

Older Children

*Lars and the
Real Girl*

Parent/Teen Movie Chat

Best Use

As a movie night and discussion for parents with their teens

Nutritional Value

Meaningful dialogue about the power of relationships

Advance Preparation

- Rent or purchase the movie **Lars and the Real Girl** (Rated PG-13)
- Like most films, this movie includes inappropriate language and some offensive themes. (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.

Set 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

Ryan Gosling stars in a quirky yet touching story about Lars, a man who isolates himself from everyone. He fears human touch and panics when anyone tries to draw close - even those he loves most. His brother and nurturing sister-in-law live fifty feet away yet feel like strangers. But one day, to the shock of his family, Lars introduces his girlfriend: a life-sized doll. He ordered her online, apparently unaware of the perverse reason such dolls are made. He instead treats her with affection and the kind of respect a lady deserves: a woman who may become his bride. Those closest to Lars fear he has lost his mind. But they go along with his delusion, hoping "the real girl" might just play a redemptive role in Lars's life. (Heads up: you might want to fast-forward through one or two brief scenes involving a male co-worker who talks about pornography and views women as sexual objects.)

DISCUSS:

1. **QUESTION:** What is so bad about Lars isolating himself from other people? (See "A" below)
2. **QUESTION:** This film points to the power of a loving community to help someone with special needs or challenges. Lars is a severe example of a real struggle many grown children have after experiencing trauma in childhood. Do you think going along with Lars's delusion was the right thing for his friends and family to do? Why or why not? (See "B" below)
3. **QUESTION:** In the end Lars's deepest need was met and his sanity rescued by the very thing he was trying to avoid - human touch. Why are relationships such a powerful and essential part of our health and sanity? (See "C" below)

THINK ABOUT IT:

- **A)** In Genesis 2:18 God calls something he just made "not good." He said "It is not good that man should be alone." As human beings we are made in the image of a God who is three persons, not one isolated individual.
- **B)** Who in our family/church/sphere might be isolated from others and could use an extra measure of patience, affirmation and love? What can you do this week to extend an invitation for relationship?
- **C)** We are most fully human (the image of God) when we are in deep relationship with others - especially a spouse and family.