

TO SAVE A LIFE

EVERYONE HAS PROBLEMS.
NOT EVERYONE HAS FAITH.



STUDY GUIDE

Crew Overview

Brian Baugh (Director)

Jim Britts (Screenwriter)

Cast Overview

Randy Wayne (Jake Taylor)

Deja Kreutzberg (Amy Briggs)

Robert Bailey, Jr. (Roger Dawson)

Joshua Weigel (Chris)

Kim Hidalgo (Andrea)

Sean Michael Afable (Jonny)

Bubba Lewis (Danny)

Steven Crowder (Doug)

Using This Discussion Guide

Intended for use after viewing the film, this study guide provides the structure and opportunity for Bible-based discussion of the themes from *To Save A Life*.

The guide offers exploration of three different themes from the movie and allows groups or families to discuss all the themes in one session, or they might focus on one or two themes at a time.

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Film Overview/Note to Group

To Save A Life, written and directed by a seasoned youth pastor inspired to reach out to teenagers, tells the story of Jake Taylor, senior at Pacific High School near the southern California beach. Jake has it all: friends, fame, a basketball scholarship and the hottest girl in school. He's the star of the party scene and everyone's hero. He thinks he's got it made...until a former childhood friend and a sudden tragedy change his life forever.

Jake was best friends with Roger Dawson when they were kids, but the social politics of high school slowly pull the boys apart. While Jake seems to have everything, Roger has nothing—no friends, no hope, nothing but putdowns and getting pushed aside. Roger doesn't seem to belong in Jake's—or anyone's—circle of friends, and he's had enough. He walks onto campus with a gun in his pocket and pain in his heart and makes a tragic move.

Jake's last-ditch effort can't stop Roger, and it rocks Jake's world. Something breaks loose inside Jake and sends him questioning everything. Most of all, he can't shake the question from his mind, *Could I have saved Roger?* As Jake desperately searches for answers, a compassionate stranger enters his life and offers hope from an odd place—in a relationship with God. Jake blows off the idea at first and does his best to cope, but other parts of his world begin to crumble, and he finds himself in church for the first time in his life.

Slowly and through new friendships in the church's youth program, Jake finds out that his shallow, party-every-weekend life can't provide the inner peace he craves. He learns to find true fulfillment in a growing relationship with Jesus, and then he discovers how often Roger's pain and loneliness is echoed by others around him. He starts to notice how many kids are hurting—kids he'd never even noticed before—and he begins to wonder about what really matters in life. So he starts reaching out to the outcasts and the lonely on his school campus, determined to redeem Roger's suffering and put his new faith to work. But Jake quickly finds that crossing class castes threatens everything he's built his world on, and it could cost him his friends, his girl, his dreams, and even his reputation.

(Warning—spoilers mentioned below)

Jake's journey to a life that really matters speaks to real-life challenges of teens and their choices. Students at Pacific High deal with compelling issues like suicide, teen sex and pregnancy, divorce, peer-pressure, drug and alcohol use, bullying, and the need to appear in control during times of personal pain and strife. The teens in the film also battle intense feelings of loneliness, rejection, frustration, stress, and depression in a variety of circumstances. These same realities affect every teenager walking the hallways of your local high school and their only lasting hope is found in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

To Save A Life was born from a passion to reach young people with the love and security they so desperately need. The film vividly shows how loving God and loving people gives us power to find true purpose and fulfillment in life. It also reminds us to stay aware of the pain and loneliness of others and compels us reach out—especially to those struggling in our families, communities, schools, and those on fringe of acceptance by our culture.

PARENTAL ADVISORY: *To Save A Life* has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America. Because teens today are hurting and facing challenge like never before, *To Save A Life* doesn't shy away from these tough topics; instead, it points to a way out of these problems by following God's path and reaching out to others. It urges viewers to ask themselves the necessary question, "What do I want my life to be about?" then dares them to answer with boldness, honesty, and Christ-likeness.

