William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery

AMAZING GRACE

ERIC METAXAS

Foreword by DR. FLOYD H. FLAKE, president of Wilberforce University
Table of Contents

Book Discussion Questions 3

ericmetaxas.com 4

Amazing Grace Film Study Guide 7
Amazing Grace Discussion Questions
Compiled by Provo City Library Staff

1. The book’s introduction points out that more than just the slave trade, Wilberforce abolished the mindset that “the evil of slavery was good” (xv).

2. Are there established mindsets in today’s society that should be changed? What attitudes toward certain institutions, events, or practices should change?

3. Why do mindsets have to be changed as well as laws and practices?

4. In what way did Wilberforce and his friend, Pitt, need one another to achieve their goals?

5. How do you think Wilberforce and Pitt’s young age affected their work?

6. What influences do you think make some people more idealistic or motivated to effect social change?

7. Why do you think it was important for Wilberforce to meet Equiano?

8. Why do you think Wilberforce initially saw religious and secular work as separate from one another? Do you think they should be? Are there different times when they should or should not be?

9. What is the difference between observing a problem and acting on your knowledge about it?

10. What are contemporary issues that remain invisible and unreal to society?

11. Why do you think Wilberforce was drawn to Barbara Spooner?

12. How do you think Wilberforce remained committed to his cause throughout such a long (twenty-year) campaign?

13. What were the sacrifices Wilberforce faced in working for abolition?

14. Why is the book entitled Amazing Grace?

15. How do you interpret the lyrics of the hymn “Amazing Grace” after reading this book? Do they mean anything different to you knowing that they were written by Newton, a former slave owner?
About Eric

In a decidedly eclectic career, Eric Metaxas has written for VeggieTales, Chuck Colson, and the New York Times, three things not ordinarily in the same sentence. He is a best-selling author whose biographies, children’s books, and works of popular apologetics have been translated into Albanian, Portuguese, Spanish, Korean, and Macedonian. The Hartford Courant has declared figuring him out “like trying to stick a pushpin in a cyclone.” Nevertheless, let us try.

Eric Metaxas was born in New York City in 1963, on his father’s 36th birthday. He grew up in Danbury, Connecticut, attending the public schools there, and graduated from Yale University. At Yale he made a literary splash as editor of the Yale Record, the nation’s oldest college humor magazine, and a subsequent literal splash when, following the 99th Yale-Harvard Game, he commandeered a successful effort to throw Harvard’s goalpost into the Charles. At graduation Eric was awarded two senior prizes for his undergraduate fiction. He was also “Class Day Speaker”, co-writing and -delivering “The Class History”, a satirical address that is a Yale commencement tradition, in the process upstaging Dick Cavett, the next speaker. They would not speak for nearly two decades.

Metaxas’ humor writing was first published in the Atlantic Monthly, and has appeared in The New York Times. Woody Allen has called these pieces “quite funny.” Eric’s book and movie reviews, essays, and poetry have appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, Regeneration Quarterly, Christianity Today, National Review Online, Beliefnet, and First Things. He has been awarded fellowships to Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony for his short stories. The cult-classic Don’t You Believe It! — his book-length parody of the Ripley’s “Believe It Or Not!” books — led novelist Mark Helprin to dub Metaxas “the true heir to the Far Side’s Gary Larson.”

From 1988-1992, Metaxas was editorial director and head writer for Rabbit Ears Productions, writing over 20 children’s videos and books narrated by such actors as Mel Gibson, Robin Williams, Sir John Gielgud, Danny Glover, Sigourney Weaver, John Candy, Michael Caine, Michael Keaton, Geena Davis, Jodie Foster, Emma Thompson, and Raul Julia. His Rabbit Ears videos have won numerous Parent’s Choice Awards and three Grammy nominations for Best Children’s Recording; they all aired on Showtime and as popular audio programs on NPR’s Rabbit Ears Radio, hosted by Mel Gibson and Meg Ryan, whose radio scripts Eric has also written. Parenting magazine and others have called Metaxas “the unsung hero” of Rabbit Ears and a “children’s author nonpareil.”

Mr. Metaxas’ The Birthday ABC was chosen as a 1995 “Pick of the List” by the American Bookseller’s Association. Reviewers said the book’s light verse “sparkled” and “sizzled,” comparing it with Odgen Nash, Edward Lear, and Lewis Carroll. Eric’s many other children’s books include the Angel Award-winning Prince of Egypt A to Z, a tie-in to the Dreamworks film;
and the acclaimed *Uncle Mugsy & the Terrible Twins of Christmas*. *Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving* was awarded an Amazon.com “Number One Bestseller” Award in 1999.

