

*Older Children*

*Dead Poets Society*

*Parent/Teen Movie Night*

**Best Use**

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

**Nutritional Value**

Triggers meaningful dialogue on disappointment and meaning in life

**Advance Preparation**

- Rent or purchase the 1980 film *Dead Poets Society*. This film is rated PG and includes some offensive language and brief sexual innuendo. You might consider buying a service like *clearplay.com* that edits out language and offensive scenes.
- Pop some popcorn and have the discussion guide on the reverse side ready.

**Serve It Up**

Be up front with your teen, explaining that you want to watch the film to discuss its themes from a Christian perspective. Don't use this as an occasion to teach, but to enjoy some good dialogue. You probably won't agree on everything, which is fine. Just discussing the themes can strengthen your relationship and stretch critical thinking skills.

## **Film Synopsis**

Mr. Keating (played by Robin Williams) is a wonderful teacher who uses unconventional methods to awaken his student's minds to poetry, beauty and a passion for life. But he does so based upon a view of the world which says that we should pursue life to the full while we are alive because when it's over, it's over. His primary theme is "Carpe Diem - Seize the Day!" One young student named Neil fully embraces Mr. Keating's philosophy, giving him the courage to defy his overbearing father. But doing so ends in tragedy when Neil's *Carpe Diem* dream is taken away.

## **Discuss**

Alternate asking one another the following questions. Once you have shared your own thoughts, refer to the "Think About It" notes below.

1. What view of God & eternity does Mr. Keating present? (A)
2. What is the problem with this view? (B)
3. What book of the Bible speaks to the same issue? (C)
4. Deep down, do you think Neil's father loved his son? (D)
5. Why did Neil take his own life? (E)
6. Do most people achieve their *Carpe Diem* dreams in this life? (F)

## **Think About It**

**A** - The view that there is no God or life after death.

**B** – In truth God who gives purpose/meaning in and beyond this life.

**C** – In the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon describes life "under the sun" (which means "apart from God") as meaningless.

**D** - Yes, but he was an imperfect and overbearing man.

**E** - He had embraced a philosophy that says there was no meaning to life unless we are able to do what we want – so he lost hope.

**F** – No, but they still have meaning and a God-given purpose in life.

*For more ideas:* **MovieNightChat.com**