



THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTION

Director Antoine Fuqua brings his modern vision to a classic story in *The Magnificent Seven*. With the town of Rose Creek under the deadly control of industrialist Bartholomew Bogue (Peter Sarsgaard), the desperate townspeople employ protection from seven outlaws, bounty hunters, gamblers and hired guns—Sam Chisolm (Denzel Washington), Josh Farraday (Chris Pratt), Goodnight Robicheaux (Ethan Hawke), Jack Horne (Vincent D'Onofrio), Billy Rocks (Byung-Hun Lee), Vasquez (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo), and Red Harvest (Martin Sensmeier). As they prepare the town for the violent showdown that they know is coming, these seven mercenaries find themselves fighting for more than money.

The western genre in film has always carried with it deeper themes than simple action or adventure films, and *The Magnificent Seven* is no exception. Below are a few discussion starters for conversations around this new version of a genre classic.





THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Discussion Guide

GREED AND SACRIFICE

The Magnificent Seven makes it clear from the start of the film that the real battle being waged in Rose Creek is between greed and sacrifice. On one hand, we have Bartholomew Bogue, who represents the love of money above all else. On the other, we have the citizens of Rose Creek and their protectors, the Magnificent Seven, who are willing to sacrifice everything for their freedom and safety. In the first scene of the film, Bogue, robber baron extraordinaire, marches into a town meeting at the church and delivers his message: democracy equals capitalism equals God. Those who would stand in the way of democracy and capitalism are roadblock to divine progress, at least in Bogue's understanding of God. It's a message fueled primarily by greed and a willingness to consume with no thought for others.

This stands in stark contrast to the people of Rose Creek and their hired protectors, the Magnificent Seven, both of whom exhibit the willingness to sacrifice the self for the well being of others. Emma is willing, on behalf of the town, to give away everything they have to buy their freedom and safety. Sam Chisolm and his six partners are willing to give their lives to save the people of Rose Creek, and four of them eventually do. Although the film's relentless violence complicates matters, the Magnificent Seven respond to the call to lay down their lives in service others. Against this power and love, no force, not even Bogue and his army, can stand.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What are the battles that you wage on a daily basis? Is the struggle between greed and sacrifice one of these?
2. In your communities, where does greed trump sacrifice? Where is sacrifice winning? How can you partner with others to create a more compassionate community?



A scene from the movie The Magnificent Seven showing Emma (Lucy Liu) and Brogue (Chris Pratt) in a field. Emma is on the left, looking off to the side, and Brogue is on the right, wearing a hat and looking towards the camera. They are both holding guns.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN


Discussion Guide

SERVING THOSE WHO SUFFER

The opening scene of *The Magnificent Seven* is a disturbing one as Brogue and his men, unprovoked, slaughter many of the residents of Rose Creek. The survivors scream in terror and repeatedly ask why this is happening. Why are their friends and family members being senselessly killed? Why is a greedy businessman stealing their land? If you didn't know better, you might think these questions are about real world events, not the plot of a new Western film.

We are surrounded by people who ask questions like these on a daily basis. *The Magnificent Seven*, without being heavy-handed, might provide us with one answer to these questions. As Brogue's men attack the people of Rose Creek at the beginning of the film, family members rush to protect their loved ones, friends comfort the dying, and others simply weep over the tragedy taking place around them. As we discussed above, Emma sets out with Teddy Q to seek help, giving everything to protect their town. Small acts of goodness like these often go unnoticed in the violence and chaos around us, but they are invaluable. So as people weep with unanswerable questions, maybe we can follow this example, of staying silent and putting our arms around those who suffer, aiding the afflicted and protecting the weak. The questions won't disappear, but perhaps they will be joined by some comfort.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Think about the times where you have suffered in life (physically, emotionally, spiritually). For those who supported you along the way, what did they do that still stands out? Were there people that made matters worse? If so, how and why?
 2. Where do you see suffering in your community? How can you help?
- 
- A scene from the movie The Magnificent Seven showing Brogue (Chris Pratt) in a field. He is wearing a hat and a vest, and is looking towards the camera. He is holding a gun.



THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Discussion Guide

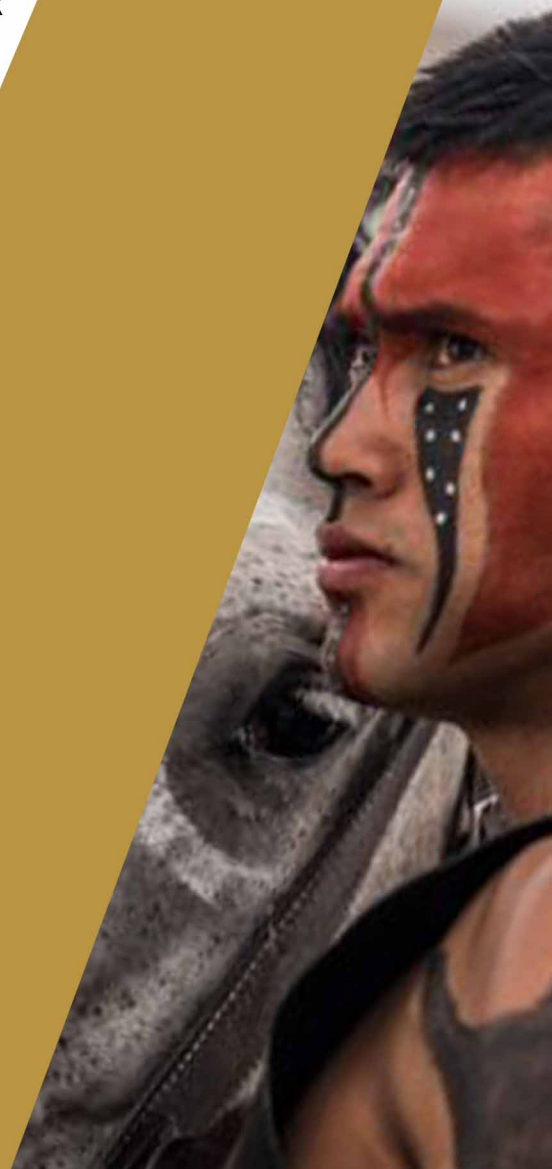
VICTIMS AND VIOLATORS, HEROES AND VILLAINS

Life is complicated. People are complex. We're rarely one thing—either hero or villain—but always an evolving mix of the two. We are both victims and violators. There is, thankfully, an element of this complexity in *The Magnificent Seven*, namely in the character of Jack Horne, a bear of a man, who lives himself in the wilderness. Jack has a complicated, violent past with a penchant for scalping Indians. However, he seems to have walked away from that life, signaled in part by his quick friendship with Red Harvest. But in the film, Jack has also become a victim as two villains attempt to capitalize on his fame by murdering him. They sneak up on Jack and drop a rock on his head, but, unfortunately for them, this doesn't kill him. When they cross paths again, Jack quickly kills them, thus perpetuating the cycle of violence.

Although probably much less violent than Jack, we are all violators and victims. We participate in systems that harm others and wreak havoc on the environment, even when we try our best not to. We get stressed and lash out in anger at others, even those we love. Of course, we all know what it's like to be hurt by others and to feel cheated, abused, or abandoned. Some of us know this more powerfully than others. Some whole communities suffer more severely than others. The goal of our lives, individually and collectively, must be to reduce our role as violators and villains while being heroes for the victims around us.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Talk about the "villains" in your life. Who are they? What makes you see them this way? Can you see something heroic in them.
2. Talk about the "heroes" in your life. Who are they? Why are they heroic? Have you ever seen them be a "villain?"





THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Discussion Guide

FROM THE ASHES

Most members of the Magnificent Seven have a history together, but none seem to run as deep as that between Sam Chisolm and Goodnight Robicheaux. They've been friends and colleagues for quite some time, battled together, and shared in great losses. They sum up their relationship, and perhaps life, with this phrase, "What we lost in the fire, we'll find in the ashes."

This really is a beautiful sentiment, and one that points to deep spiritual and emotional truths. It knows that we will face trials and tribulations and that we will experience, potentially, great loss. It doesn't sugarcoat life, but at the same time, it doesn't abandon hope. It also recognizes that the fire is not final. From death, new life can emerge. We can find newness, change, revitalization, after the fire has cooled and the ashes have scattered.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Talk about the fires in your life. What almost consumed you?
2. What did you find in the ashes?

