fact that her body cannot process food and drink a devastating and life-altering issue?
- Can you relate to the gravity of the Beams' situation? Have you ever experienced a time of intense suffering? Have you ever helped someone walk through a difficult season?





Read Romans 5:3–5; Romans 8:18; and 1 Peter 5:10 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- According to Romans 5:3–5, what three attributes are produced because a period of suffering precedes them? Why are we not put to shame (see verse)?
- What do Romans 8:18 and 1 Peter 5:10 say about present sufferings and future glory? How do these verses encourage you to maintain an eternal perspective?

While Anna suffers the physical ramifications (as well as emotional, social and spiritual, to be sure) of her motility disorder, Christy’s suffering is borne of both her desire to find a solution for Anna as well as her struggle to maintain faith amidst hardship. A new form of suffering emerges when Christy’s fellow churchgoers suggest that unconfessed sin might be preventing Anna’s healing; their misguided attempt to help wounds Christy and leaves her feeling further alienated from things of faith. In Boston, though, Christy finds compassion in two unexpected places.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Unsolicited Advice (00:28:40–00:30:10)

A Mother’s Plea and a New Friend (00:33:15–00:39:30)

- In the first Scene to Review (*Unsolicited Advice*), how do Christy’s fellow churchgoers misconstrue and misapply Pastor Scott’s sermon about unconfessed sin?
- When someone is going through a difficult time, what are some practical ways to come alongside that person to show compassion and give support?
- In the second Scene to Review (*A Mother’s Plea and a New Friend*), how does the receptionist show compassion for Christy?
- What does Angela do when she notices that Christy and Anna are having a tough time? How is Angela’s response a wonderful example of stepping in to meet a need?

Read Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2; and 1 Peter 3:8 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How do Romans 12:15 and Galatians 6:2 call us to support one another? Why is it important to respond appropriately to others’ rejoicing and mourning?
- 1 Peter 3:8 tells us to be like-minded, sympathetic, loving, compassionate and humble. Take some time to think about and discuss what each of these characteristics means.

The persistent pain of Anna’s disorder, the trips to and from Boston and the stress of being separated so often begin to take a toll on all of the Beams. In the hospital in Boston, Anna reaches her lowest point and tells her mother that she wants to die so that the pain will end. Christy comforts her daughter as best she can, but the reality of Anna’s condition is all too evident. Later, Anna grows obstinate, and it seems the mother and daughter are at a standstill ... until a much-needed surprise visit boosts their spirits and ushers in reconciliation.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Lowest Point (01:06:13–01:08:33)

A Surprise Visit (01:10:02–01:12:43)

- How does the first Scene to Review (*Lowest Point*) represent everything that the Beams – especially Anna and Christy – have endured so far on their journey?
- How does this scene serve as a reminder of the constant pain that Anna feels? In what ways does this scene underscore the various ways that Anna suffers (and has suffered)?
- In the second Scene to Review (*A Surprise Visit*), describe the cause of friction between the mother and daughter. How does the mood change when Kevin and the girls arrive?
- What does this scene suggest about the importance and value of family and community? What are the benefits of bearing each other’s burdens and supporting one another?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:25–26; 2 Corinthians 4:8–10; and

Ephesians 4:32 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do 1 Corinthians 12:25–26 and Ephesians 4:32 say about compassion? Why is compassion a necessary response to suffering?
- List all of the pairings (e.g. hard pressed, but not crushed) in 2 Corinthians 4:8–10. How does this passage offer hope in the midst of suffering and hardship?

As you conclude this theme discussion, take some time to read Psalm 34:19; Isaiah 43:2; John 16:33; and James 1:2–4 (see Scriptures Referenced). What do these verses say about suffering? Two of the passages – Isaiah 43:2 and James 1:2–4 – contain promises spoken by the Lord. What does He promise, even (and especially) amidst hardship? Because we live in a sinful, broken world, suffering is part of our existence. The Bible offers countless reminders and instruction to keep our gaze on Jesus and to trust that He is working out all things, including suffering, for an eternal good and glory that will far outweigh the temporary nature of this world.

