

“Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events” starring Jim Carrey, Jude Law, Meryl Streep, 2004, PG, 108 minutes

Major themes:

- Home
- Orphans
- Inheritance
- Courage
- Ingenuity
- Unity
- Good vs. evil
- Justice

Major characters:

- Count Olaf
- Violet Baudelaire
- Klaus Baudelaire
- Sunny Baudelaire
- Lemony Snicket
- Mr. Poe
- Justice Strauss
- Uncle Monty
- Aunt Josephine

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- The film's tagline is, *"At last a holiday movie without all that pesky hope and joy."*
- Meryl Streep accepted her role in this film upon the request of her daughter, who was a huge fan of the books upon which it is based.
- Helena Bonham Carter makes a cameo appearance in this film (as Beatrice Baudelaire).
- Some of Sunny's scenes involve a real baby; some are created with CGI.
- Count Olaf's car is a 1960 Imperial Crown Limousine by Ghia.
- In the stairwell where we first meet Count Olaf, there is a portrait of Olaf in Shakespearian garb, reaching out with his hand. This is almost an exact duplicate of a picture of John Barrymore playing *"Hamlet."*
- VFD, or Volunteer Fire Department is an international organization of which most of the major characters are members. Exactly what VFD does is never made clear; the organization goes to great lengths to conceal all traces of its activities, through the use of complete disguises and codes. They do actually primarily put out fires, but they also carry out humanitarian acts. The insignia of the organization appears to be an eye, made up of the letters 'V,' 'F,' and 'D.' There are several other references in the film to those initials. In the car scene, Count Olaf holds up a newspaper to his face, the back of which reads "Veritable French Diner." Also, When Klaus finds a spy-glass in his father's desk, there is a box of green cigarettes lying beside it, labelled VFD. This is a reference to a situation in the book series, in which Sunny uses Verdant Flammable Devices (mistaken for green cigarettes) to signal her siblings.
- It was the first Nickelodeon movie to win an Academy Award (two, actually – 2005 Best Achievement in Makeup and Best Achievement in Art Direction)

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Scriptures:

John 15:12 – 13 (The Message) – *“This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends.”*

Exodus 22:22 – 23 (NLT) – *“You must not exploit a widow or an orphan. If you exploit them in any way and they cry out to me, then I will certainly hear their cry.”*

Deuteronomy 10:17 – 18 (NLT) – *“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing.”*

1 Corinthians 16:13 – 14 (NIV) – *“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.”*

Ephesians 4:2 – 3 (The Message) – *“I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don’t want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don’t want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.”*

Isaiah 1:17 (NLT) – *“Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.”*

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Discussion points:

1. How can seeing the children building a “*safe little place in a threatening world*” teach us to find sanctuary with courage and ingenuity in the face of danger, fear, and adversities?
2. What are some alternative ways the children may have responded to the “*series of unfortunate events*” in their lives if they had viewed themselves as helpless victims?
3. No matter how dark the circumstances became, the children clung to hope and refused to give up. What were they hoping for? How important is the object or goal of our hope?
4. Why do you think God tells us so many times in the Bible to persevere / stand firm / be still?
5. Each of the children was willing to sacrifice their own happiness, comfort, and safety, for the others. What were some of the effects of this strong bond of unity?
6. Not every child has an adult they can count on in their lives. What are some practical ways in which can we advocate for children so that they won't be taken advantage of, mistreated, or ignored?