Theme One: Different Kinds of Dirt

Guiding Scripture:

John 16:33 (NIV): “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Scriptures Referenced:

- Matthew 26:36–46 (NIV): “Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?’ he asked Peter. ‘Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.’ He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.’ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. When he returned to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!’”
- John 16:33 (NIV): “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

DVD Scenes to Review:

- Roger’s Monologue (00:51:46—00:53:10, Chapter 19)
- Different Kinds of Dirt (01:39:15—01:40:10, Chapter 43)

Discussion Questions

Many people have trouble coping with difficult situations in life because they harbor inaccurate expectations of how life should be—and worse, how it should be handled. In the beginning of *To Save A Life*, Jake Taylor aspires to the perfect life: perfect college, perfect girl, perfect friends, perfect dreams. Roger Dawson, on the other hand, experiences rejection and bullying he interprets as a judgment on his value as a person. This theme explores the different types of hurts and issues people face and how you can develop biblical tools to combat those issues in a realistic rather than idealistic way.

Scene to Review:

Roger’s Monologue (00:51:46—00:53:10, Chapter 19)

- Which of Roger’s feelings expressed in his monologue resonate with you? Which are hard for you to understand? Why?
- Read Matthew 26:36–46. How do you think it made Jesus feel when his best friends fell asleep when He needed them most? How do you think He felt when they did it a second time?
- How can you relate to this story? When have you felt alone and really needed a friend, but no one was there for you? Have you ever “fallen asleep” when someone needed you? Explain.
- Who do you know that needs a friend right now? What can you do to be there for them, starting this week? Give specific, practical ideas (i.e., “I could call them after school tomorrow just to find out what’s going on,” “I could take them to lunch one day next week,” “I could text them just to say I was thinking of them,” etc.)

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In the following scene, Jake finds out from Andrea that there are “different kinds of dirt” in everyone’s life—no one has it all together all the time, no matter how they look. God does not promise us a trouble-free life, but He does promise to walk through it by our side and empower us for growth and victory.

Scene to Review:

Different Kinds of Dirt (01:39:15—01:40:10, Chapter 43)

- Describe someone you know who always looks like they “have it all together.” What makes them appear that way? Is it true? How do you know?
- Would your friends say that you’ve got it all together? When you have a difficult problem, do you let other people know? Why or why not?
- Read John 16:33. When people first become Christians, they sometimes think all their problems will be solved and their lives will be wonderful from then on. Would Jake agree with this view? How is this view contrary to what Jesus says here?
- What is different about the way Jake responds to his problems at the beginning of the film, versus after he starts learning about God?
- In the second half of John 16:33, Jesus make a statement to reassure us. When things get difficult in your life, what is helpful about knowing that Jesus “overcame the world”?



Theme Two: The Bigger Picture

Guiding Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV:

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...”

Scriptures Referenced:

- Luke 19:1–8 (NIV): “Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 (NIV): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

DVD Scenes to Review:

***He’s More Than Worth It* (00:43:50—00:45:50, Chapter 16)**

***Jake Challenges the Youth Group* (00:57:44—01:00:11, Chapter 21)**

Discussion Questions

At several points in *To Save A Life*, Jake comes face-to-face with the fact that life isn’t just about the next party, the next date or the next basketball game—fulfillment in life comes from loving the people around you and finding God’s purpose for your life. But relationships are messy things, and answers aren’t always clearly defined. This theme explores God’s view of people—how much they matter to Him, how much they should matter to us, and the purpose and joy we discover in life when we decide to love people the way God does.

Scene to Review:

***He’s More Than Worth It* (00:43:50—00:45:50, Chapter 16)**

- In this scene, Jake talks about not wanting to “settle” in his life. How is Jake “settling”? Is anyone else “settling” in the film? Who and how?
- Read Luke 19:1–10. In this story, Jesus connects with a man with a terrible reputation for greed and self-interest. Why do you think Jesus chose to pay attention to Zacchaeus out of all the people that surrounded Him at that moment?
- The world tries very hard to convince us that all we need is “more,” and we will be happy and fulfilled. Give some examples of this. Is it true? Why or why not?
- What does Zacchaeus learn from his experience with Jesus? How is it similar to what Jake learns?