THEME TWO: FAITH

Guiding Scripture: Hebrews 11:1 (NIV): Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 34:4 (NIV): I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
- Psalm 37:24–25 (NLT): Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand. Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread.
- Psalm 46:1 (NIV): God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
- Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV): Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
- Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV): Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
- Nahum 1:7 (NLT): The LORD is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him.
- Luke 1:78–79 (NLT): “Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”
- 1 Corinthians 16:13 (NIV): Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.
- Ephesians 3:20–21 (NIV): Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,

according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

- Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV): Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Hebrews 11:1 (NIV): Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
- 1 Peter 5:6–7 (NIV): Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
- 1 John 5:5 (NIV): Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- The Only True Shelter (00:03:45–00:06:07)
- “I know God loves you.” (00:23:13–00:24:00)
- “Do you even hear me?” (00:24:40–00:26:47)
- Wrestling With Doubt (00:50:29–00:53:35)
- Sharing With Haley (00:58:38–01:00:56)
- Experiencing Heaven (01:24:40–01:29:04)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Guiding Scripture for this theme discussion is Hebrews 11:1, which says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (NIV). As you begin your discussion of faith, consider the way this verse uses the terms “confidence” and “assurance” regarding faith. Why do you think the author of Hebrews uses such steadfast and certain terms to describe something that many might consider intangible and undefined (hence, the term “faith”)?

Miracles from Heaven offers a candid and vulnerable look at a portion of Christy Beam’s faith journey. As Christy watches her daughter struggle with illness, she faces challenges that are familiar to so many of us – wrestling with doubt, questioning God, wondering why a good God would allow



suffering. These are difficult questions, to be sure. Though we don't have all the answers, one thing is certain: the light of Jesus shines brightest in the darkest of places.

SCENES TO REVIEW

The Only True Shelter (00:03:45–00:06:07)

"I know God loves you." (00:23:13–00:24:00)

In *The Only True Shelter*, after trying on a helmet and opening an umbrella to make a point about disaster preparedness, Pastor Scott says, "But there's one thing that we need that can't be seen, and it can't be bought, and that is faith. Faith is really the only true shelter."

- Talk about the intersection between doing things that are within our power (e.g., common-sense disaster preparedness) and trusting God to take care of the rest.

Pastor Scott also says, "... when the road gets bumpy, when the storms rain down ..."

- Why does Pastor Scott refer to difficulties as though we should expect them? How does pain sculpt our character and deepen our spiritual life, as Pastor Scott also mentions?
- Based on these two scenes, where is Christy in her faith journey? Do you sense that she is cultivating her faith and relying on God during the early part of Anna's illness?
- In the second Scene to Review ("*I know that God loves you.*"), what answer does Christy give Anna and how does her answer demonstrate a willingness to be honest in her faith?

Read Psalm 37:24–25; Nahum 1:7; and 1 Corinthians 16:13 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- List all the attributes of God in Psalm 37:24–25 and Nahum 1:7. What do these verses say about God being our refuge, shield and protector?
- What do you learn from 1 Corinthians 16:13? Why do you think the verse correlates standing firm in the faith with being on guard, being courageous and being strong?

Anna's condition soon becomes unmanageable for Christy on several different levels. She spends a large chunk of her time managing Anna's medications, calling doctors, writing letters and worrying about finances – on top of being a wife and mother. As Christy loses more and more control, she also loses more and more footing with her faith. Despite encouragement from Kevin and Pastor Scott, Christy finds that her questions and doubts are gaining the upper hand.

SCENES TO REVIEW

"Do you even hear me?" (00:24:40–00:26:47)

Wrestling With Doubt (00:50:29–00:53:35)

- Do you find that it is harder or easier to trust God when you're losing control of a situation (or when you finally have no control in a situation)? Explain why.
- What is it about our human tendencies that compel us to do everything in our power to bring about a desired outcome? Where does faith come into play?
- What do these scenes indicate about the state of Christy's faith? How have her doubts and questions about God's goodness interfered with her desire to stand firm in faith?
- How do both Kevin and Pastor Scott reach out to Christy to not only support her during this difficult season, but also to give her the room she needs to wrestle with her faith?

Read Proverbs 3:5–6; Ecclesiastes 4:12; and 1 Peter 5:6–7 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What message is shared in both Proverbs 3:5–6 and 1 Peter 5:6–7? What does this message tell us about our need to trust God in all aspects of life?
- How does Ecclesiastes 4:12 speak to Kevin and Christy's marriage? How does it stress the importance of finding a friend or a community that can act as a support system?

While Christy openly struggles with aspects of faith and doubt in the film, there are two scenes in particular in which Anna demonstrates a childlike, confident faith, and her



quiet strength not only gives her the opportunity to share her assurance with her hospital roommate, Haley (Hannah Alligood), a young girl with cancer, but it also speaks to her mother's heart. It is a balm to Christy's weary soul, offering comfort and peace on what has been a tumultuous path.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Sharing With Haley (00:58:38–01:00:56)

Experiencing Heaven (01:24:40–01:29:04)

- In the first scene (*Sharing With Haley*), Anna assures Haley that Jesus is with her. What impact does this simple, yet profound, assurance have on Haley?
- How does Anna perfectly capture the beauty of childlike faith? What do you notice in these scenes as well as throughout the film about her willingness to believe?
- What are your thoughts on Anna's visit to Heaven? How does she describe the experience? What do you think of her account in relation to her healing?
- Anna says, "Not everyone's going to believe, and that's okay. They'll get there when they get there." What impact do Anna's words seem to have on Christy?

