

JESSICA CHASTAIN ANDREW GARFIELD



SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES presents a TITZKLE FILMS/MADISON WELLS STUDIOS production "THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE" JESSICA CHASTAIN ANDREW GARFIELD CHERYL JONES AND VINCENT D'ONOFRIO  
WRITTEN BY THEODORE SHAPIRO DIRECTED BY ANDREW COOPER  
CASTING BY MARY JO MARLEY, A.C.E. COSTUME DESIGNER ANDREW WILSON, A.C.E. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GUY LOUVAUX JACQUELINE GOLDBLUM JOSH JENNY HINKEY MATTIENI MILTEN JORDANA WELLS LUCY ADRIAN AL PEROVICHI  
PRODUCED BY FENTON BARKLEY RANDY BARBARO WRITTEN BY JESSICA CHASTAIN BASED UPON THE BOOK BY KELLY CARROLL WITH JACQUELINE GOLDBLUM  
DIRECTED BY ANDREW COOPER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FENTON BARKLEY RANDY BARBARO PRODUCED BY PAUL SYLVIA AND MICHAEL SCHWARTZ  
SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 4

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# About the film

THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE is an intimate look behind the extraordinary rise, fall and redemption of American televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker.

In the 1970s and '80s, Tammy Faye (Jessica Chastain) and her husband, Jim Bakker (Andrew Garfield), rise from humble beginnings to create the world's largest religious broadcasting network and theme park. Tammy Faye becomes renowned for her message of love, acceptance and prosperity – as well as her indelible eyelashes and idiosyncratic singing.

But it isn't long before financial improprieties, scheming rivals, and scandal threaten to topple their carefully constructed empire. To find faith again, Tammy will need to rediscover what inspired her from the beginning – the God she loves, and the people she longs to heal.

## About this resource

You can use this resource to plan an activity for your church small group. The discussion questions will help you explore themes around God's blessing, fallible leadership, and loving outsiders.

Please use whichever questions you feel are appropriate for your group. If you're meeting together in person, be sure to stay COVID-safe and check the latest guidelines.



# Who was Tammy Faye?

For a generation of Americans, Tammy Faye Bakker was known as an eccentric, glamorous television personality who ended up at the centre of a tabloid scandal. But who was the woman behind the makeup?

Tamara Faye LeValley was born to Pentecostal preacher parents in Minnesota in 1942. She met Jim Bakker while they were both studying at North Central Bible College, and in the early 1960s the newly married couple went on the road together as travelling preachers. They soon became involved in television, going on to found The PTL Club, a Christian news and entertainment programme which evolved into its own TV network.

Tammy's presence as a host on The PTL Club broke the mould in various ways. She spoke frankly about subjects which were considered taboo by the Evangelical church at the time, including drug addiction and sexuality. In 1985 she conducted a live television interview with Steven Pieters, a gay Christian minister with AIDS, encouraging her viewers to show compassion and pray for the ill during the AIDS epidemic.



*'Her fans were people who grew up in a very fundamentalist tradition, not being able to wear make-up, or dance, or go out in public,' reflects Tammy's friend the Reverend Mel White on the secret of Tammy's success. 'So here comes Tammy, with her dyed hair and make-up, her ebullient spirit and outspoken ways ... She took on the caricature of an obedient wife and blasted it.'*

**TAMMY FAYE will be in UK cinemas Feb 4th**



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# Who was Tammy Faye?

The Bakker's public image collapsed in 1987 after it was revealed that PTL had paid \$287,000 to silence a woman accusing Jim of sexual assault. More questions were asked about Jim and Tammy's misuse of money and luxurious lifestyle, with Jim eventually sent to prison for fraud and conspiracy. Under scrutiny and struggling with drug addiction, Tammy became a national laughing stock.

But this was not the end of her story. Tammy continued to make television appearances throughout her later life and was embraced as

an icon by the gay community to whom she'd shown friendship. 'When we lost everything, it was the gay people that came to my rescue, and I will always love them for that,' she said in her last public interview.