Eric’s newest children’s book, *It’s Time to Sleep, My Love*, illustrated by Nancy Tillman, had a first printing of 175,000 and debuted in Barnes&Noble.com’s Top 100 books in October 2008, where it was hailed as a “*Goodnight Moon* for the 21st century.” Sally Taylor, the daughter of James Taylor and Carly Simon, wrote a lullabye song to Eric’s words, and sings it on the book’s audio cd.

Metaxas was for two years a writer and editor for Chuck Colson’s *Breakpoint*, a nationally syndicated daily radio program with over 400 stations and a weekly audience of five million. He then worked as a writer for VeggieTales, where he co-wrote *Lyle the Kindly Viking*, and provided the voice of the narrator on *Esther*. In *3-2-1 Penguins!* he provided the voice for “President Wait-Your-Turn” and “Vacuum #10”. Eric’s children’s books for VeggieTales include the #1 bestseller *God Made You Special!* (over 600,000 copies in print), as well as *Even Fish Slappers Deserve a Second-Chance* and *The Pirates Who (Usually) Don’t Do Anything*, both also bestsellers. He is the author of the unproduced *Gourd of the Baskervilles* and an unproduced VeggieBook, *The Boy Who Cried Waffle*.

Metaxas has been frequently featured as a cultural commentator on *CNN* and the *Fox News Channel*; and has discussed his own books on *C-Span’s Book TV* and *Hannity & Colmes*. He has been featured on many radio programs, including NPR’s *Morning Edition* and *Talk of the Nation*, *Hugh Hewitt*, the *Bob Grant Show*, *Janet Parshall’s America*, *Monica Crowley*, and *The Alan Colmes Show*.

He is the founder and host of *Socrates in the City: Conversations on the Examined Life*, a monthly event of “entertaining and thought-provoking discussions on ‘life, God, and other small topics’” that features such speakers as Dr. Francis Collins, Sir John Polkinghorne, Baroness Caroline Cox, Dana Gioia, Os Guinness and Peter Kreeft, and which was mentioned in a front-page story in the *New York Times*. *The New Canaan Society*, of which Eric is a founding and current member, was also mentioned in the article.

Eric has debated at the Oxford Union, the world’s oldest debating society, and speaks widely on a variety of topics. His no-holds-barred introductions of such figures as U. S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, former Attorney General John Ashcroft, and Rick Warren have made him much sought after as an emcee and moderator. He has moderated debates with Bishop Spong and President Obama’s former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright; and has spoken at the White House, on Capitol Hill, at West Point, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, and many other venues, and was this past year the featured speaker at the Louisana Governor’s Prayer Breakfast in Baton Rouge. In 2007 he was made an Honorary Fellow of the prestigious British-American Project, the only person ever to have been afforded this privilege.

Eric’s acclaimed biography, *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* was published by HarperSanFrancisco, and is the “official companion book” to the feature film, also titled Amazing Grace. The book was #23 on the *New York Times* Bestseller list, and has been lauded by Stanley Crouch (“...a superb history of the British fight against slavery”);
Former NYC Congressman Floyd Flake ("magnificent… will stand as a living landmark…”); John Wilson ("a crackling bonfire of clarity and truth.”); Rudy Giuliani ("better than the movie!"), and many others.

Eric’s *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About God (but were afraid to ask)*, came out in 2005, and was praised by Ann B. Davis, Alice on *The Brady Bunch* ("I am absolutely smitten with this book!"), Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church ("The difficulty is not to gush."). The sequel, titled *Everything ELSE You Always Wanted to Know About God (but were afraid to ask)* was published in 2007.

Eric attends Calvary/St. George’s Episcopal Church, and lives in Manhattan, New York, with his wife and daughter. He is currently at work on a biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to be published by HarperOne in September 2009.
A nation was blind
until one man made them see

Amazing Grace

Study Guide
A Message from the Producers

It is with great pride that we at Bristol Bay Productions highlight William Wilberforce’s legacy through our forthcoming film, Amazing Grace. The early 2007 release date of the film is purposeful, coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain. It was in 1807 that the long, arduous anti-slave trade campaign spearheaded by William Wilberforce resulted in the passing of the abolition bill in the British Parliament.

For the contemporary world, we commemorate Wilberforce’s story as an inspiration and an exhortation. It examines the uniquely human virtue of conscience put into practice on others’ behalf. To this end, we announce, in conjunction with the release of Amazing Grace, our Amazing Change campaign, a campaign encouraging us all to take action on behalf of social justice throughout the world. Through this campaign, and through our film, we retell the luminous story of a “great soul” and the good he sought to do. For more on the Amazing Change campaign, visit www.TheAmazingChange.com.