Read Psalm 34:4; Luke 1:78–79; and Ephesians 3:20–21 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do Psalm 34:4 and Luke 1:78–79 say about being delivered from fear, experiencing God's beautiful light and being shown the path of peace? How do these verses offer encouragement when we are experiencing doubts or questioning God?
- How does Ephesians 3:20–21 teach us about God's power to work beyond all we can ask or imagine? What hope can we draw from God's power when we are floundering?

In concluding this theme discussion, take time to look at Psalm 46:1; Philippians 4:6–7; 1 John 5:5; and revisit Hebrews 11:1, the Guiding Scripture for this section (see Scriptures Referenced). What do these verses say about faith? How do these verses also address the difficult issues that often accompany people as they grow in faith – matters such as wrestling with doubt, questioning God and wondering about suffering in the world? On the other hand,

how does faith grow us in beautiful, astounding ways? How does faith enable us to draw closer to God as He draws closer to us? What is our confidence and our assurance (according to Hebrews 11:1)? Many of us can relate to Christy's journey in that we stumble and God catches us – how has He caught you, carried you, sustained you and developed you as you have walked in faith with Him?

THEME THREE: MIRACLES

Guiding Scripture: Job 9:10 (NIV): He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Numbers 6:24–26 (NIV): "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."
- Deuteronomy 10:21 (NIV): He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.
- Joshua 1:9 (NLT): "This is my command – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
- Job 9:10 (NIV): "He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted."
- Job 12:22 (NIV): "He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light."
- Psalm 77:14 (NIV): You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.
- Psalm 86:15 (NLT): But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.
- Psalm 139:13–14 (NIV): For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
- Jeremiah 17:7–8 (NIV): "But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."
- Jeremiah 32:27 (NIV): "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"
- Matthew 19:26 (NIV): Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- Mark 9:23 (NLT): "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."
- 2 Timothy 2:13 (NLT): If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.



- 1 John 4:16 (NIV): And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- The Fall and the Healing (01:14:21–01:24:39)
- Spontaneous Remission (01:29:05–01:32:04)
- “Miracles are everywhere.” (01:33:47–01:41:31)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you begin this theme discussion about miracles, take some time to consider how you would define *miracle*. In your opinion, what qualifies as a miracle? If you’d like, go ahead and name some things that you consider to be miraculous. Toward the end of the film, Christy credits Albert Einstein as saying that there are two ways to live your life: one is to live as if nothing is a miracle; the other is to live as if everything is a miracle. Which perspective do you tend toward?

The following Scene to Review (*The Fall and the Healing*) is a bit longer, but it captures a wonderful arc from one of the lowest points in Anna’s young life to the highest. When the Beams return to Texas after reuniting in Boston, Abbie persuades Anna to climb a massive tree in their front yard – a tree they used to climb all the time. As Anna and Abbie perch on a branch 30 feet in the air, the branch snaps, forcing Anna to move back for refuge. In a fall that could easily end Anna’s life, God has different plans. What unfolds is, quite simply, miraculous.

SCENE TO REVIEW

The Fall and the Healing (01:14:21–01:24:39)

- At the beginning of the scene, what initially draws Anna’s attention to the tree? What other aspects of the scene seem to indicate that the tree serves a purpose in Anna’s life?
- As you think through Anna’s fall and subsequent rescue, what is your reaction to such a dramatic turn of events? Which parts of the scene affect you most?
- When Christy looks around at the rescue chaos, what is she compelled to do? How does her simple, desperate act of faith remind us of the hope and comfort we have in God?
- Regarding Anna’s lack of any injury (other than a slight concussion), the doctor says he’s never seen anything like it. How do you explain what happened to Anna? Is it a miracle?

Read Deuteronomy 10:21; Psalm 77:14; and Matthew 19:26 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do Deuteronomy 10:21 and Psalm 77:14 tell us about God’s power to perform great wonders and miracles? According to the verse in Deuteronomy, what is due God?
- How does Matthew 19:26 demonstrate the difference between human limitations and God’s all-surpassing power?