Tammy died of cancer in 1996, leaving behind her children and grandchildren, several bestselling books and 25 musical albums. Her life has inspired stage musicals, a play, a documentary - and now, a feature film.



# Icebreaker

**Tammy Faye Bakker was best-known in America - but these TV show hosts are current favourites on British screens.**

**Can you guess each host from the clue?**

1. Which 'BF' was recognised by the Guinness Book of Records for the length of his TV presenting career?
2. Which 'RR', when she got her current presenting gig, said 'There's only one cool maths job around and I was lucky enough to get it'?
3. Which 'MB' is due to be a judge in a national pudding-making competition for the Queen's jubilee this year?
4. Which 'RO' has sold the film rights for his first novel to Steven Spielberg?
5. Which 'RM' crawled through fish guts and rotten vegetables on a popular celebrity gameshow in 2021, before leaving the show early due to illness?
6. Which 'NM' who presents BBC Breakfast is skilled at jazz trumpet, piano and golf?



Answers: 1 - Bruce Forsyth; 2 - Rachel Riley; 3 - Mary Berry; 4 - Richard Osman; 5 - Richard Madeley; 6 - Naga Munchetty



# Discuss and Reflect

1. Why do you think the filmmakers chose to start by showing Tammy Faye as a little girl? What do we learn from these scenes, and how might they shape the way we feel about Tammy?

**'I don't pretend to be something I'm not.'**  
- Tammy

2. Do you agree that Tammy is an authentic person? What impact does her unique personality have on those around her? What might it look like to be our own true selves in the way we live out our faith?

**'God doesn't want us to be poor.'** - Jim

3. How does the film portray Jim's attitude towards money and possessions? How does he justify this through his beliefs about God? Do you think these beliefs are sincere?

4. How can we reconcile Jesus' warnings about money with the idea that God wants to bless and take care of us? What have you learned on your own faith journey about God's blessing and provision?

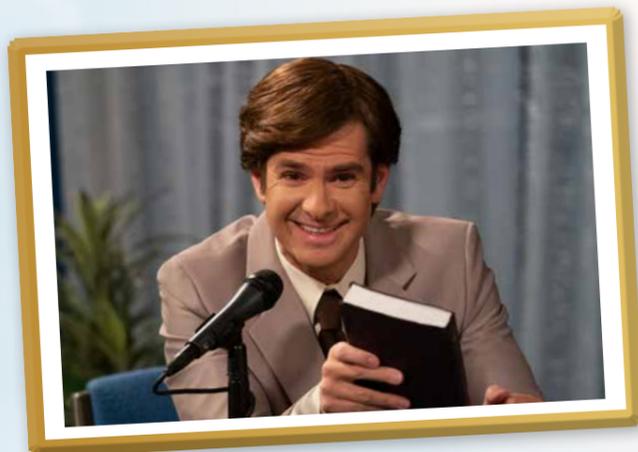
5. What was your response to Jim and Tammy's very public fall from grace? News stories about fallen or corrupt Christian leaders are still all too common; how do you feel when you hear these stories, and do they challenge your faith?

6. What happens when we put Christian leaders on a pedestal and forget that they're only human? How can we hold God's forgiveness for fallen leaders alongside God's compassion and justice for the people they've wronged?

**'We're in the business of healing people.'**  
- Tammy

7. How does Tammy's love for people motivate her to tackle controversial issues throughout the film? What can give Christians confidence to address difficult topics, even if we don't have all the answers?

8. Tammy's televised conversation with gay pastor and HIV/AIDS activist Steve Pieters (*Randy Havens*) was shocking to many at the time. What might it look like for Christians in our society to 'shock' others with radical love, grace and acceptance?



## Reflection: Coffee with Jim and Tammy

As young preachers, Jim and Tammy travelled across the country to spread their message. Imagine that they stop at your church to preach their own perspective on God's love and His desire to bless us with material success in life.

Reflect as a group about how a conversation with Jim and Tammy over coffee might go after the service. What parts of their message would you celebrate and agree with? What might you question or challenge, and why?