About the Movie

Amazing Grace is based on the true story of William Wilberforce, a British statesman and reformer from the early part of the 19th century. This feature film chronicles his extraordinary contributions to the world, primarily his 20-year fight to abolish the British slave trade, which he won in 1807. Wilberforce was also instrumental in passing legislation to abolish slavery in the British colonies, a victory he won just three days before his death in 1833.

Amazing Grace stars Ioan Gruffudd as William Wilberforce, Albert Finney as John Newton, and Youssou N’Dour as Oglahak Egalano. It was directed by Michael Apted (Coal Miner’s Daughter, The World Is Not Enough) and produced by Terrence Malick (The Thin Red Line, The New World), Ed Pressman, and Patricia Heaton (“Everybody Loves Raymond”). The screenwriter is Steven Knight (Academy Award® nominee for Dirty Pretty Things). Ken Wales (whose screen credits include Chariots and whose book credits include Sea of Glory) was executive producer.
Table of Contents

ACTIVITY ONE
page 2 The Amazing Story of Amazing Grace

ACTIVITY TWO
page 4 Who’s Who and What’s What?

ACTIVITY THREE
page 6 Timeline of Important Events

ACTIVITY FOUR
page 8 Witness to Injustice: Olaudah Equiano and the Slave Trade

ACTIVITY FIVE
page 10 Taking Action: Then and Now

ACTIVITY SIX
page 11 From Sources to Screen

ESPECIALLY for EDUCATORS
page 12

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
page 17

How To Use This Guide

Activities in this Study Guide target grades 9-12, are interdisciplinary, and comply with national content and education standards for Social Studies, Language Arts, Visual Arts, Theater, Music, and Character Education. Activities feature adaptations for students who require additional support, and/or for whom English is a second language. This study guide may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for educational purposes only.

Read the Book

Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery
by Eric Metaxas
Hardcover (ISBN: 0-06-117300-2)
Publisher: HarperSanFrancisco
Publication date: March 1, 2007

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Kevin Belmonte, who worked closely with Steven Knight, the film’s screenwriter, to provide necessary background information, supporting research, and commentary at each stage of the script’s development.

Motion picture artwork and photos ©2006 by Bristol Bay Productions, LLC. All rights reserved. Text and design ©2006 Walden Media, LLC. Walden Meda and its logos are registered trademarks of Walden Media, LLC. All other trademarks and logos are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.
The Amazing Story of Amazing Grace

It's been sung by Mary J. Blige, Ray Charles, and Bono. It's been played on bagpipes and the saxophone, and it's been sung all over the world. Read about the hymn Amazing Grace, its role in the lives of abolitionist William Wilberforce and its lyricist John Newton, why it's so beloved—then, now, and always—and why it's featured in the film Amazing Grace.

AMAZING GRACE | Facts |

- E.D. Hirsch's 1987 book Cultural Literacy includes a list of five thousand names, phrases, dates, and concepts Hirsch believes that every American should know. There are thirty-three songs on the list, five of which are religious. Of these five songs, two are Christmas carols, two are spirituals—and one is the hymn Amazing Grace.

- Judy Collins' 1970 recorded version of Amazing Grace hit the charts and brought about the hymn's recent popularity.

- Amazing Grace was regularly played on bagpipes at the funerals of police officers and firemen who perished in the attacks on the World Trade Center.

- In a speech to Harvard students in 2001, singer/songwriter Bono echoed John Newton's lyrics when he said, "I am a singer and a songwriter and I am also a father. Four times over. I am a friend to dogs. I am a sworn enemy of the saccharine, and a believer in grace over karma."

- During the civil rights movement, Judy Collins recalls hearing the hymn sung by marchers as well as gospel singers, and she sang it with activist Fannie Lou Hamer (shown above) when they attended voter registration marches together in Mississippi. At the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, NJ, Fannie Lou Hamer delivered a nationally televised speech to the convention's Credentials Committee. Citing discriminatory practices against African-Americans, Hamer asked, "Is this America?"

YOUR TURN | How Is It Possible?

- What do you think Newton meant by the lyrics, "Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come."

- Why would Wilberforce have feared these words comforting? Challenging?

- Why is Amazing Grace sung today as a social justice anthem, just as the song We Shall Overcome is also sung?

AMAZING GRACE | Sources |

Who Was Amazing Grace Lyricist John Newton?

