

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2 Guide

Film length: 2hrs. 10 minutes

Film rating: PG-13

Director: David Yates

Genre: Drama/Adventure

Synopsis:

In this last of the Harry Potter films, Harry must complete his task of finding and defeating the evil Voldemort once and for all. The earlier films (and books, of course) have all led up to this confrontation., To finish his task, Harry must first find and destroy the horcruxes that contain a part of Voldemort and protect V. from complete destruction. Harry eventually has to face a very difficult choice if evil is to be defeated.

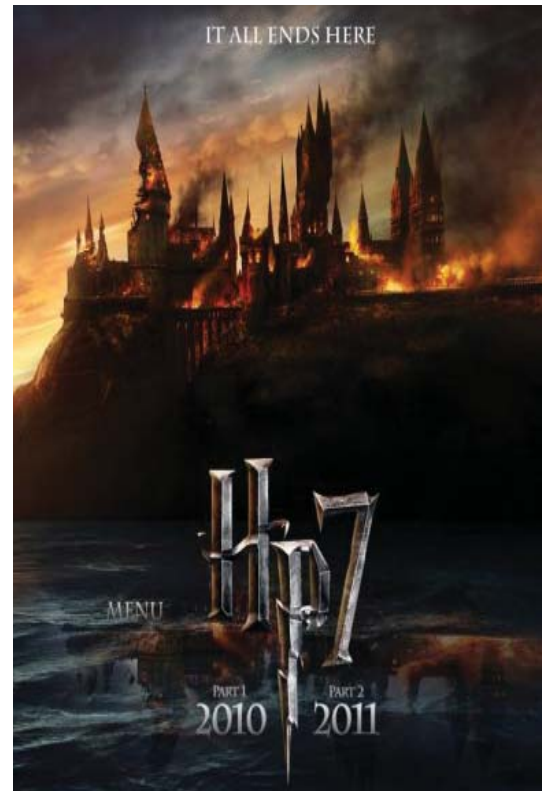
Harry, as usual, has friends and supporters who help him do so. As expected, Hermione and Ron are part of the action, and so are other students from Hogwarts, especially Neville, who becomes empowered and surprises himself and others with his quick action and his willingness to face the forces of evil, by sword and by stance.

The adults who remain alive after the long struggle to contain and defeat Voldemort also have roles to play. Professor McGonagall assumes leadership to protect the school and even Ron's mother takes part in the defense. Professor Snape proves to be a very complex character as we finally understand whose side he is really on. Even the adults who died in earlier films appear to offer support to Harry, and Dumbledore is back to offer his final lessons.

The film's climax is a brutal and bloody battle between good and evil. But the final scene of the film is one of peace, family, relationships and continuity. All's well that ends well.

Themes to Engage Through the Film:

- *The reality of good and evil*
- *Development of personhood, of moral character*
- *Complex moral decision-making and ethical choices*
- *Knowledge vs. Wisdom*
- *The importance of community, friendship, solidarity*
- *The question of the necessity of violence*
- *The limits of power*
- *Being true to one's best self*



- **The film promotes solidarity and the common good over individual gain and power.**
- **This film is an excellent tool to explore and examine moral decision-making, ethical issues and important justice themes.**
- **This film explores the tension between becoming and being, between identity and destiny.**

Web Link:

Official Movie Site:

<http://harrypotter.warnerbros.com/harrypotterandthedeathlyhallows/mainsite/index.html>

Catholic Social Teaching Connections:

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person (and of Others):

- For Harry, all are worthy of respect, be they muggles, half-bloods, elves, or misfits like Neville. All are valued--even if they are too old, weak, scared to participate in defeating evil.
- Females, young and old, have skills, talents and intelligence that are to be recognized and utilized for the common good.
- Harry chooses to save the lives of Draco and his friends despite their hatred of him. Harry is not driven by revenge towards others. He shows mercy and compassion to those who have harmed him

The Principle of Solidarity:

- Everyone has a role to play in promoting the good and defeating evil.
- People are drawn together to work towards a peaceful community; they share a vision of life free from evil.
- Individual glory and gain is not the priority in this film.
- Loyalty to others and to positive ideals are promoted by the film.