In the movie, several characters develop a new understanding of how much people matter to God and should matter to us. Jesus gifts Christians with the Holy Spirit—part of Himself—which in turn helps us see people as valuable, created beings with a purpose, the way Jesus sees them. The difference in perception can come upon you suddenly or subtly, but developing God's love for people results from His infusion of love in you.

Scene to Review:

Jake Challenges the Youth Group (00:43:50—00:45:50, Chapter 16)

- Jake asks the question, “What’s the point of all this if you’re not going to let this change you?” What makes Jake stand up and challenge the youth group kids? In what ways do they need to change?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:15–21. What were you like before you knew Jesus? How has your life changed since then? How did the change occur?
- Verse 20 calls us Christ’s “ambassadors,” meaning we represent Him. How should someone who represents Jesus behave in a youth group meeting? In their family? With their friends? In their community? What happens when we do this?
- How will you be an ambassador for Christ in the coming week?

Jake asks some serious, courageous questions of himself during *To Save A Life*, and he also asks these same questions of the people who claim to follow Christ. Once he gets a hint of the authentic joy, peace and friendship available in the body of Christ, he cannot allow the other kids in the youth group to continue in a shallow, meaningless way. When you decide to become a Christ-follower, often you become a walking-talking challenge to others. In fact, it often has a “ripple effect”; for example, in the movie, Chris became one for Jake, then Jake became one for the youth group, and the youth group became one for Jonny and Amy. This is precisely how God intends us to spread the Good News of His love and redemption—one willing heart at a time.

Theme Three: Reaching Out, Saving Lives

Guiding Scripture: Acts 1:8 (NIV):

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”

Scriptures Referenced:

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NIV): “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”
- Proverbs 13:20 (NIV): “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”
- Proverbs 19:20 (NIV): “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.”
- Acts 2:42-48 (NIV): “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”
- Acts 1:8 (NIV): “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”

DVD Scenes to Review:

Friendship Montage (01:08:17—01:10:08, Chapter 28)

Jake & Amy at the Abortion Clinic (01:32:22—01:34:18, Chapter 39)

Facebook Page (01:15:01—01:15:50, Chapter 32)

Discussion Questions

To Save A Life addresses some complicated issues including divorce, teen pregnancy, suicide, and cutting. You may struggle with one or more of these issues daily, or you may never struggle with any of them, but one thing is certain—everyone knows at least one person whose life has been indelibly marked by them. This theme explores how one might offer hope and help to a struggling, hurting world, just by starting with those within your sphere of immediate influence. It doesn’t take a lot of time or resources to help, but it just might save a life.

Scene to Review:

Friendship Montage (01:08:17—01:10:08, Chapter 28)

- What do you notice about the relationships portrayed in this scene? How are they different from Jake's relationships at the beginning of the film?
- Read Acts 2:42-48. To you, what would be the best part of a community like this? What would be hard for you?
- In the early church in Acts 2, the believers "shared everything" and "gave to everyone as they had need." Would you be willing to let God "re-purpose" you and your stuff to serve others—even strangers? Why or why not?
- How might things have been different for Roger if he'd been a part of a community like this? What can you do to make your circle of friends more like the Acts 2 church?

Through his new friends in the youth group, Jake finds out what true, authentic friendship looks like. God does not intend for us to walk through life alone. God promises to "never leave us or forsake us," and we can depend on Him to be an "ever-present help" to us. But He also intends for us to activate the love He shows us for one another, so we can be the hands and feet of Jesus to a hurting world.

Scene to Review:

Jake & Amy at the Abortion Clinic (01:32:22—01:34:18, Chapter 39)

- Describe a situation in your life when you were glad you had someone there for you.
- In this scene, Jake expresses his willingness to sacrifice his dreams for Amy. How was Amy feeling before Jake arrived? How does she feel afterward they talk? How do you think Jake affected Amy's decision?
- If this situation had occurred at the beginning of the story, how do you think Jake's reaction to Amy would have been different? In what ways has Jake changed?
- Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 and Proverbs 13:20 and 19:20. Think of someone in your life who could use a friend right now. How might God want you to be there for them? List some practical things you could do for them.
- In another scene from the movie, Chris says to Jake, "I'm here for you, no matter what." How do you think Chris' actions affected Jake's decision to be there for Amy? How does an act of love for someone help them act in love for others?



