

“To Kill a Mockingbird” starring Gregory Peck, John Megna, Frank Overton, 1962, NR, 129 minutes

Major themes:

- Prejudice
- Justice
- Courage
- Advocacy
- Rape
- Honor
- Truth
- Father Love

Major characters:

- Atticus Finch
- Jeremy Atticus “Jem” Finch
- Jean Louise “Scout” Finch
- Calpurnia
- Charles Baker “Dill” Harris
- Arthur “Boo” Radley
- Mr. Cunningham
- Tom Robinson
- Robert E. Lee “Bob” Ewell
- Mayella Violet Ewell
- Sheriff Heck Tate
- Judge Taylor

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- A Mockingbird is any of several gray, black, and white songbirds of the U.S. and Mexico noted for their ability to mimic the songs of other birds.
- A chifferobe is a piece of furniture having both drawers and space for hanging clothes.
- This film won three Academy Awards – Best Actor (Gregory Peck), Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Art Direction.
- Atticus Finch was voted as the best movie hero of the 20th century by the American Film Institute in their special, "*100 Years, 100 Movies, 100 Heroes & Villains*." This film is ranked #2 on the American Film Institute's "*100 Most Inspiring Movies of All Time*" (2006), behind "*It's a Wonderful Life*."
- Elmer Bernstein's original music is considered one of the best film scores of all time.
- Gregory Peck's character's nine-minute summation speech was filmed in a single take!
- The author of the book of the same name upon which the film is based, Harper Lee, was present at the filming of Gregory Peck's first scene. After filming, Peck noticed that Lee was crying, and asked her why. She responded that he had looked just like her late father, upon whom she modeled the character Atticus Finch. Amasa "A.C." Lee was an attorney and Alabama state legislator, whose 1923 defense of a black client partially inspired her writing about the trial in the book. Like Amasa Lee, the character of Atticus Finch was an attorney, state legislator and widowed single father. Gregory Peck met the ailing Amasa Lee shortly before he died (during filming).
- According to the comics, this is Clark Kent's (aka Superman, under cover) favorite movie. Clark Kent was modeled after Atticus Finch.
- This movie marked Robert Duvall's film debut (with no verbal dialogue).
- As of mid-2014, Robert Duvall is the film's last surviving adult cast member.

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Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) – *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (NLT) – *“See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.”*

1 Peter 3:9 (NLT) – *“Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will bless you for it.”*

Matthew 7:7 – 12 (The Message) – *“Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better? Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get.”*

Romans 12:10 (NLT) – *“Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.”*

1 Corinthians 12:25 – 26 (The Message) – *“The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.”*

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Discussion points:

1. What is the significance of each of these items in this film (seen in the opening credits) – pocket watch, harmonica, pearl necklace, whistle, marbles, and a child’s drawing of a bird?
2. Discuss this Atticus quote: *“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.”*
3. A mockingbird is described in this film as a creature that should never be killed because it is harmless and even provides song for the enjoyment of others. Why do you think the film (and the book upon which it is based) bears the title of, *“To Kill a Mockingbird?”*
4. After the verdict, why is the courtroom completely silent? Share of a time when you’ve experienced complete silence in a crowd.
5. The theme of prejudice between opposing individuals and groups creates a tension that runs throughout the whole film. What types of prejudice do we see? What do we learn from six-year-old Scout about race, culture, society, justice, stereotypes, morality, and ethics? Do any of the characters break through stereotypes?
6. Who do you think was the best casting choice for this film, and why?