The Common Good:

- Harry knows that he has a responsibility to others and must sacrifice for the common good.
- Harry's friends also choose the common good over their own self-interests. They are also willing to struggle and die so evil can be defeated; they realize that others will benefit from their actions.

Participation in Family and Community

- Harry cherishes the memory and the lessons of his parents and desires to live up to these.
- Ron's family is close-knit but open to others; they take in Harry and treat him as a family member. They also know they have a role to play in keeping the greater community safe.
- The importance of the life and well-being of the community, and the individual's role in the community, is stressed in many ways throughout the Harry Potter series. He develops an extended family who demonstrate love, loyalty and responsibility.

Supporting Education for Justice Resources:

What other connections to Catholic Social Teaching principles are relevant when discussing the final Harry Potter film?

- **The Principle of the Common Good**
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/329>
- **The Principle of Solidarity**
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/644>



Questions for Discussion:

- 1 Is Harry Potter a super-hero like other main characters in recent films? How would you describe him? Several critics have called him a Christ figure; in what ways could this be accurate, and in what ways, inaccurate?
- 2 Many characters contributed to helping form Harry Potter from his first days at Hogwarts until his final confrontation with V.; who are some of these characters and what was their role in his development?
- 3 What are some of the lessons that Harry Potter has learned through these people as well as through his adventures, the challenges and struggles in the earlier films in this series; what knowledge and what wisdom did he learn? What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Were there times when wisdom trumped knowledge in the series? How do knowledge and wisdom serve him in this final film?
- 4 What does this final film tell us about the responsibility of the individual to a greater, common good? What are choices that Harry, and other characters, make even if their own self-interest is put in jeopardy? Why do they make these choices? What is the result of their choices for the common good? What virtues are exemplified in this film, such as fortitude, prudence, justice, etc? Who exemplifies these virtues?
5. The film grapples with the issue of authentic identity as Harry discovers many things about himself and as he makes choices as he develops and matures. What does he discover about himself? How does he deal with this? Do “givens” control him, or is he able to rise above these and define himself through his moral choices? Can you give any concrete examples of important choices Harry has had to make? Are these related in any way to choices young people have to make in real life?
- 6 Harry encounters many characters that can be described as outsiders, or “the other”; who are they, and how does Harry relate to these others who are not always given respect? (For example, Dobby, Hagrid, etc.)
- 7 What role do girls and women have in the story line of the Harry Potter series? Are they complex characters or stereotypes? Do they have power and/or become empowered? What are the strengths and limitations of the characterization of females this series? Do these female characters challenge and/or reinforce stereotypes? How is the portrayal of girls and women in the stories important for young audiences?
- 8 Friendship and solidarity with others are an important part of all the Harry Potter books and films. Can you think of examples of the importance of friendship and the importance of standing and acting with others in the series? Why are these so important? What is the role of “belonging” or being accepted in this film. How does the community work together to contribute to the defeat of evil at the climax of the film?
- 9 One major movie critic has called this film “a war movie,” and another called it “a battle film.” Do you agree with these categories? Violence does play a large role in this film. In terms of Catholic Social Teaching, which promotes peace as well as justice, how do you reconcile the violence with the other, more positive, messages of the film and the series?
10. How has cultural conditioning regarding violence shaped our expectations about the ways to defeat evil? What are messages we receive regularly about the “need” for violence? Have films and the movie industry so conditioned us that we accept violence as a necessary way to end dilemmas? Can we even imagine a way out of the violence and a peaceful way to defeat evil and still have a satisfying film experience? Can you think of any films that actually do this?
- 11 What do you think will be the legacy of the Harry Potter series and films? How will they shape our younger-generation’s sense of reality and human possibility? How can we take what is good in these cultural productions and promote the value of Catholic Social Teaching?

