

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

“Temple Grandin” starring Claire Danes, Julia Ormond, David Strathairn, 2010, PG, 107 minutes

Major themes:

- Autism
- Doors
- Determination
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Social cues
- Coping
- Cattle

Major characters:

- Temple Grandin
- Eustacia Grandin (Temple’s mom)
- Aunt Ann
- Dr. Carlock (teacher)

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Background info:

- The film's tagline is: *"Autism gave her a vision. She gave it a voice."*
- Autism is defined today as *"a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, and restricted and repetitive behavior."* However, in the 1940s and 1950s, autism was thought by the medical community to be a form of schizophrenia resulting from insufficient maternal affection.
- This film won three Emmy Awards in 2010, for outstanding lead actress, art direction, and hairstyling.
- The scenes involving cattle in distress were shot using animatronic cows known as *"stuffies."*
- The small rocket that Dr. Carlock launches in celebration is a model of the *"Little Joe II"*, a rocket used to test the Apollo capsule as part of the Moon program.

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Scriptures:

Proverbs 12:10 (NLT) – *“The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.”*

Romans 14:19 (NASB) – *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”*

Proverbs 12:25 (ESV) – *“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”*

James 1:2 – 4 (NLT) – *“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles 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.”*

Philippians 2:3 – 4 (ESV) – *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Psalms 46:10 – 11 (NASB) – *“Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.”*

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Discussion points:

1. We all notice different things, and perhaps often assume that everyone else notices what we're noticing. What were some of the things Temple noticed, and what did she do about them?
2. Temple repeatedly remembered her teacher's encouragement to look for open doors and walk through them to new worlds. How have you responded to the "doors" you've encountered in your life?
3. Temple said, "*Nature is cruel but we don't have to be; we owe them some respect . . . I became aware of how precious life was.*" What can we learn from the way both people and animals were treated in this film?
4. Temple's mother insisted that people treat her daughter as "*different, but not less.*" To what group of people do we have the most difficulty in demonstrating love, honor, and value, despite very real differences?
5. Temple built herself a "*squeeze machine*" in order to relieve stress and anxiety and find a measure of calm; what helps you to "*be still*" on the inside?
6. How does realizing that others may think and / or communicate differently from you affect the way you perceive them and how you receive what they have to offer?