

# Batman Begins

PG-13

Warner Bros Entertainment, 2005

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## Introduction

Christopher Nolan's epic, "Batman Begins" charts the origins of Bruce Wayne's transformation into the Dark Knight—Batman. The film travels into the disturbed psyche of young Bruce Wayne, including his childhood fear of bats, his parents' murder, his fall from grace into an overseas prison, and a journey of guilt and anger. A strange man named Ducard befriends Bruce along the journey. Ducard gives him the tools necessary to combat evil in heart of corrupt Gotham City. The film is filled with fantastic actions sequences and engaging dialogue that is sure to entertain young viewers.

The official movie Web site: <http://www2.warnerbros.com/batmanbegins/flash/index.html>

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## Topic #1: What do you fear?

The opening 45 minutes set the stage for the foundations of Batman. It also contains heavy dialogue and psychoanalysis of Bruce Wayne's character. The conversation between Wayne and Ducard centers on the ideas of fear, pain, anger, and guilt. Fear is a predominant theme throughout the movie. We are constantly reminded of Bruce's fear of bats. The Scarecrow villain preys on the fears of people in order to control them. Gotham's crime boss, Carmine Falcone, talks to Bruce about the "power of fear" in the restaurant, saying, "You always fear what you don't understand." And ultimately, Ducard plots to destroy Gotham City by polluting the water system with a substance that causes people to be overcome (hallucinations and behaviors) by their worst fears. In the end of the movie, we see Bruce give hope to those who are fearful of evil people.

## What does the Bible say?

- [Luke 1:13, 30](#); [Luke 2:10](#)
- [Luke 5:10](#)
- [John 14:27](#)
- [Matthew 28:10](#)

## Discussion questions

- What does Jesus say to people who are afraid?
- How did the angels calm the fears of God's people in the first two chapters of Luke?
- What was something you used to be afraid of as a child? Are you still afraid of it? Why? What does it take to overcome your fears?
- Are you ever motivated to do (or not do) something because you're afraid? What? When?

## Activity suggestion

- Ask the group to name things that they think young people are scared of. Write these items down on a large sheet of paper or a dry-erase board. Go back through the list and discuss why young people are afraid of each item. How can you help calm the fears of your friends? Use the list of fears as points of prayer.

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## Topic #2: “The will to act”

Ducard teaches Bruce that the “will to act” is a large difference between people. Rachel Dawes, Bruce’s childhood friend, asks, “What chance does Gotham have when good people do nothing?” Later, after Bruce’s swim in the hotel fountain, she tells Bruce “it’s what you do that defines you.” Lutheran Christians are often reluctant to focus on our actions because it gets dangerously close to the idea of works righteousness. After all, it’s the grace of God that gives us salvation, not our good works. However, scripture is clear that our actions are important to God, because God’s people are important to God.

### What does the Bible say?

- [James 2:14-17](#)
- [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

### Discussion questions

- Do you agree with the statement, “It’s what you do that defines you”? Why or why not?
- Do you think God judges us based on our actions? What do you think God desires for us to do and be during our life here on earth?
- We are saved by grace through faith. Does that mean we can do whatever we want because we’re going to heaven anyway? Why do you think that way?
- Why do you think our actions are important to God?

### Activity suggestion

- Have the group members find a partner. Give them each a pencil and an index card or 1/2 sheet of paper. Ask each person to think of a “good deed” they can realistically do during the coming week and write it down on the card. They can discuss and share their idea with their partner. Encourage the partners to follow-up with each other next week to see how their good deed turned out. Ask, “How can we turn good deeds into habits of behavior—lives of service, compassion, and generosity?”

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## Topic #3: Faithfulness

On two occasions during the film we see the following exchange:

**Bruce:** “You haven’t given up on me yet.”

**Alfred:** “Never!”

Alfred demonstrates his faithfulness to Bruce in word and deed, regardless of whether Bruce deserves it or asks for it. In many ways, Alfred embodies God’s faithfulness to God’s people.

### What does the Bible say?

- [Joshua 23:14](#)
- [1 Kings 11:37-38](#)
- [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)

### Discussion questions

- How do we know of God’s faithfulness from the Bible?
- How has God been faithful to you?

- Who is someone that has shown God’s faithfulness to you?
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that God will not let you be tested beyond your own strength. What do you think that means? Has there ever been a time in your life that you felt tested beyond your own strength? If so, where do you think God was during that time?
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## Topic #4: Destroy the world

Ra’s Al Ghul states that the “most important function of the League of Shadows is to wipe out evil; even if it means removing the good with the bad.” Their quest, which Bruce chooses not to participate in, is to wipe out Gotham City so that it can start anew. This may conjure up images of The Flood in Genesis chapters 6-9.

### What does the Bible say?

- [Genesis 6:1-8](#)
- [Genesis 6:20-22](#)

### Discussion questions

- Is there benefit to what the League of Shadows is trying to accomplish?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you were punished just because you were around a person who was doing wrong?
- Do you ever think the world is beyond saving? When all seems lost, what signs (people, events, actions, aspects of creation, etc.) of hope do you see in the world?
- Why did God promise not to destroy the world again?

### Activity suggestion

- Find a wall in the church that could use a little more color. Paint a large rainbow on this wall. Somewhere near the rainbow write out what God says in Genesis 8:21-22. **(It’s best to get permission from a pastor or the congregation’s maintenance committee before painting!)**
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## Topic #5: “Now we’re two!”

Early in his career, Batman befriends police officer Gordon. He remembers Gordon consoling him as a boy after his parents were murdered. Gordon is one of the few good guys, and Batman knows he needs someone on his side if he’s going to take on crime and corruption. When asked for assistance in Batman’s quest to fight evil, Gordon claims, “I’m just one man.”; to which Batman replies, “Now we’re two!”

### What does the Bible say?

- [Matthew 18:20](#) (Whenever two or three are gathered...)
- [Matthew 28:20](#) (I am with you...)
- [Ruth 1:15-18](#) (Ruth promises to stay with Naomi)
- [Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#) (Two are better than one...)

### Discussion questions

- Do you prefer to do things by yourself, with a friend, or a group?
- What kinds of things do you enjoy doing with someone else?

- Why do you think Jesus promises to be present “whenever two or three are gathered”?
  - If Jesus is present when only one is gathered, why do you think community is so important to him?
  - What are the benefits to doing things with others?
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### **Closing prayer**

*Gracious God, we thank you for making us open to the way we should act—with justice, goodness, love, generosity, humility, and courage. Help us to be mindful of our words and actions when we leave this time together. Remind us that you are with us in everything that we do and in every place. Help us to share your good news with a world that needs to know it and experience it. In Jesus name we pray. Amen*

Contributed by *Erik Ullestad*  
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- [Rotten Tomatoes](#) (upcoming movies)
- [Crosswalk.com](#) (film review archive)
- [Internet Movie Database](#) (reviews, searchable database, upcoming movies)
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