

McFARLAND, USA

Discussion question suggestions for the movie **McFarland, USA**
(DVD available at the office and free on YouTube).

Quick overview:

Track coach Jim White (Kevin Costner) is a newcomer to a predominantly Latino high-school in California's Central Valley. Coach White and his new students find that they have much to learn about one another, but things begin to change when White realizes the boys' exceptional running ability. More than just physical prowess drives the teens to succeed; their strong family ties, incredible work ethic and commitment to their team all play a factor in forging these novice runners into champions. Based on a true story. 2015, Rated PG

Questions:

- 1) When we immerse ourselves in someone else's life experiences, we can better empathize with them and be better friends and neighbors to them. When have you misunderstood or judged someone before you got to know them? Did your opinion of them change after getting to know them?
- 2) When Coach White's team protects his daughter Julie, they put themselves in danger to keep her safe. When Coach White decides to stay in McFarland, he had to give up his dream for a bigger house/paycheck. When/what have you sacrificed for someone else? When/what has someone else sacrificed for you?
- 3) The competitors underestimated the McFarland team due to their cheap shoes and old uniforms. When we only consider outward appearances, we miss the most important lesson; it's what is on the inside that counts—character counts. Discuss a time others underestimated you and how you felt. When is a time you have underestimated others and how did they challenge you to see them differently?
- 4) In cultures all over the world family is an important part of daily life. We see the team members work long hours in the fields with their parents and they realize their parents sacrifice so they can have a better life. What are ways that you honor your family? Talk about a time when you have dishonored your family and how you worked it out.
- 5) At the end of the movie we learn that members of the first team all went to college. Most of them returned to work in the school and community. Discuss how the quote "to whom much is given, much is required" is lived out by this team.

Faith Connection:

1. Discuss how this true story of the people of McFarland and the work of Coach White show the application of Catholic Social Teaching in regard to Rights and Responsibilities; Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers (you will find more details on Catholic Social Teaching in the red Student Handbook page 5,6)
2. Which Commandments come into play in the movie (4, 10, 8)
3. Many coaches are fond of saying “It’s not how you start; it’s how you finish.” St Paul encourages the people of Corinth in a similar way.

Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win.

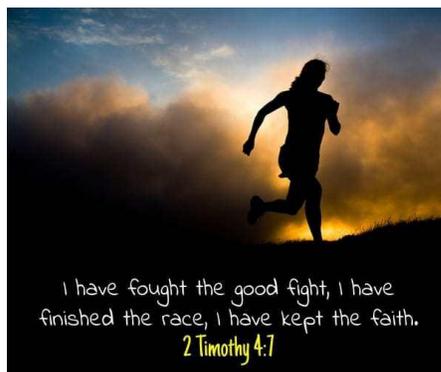
Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.

Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it,

1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

Discuss how this sport’s theme translates to our journey of faith to the crown of heaven. What discipline might we need to apply? How might we do faith training?

4. The Bible makes a point to address racial issues as well. Choose one or two verses to see what Scripture teaches;
 - Luke 10:25-37,
 - Numbers 15:15-16,
 - Revelation 7:9-10,
 - Galatians 3:23-29 – read Catholic Connection p.1560 in your student Catholic Youth Bible” Respect Radical Equality”.



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