After Anna’s symptoms miraculously disappear, Christy and Anna visit Dr. Nurko for an explanation as to Anna’s impossible healing and for confirmation that her disorder is truly cured. While Dr. Nurko insists that Anna’s illness is not curable, he concedes that medical professionals would call it “spontaneous remission.” It’s as though her central nervous system has been regenerated; her software reset. Christy asks the doctor to find his own way of saying that Anna has been cured – Dr. Nurko then hands Christy an item that perfectly conveys that message.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Spontaneous Remission (01:29:05–01:32:04)

- According to Dr. Nurko, how does medicine explain the unexplainable? Why are the terms “spontaneous remission” and “asymptomatic” different than “miracle” and “cure”?
- Based on what you have learned about Anna’s condition and motility disorders in general from watching this film, why is Anna’s healing unequivocally astounding?
- How does this scene suggest that Dr. Nurko and his staff have become like family to the Beams? How is their special bond – shared over heartache and then joy – also a miracle?
- When Christy asks Dr. Nurko to find a way to say that Anna is cured, what does he hand her? Why is this item significant? What is the message behind the gesture?

Read Job 9:10; Psalm 139:13–14; and Mark 9:23 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How do Job 9:10 and Mark 9:23 speak to the theme of miracles? How do these verses also correspond to this scene and Dr. Nurko’s inability to explain Anna’s healing?
- Read Psalm 139:13–14 in light of Anna’s miraculous healing. How does God’s personal knowledge of our



design (knitting together each one of us) inspire and encourage you?

At the end of the film, Christy returns to church to tell her family's miraculous story. She is vulnerable, hopeful and encouraging, and she speaks of her own struggles in watching Anna suffer. Having been so distracted by hardship itself, she admits to missing many of the everyday miracles and blessings that surrounded her along the way – these people, places and moments were and are evidence of God's constant love and unfailing presence in her life. When some people in the crowd question the legitimacy of Anna's illness, Christy receives yet another miracle in the form of Ben Wexler (Wayne Péré), Haley's dad, who verifies Christy's story and briefly shares a deeply heartfelt, moving account of how his daughter found faith thanks to Anna.

SCENE TO REVIEW

"Miracles are everywhere." (01:33:47–01:41:31)

- Christy says, "Miracles are everywhere ... Miracles are God's way of letting us know ... He's here." What miracles do you see each and every day?
- As Christy speaks, the film reveals moments when the Beams experienced miracles and blessings without realizing it. Discuss the many everyday miracles that are shown.
- What does Ben say about Haley's last few weeks? How did Anna's witness impact Haley when they were in the hospital together?
- Does this scene inspire you to reach out and bless others? To be a part of someone else's miracle? If yes, what are some ways that you could encourage, support and love others?

Read Psalm 86:15; Jeremiah 17:7–8; and Jeremiah 32:27 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How does Psalm 86:15 present not only a wonderful model for us to follow, but also highlight the miracle upon miracle that is God's grace and love toward us?
- Why is Jeremiah 17:7–8 especially relevant to the story of *Miracles from Heaven*?

In finishing this theme discussion, read Numbers 6:24–26; Joshua 1:9; Job 12:22; 2 Timothy 2:13; and 1 John 4:16 (see Scriptures Referenced), and discuss the way each of these verses points to miracles. At the beginning of this discussion, you were asked to define *miracle*. After watching the scenes, answering questions and discussing relevant Scripture, has your definition changed in any way? If yes, how? The Beam family lived a miracle on a huge scale, absolutely, but they also saw God's hand moving in everyday ways that shaped and guided their experience. As we, too, seek to appreciate the miracles and blessings that surround us, let us not forget the greatest miracle of all – that of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection to save us from sin.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- How do Kevin and Christy demonstrate great commitment to their marriage and to their children throughout the film despite the extenuating circumstances of Anna's illness?
- THIRD DAY's music provides a wonderful backdrop for the film's message. How does their song, "Your Words" (as heard in the film), resonate with the Beams' story?
- What additional themes do you see in the film? How do these themes tie in with the overarching themes of suffering, faith and miracles?
- Which character do you most identify with and why? Which character do you least identify with and why? Give specific examples if possible.

SCENE TO REVIEW

The Real Beams (01:43:01–01:44:41)

- What are your thoughts on seeing the real Beams in this final scene of the film?



"TOUCHES THE HEART AND SPEAKS TO THE SPIRIT."

- Chris Parente/KDVR-TV (FOX)

Starring:

Jennifer Garner
Kylie Rogers
Martin Henderson
Eugenio Derbez
Queen Latifah



SPECIAL FEATURES

- Miracles Abound: The Making of *Miracles From Heaven* featurette
- Bearing Witness featurette
- Commentary with Director Patricia Rigen and Screenwriter Randy Brown
- Your Words Music Montage
- Creating Heaven – Concept Art Exploration

BLU-RAY EXCLUSIVES

- Deleted Scenes
- Accounts From Annabel featurette



On Blu-ray, DVD and Digital July 12th



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