Scene to Review:

Roger's Facebook Page (01:15:01—01:15:50, Chapter 32)

Jake puts “feet to his faith” when he illustrates the importance of reaching out to the hurting and lonely. When he begins to rework Roger’s Facebook page, he’s not sure what will happen, but he knows he must act—and the results are astounding. The Bible says we “fulfill the law of Christ” when we reach out to the discouraged and bear one another’s burdens, and He also promises to bless us when we obey Him.

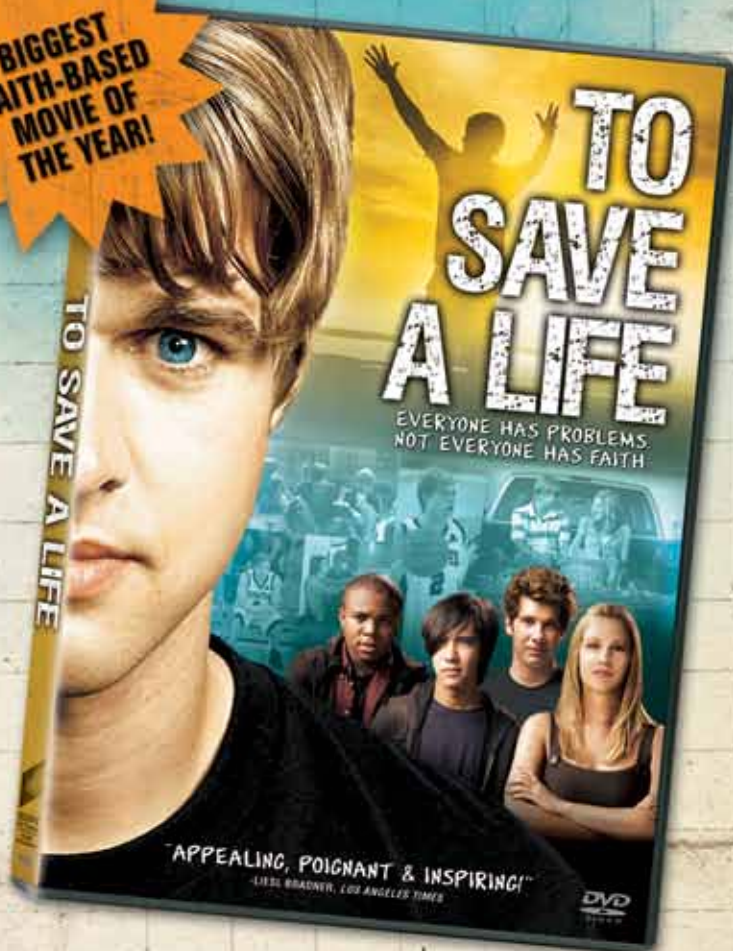
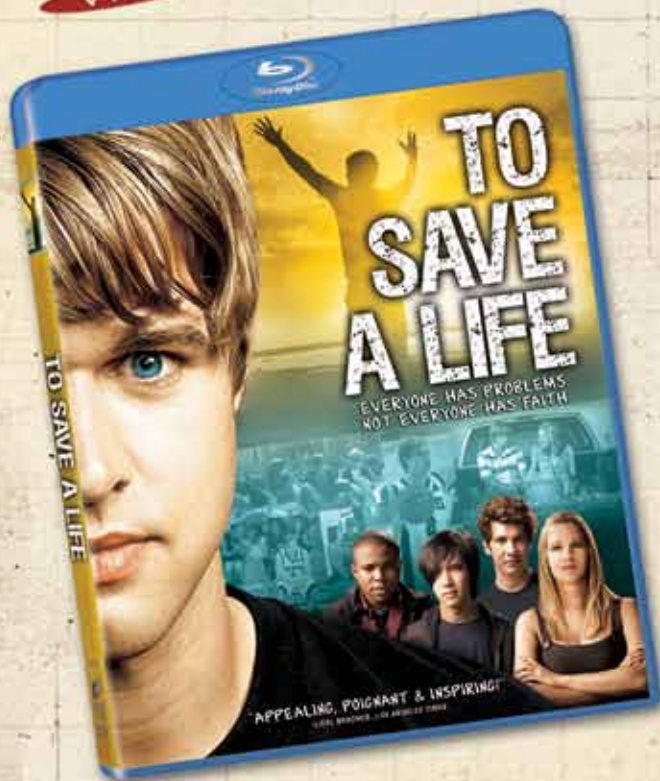
- What would you say are the top three issues facing teenagers in your local schools and neighborhoods? What is your experience with these issues?
- What’s being done to combat these issues? Is it working? Why or why not?
- What pain or injustice in the world really bothers or touches you? If you could eliminate one form of pain or injustice from the world forever, what would it be? Why?
- Read Acts 1:8. What do you think it means to “receive power”? What could you do if you felt you had the power of God behind you?
- What prevents you from starting to eliminate that pain or injustice from the world right now? What would it take to get started on it—even with just a baby-step? Come up with two or three ideas you could try in the next few days, then pray and ask God to show you how to proceed in His power.

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the *Los Angeles Times* called,
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AFFIRM FILMS

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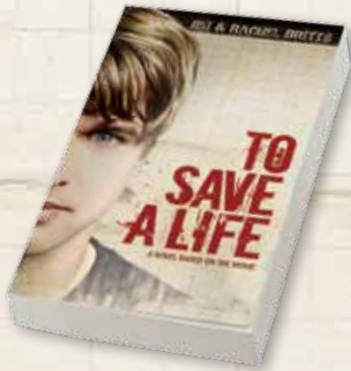
“What’s the point of all this if you’re not going to let this change you?” —Jake Taylor in *To Save A Life*

Be Inspired with these *To Save A Life* Resources



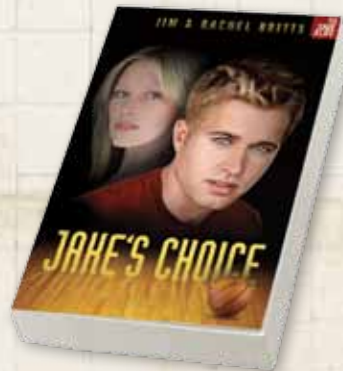
To Save A Family Parent's Kit

Strengthen your family with the six-week video curriculum that features Bible-based teaching, thought-provoking discussion questions and movie clips from the film *To Save A Life*. Plus, each lesson includes warm-up games and activities that illustrate the teaching—and add to the fun.



To Save A Life

Based on the screenplay of the movie and featuring additional scenes and back stories not shown in the film.



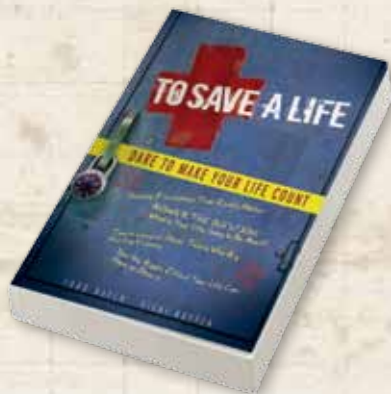
Jake's Choice

The second novel in the series, *Jake's Choice* picks up where the film ends, with Jake leaving for college. What if changing your life forever...only lasted through high school?



Life Saver: The Ultimate Devotional Handbook for Teens

Features 52 topics to help young people grow in their faith and share God's love with others.



To Save A Life: Dare to Make Your Life Count

A powerful, inspirational book that challenges teens to apply the principles of the movie by identifying with Jesus and befriending those who are lost, left out, hurting and lonely.



To Save A Life Devo2Go

A unique, interactive audio devotional for teens, as shown in the movie.

You can find these To Save A Life resources (and more) at your local Christian book store or at ToSaveALifeGear.com.