Born into a captain’s family who traded at the East India Company, John Newton (July 24, 1725 – December 21, 1807) embarked on sea voyages at the young age of 11. He soon entered the prosperous slave trade until he nearly died on a voyage that would change his life forever. He proclaimed, “Only God’s amazing grace could and would take a rude, profane, slave-trading sailor and transform him into a child of God.” This would influence his famed hymn Amazing Grace, in which he declared he was once blind but now could see. Newton wrote the hymn after converting to Christianity in 1748 and abandoning his participation in the slave trade. Newton also wrote of his experiences in his autobiography An Authentic Narrative published in 1764, the same year he was ordained as a priest in the Church of England. John Newton went on to write many other hymns as well.

In Writing the Lyrics, What Did John Newton Draw Upon?

In addition to actual events from John Newton’s life at sea, the lyrics are also based on a passage from the Old Testament of the Bible. Newton wrote the lyrics for Amazing Grace as part of the New Year’s morning sermon he delivered in 1773 titled “Faith’s Review and Expectations” at Olney Parish Church, where he was a pastor. The hymn was originally chanted, not sung. In this famous sermon, Newton compared God’s mercy and grace toward Newton’s own “wretchedness” to God’s blessings upon King David. To do this, Newton used King David’s prayer of thanks as David humbly thinks about all that God has done for him.

How Are the Lives of Abolitionist William Wilberforce and John Newton Intertwined?

William Wilberforce first met John Newton when he (Wilberforce) was a child. Newton was the pastor at the church Wilberforce attended. Wilberforce became reacquainted with Newton in his twenties when Wilberforce was on the brink of a career as a British MP (Member of Parliament). Wilberforce’s outspokenness on the abolition issue may well have also led Newton to make his first public confession of guilt over his past involvement in the slave trade. In the film, Wilberforce visits John Newton twice. The first time he asks Newton for advice about whether to leave politics and join the clergy. And, in hopes of using Newton’s testimony as a former slave trader, Wilberforce visits Newton for a second time, now at St. Mary Woolnoth Church in London. Here Wilberforce discovers that his former pastor is indeed blind.

Wilberforce incorporated Newton’s confession into his plea for abolition. The vote to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire finally passed in 1807—the same year John Newton died.

Why Was the Hymn Important to William Wilberforce?

In the film Amazing Grace, Wilberforce and his friend William Pitt discuss whether they can change England for the better. To prove that they can and soon will, Wilberforce and Pitt go into a pub visited by many important politicians. Wilberforce clinks onto a table and belts out the first verse of Amazing Grace. He dedicates his performance to the Duke of Clarence, son of the King of England, who is in the room. It’s Wilberforce’s way of letting the Duke of Clarence—and Clarence’s father the King—know that ways of doing things in England concerning slavery and the “manners” of society were about to change.
William Wilberforce

William Wilberforce was first elected to the House of Commons at the age of 21 and dedicated the rest of his life to leading the fight to abolish slavery. Though he was chronically ill and his anti-slavery bills were repeatedly rejected by Parliament, his courage and passion to abolish injustice led him to be referred to as the “ conscience of Parliament.” He also worked to collect evidence of the crimes of the slave trade, collected 300,000 signatures to support his cause, and relentlessly crafted anti-slavery bills. After almost 20 years of leading the British abolitionist movement, Wilberforce wept tears of victory when the slave trade throughout the British Empire was finally abolished in 1807. Because Wilberforce also believed in reforming the larger society, his good works included prison reform, fair care for prisoners of war, improving hospitals and the lot of the poor, the prevention of cruelty to animals, and societal reforms in India and around the world. But his passion to abolish slavery always came first.

Thomas Clarkson

Thomas Clarkson was a man of deep conviction who devoted his life to battling the Atlantic slave trade. In Amazing Grace, Clarkson and several others active in abolition come to visit Wilberforce for the first time at Wilberforce’s house in Wimbledon, in 1782. In the film, Wilberforce hosts a dinner for his guests, but the meal is interrupted suddenly when Clarkson hosts a heavy carpet bag onto the dining room table and takes out several of the brutal devices used on slaves. To Wilberforce’s horror, Clarkson demonstrates their use, then concludes his demonstration by offering a direct challenge to Wilberforce to take action against the evils of the slave trade. In 1787, Thomas Clarkson, along with Josiah Wedgwood (see page 10) and members of the Quaker Church, helped establish the Committee for Abolition of the African Slave Trade. Clarkson then joined William Wilberforce in fighting to abolish slavery. Clarkson collected testimony from men who had worked on slave ships, also to be used as evidence before Parliament.

Hannah More

Hannah More is considered one of the most important female abolitionists of her time. She encouraged Wilberforce to write about his religious conversion, and also encouraged his involvement in the abolitionist movement. In the film, Wilberforce’s involvement begins with a surprise visit from More, the former slave Olaudah Equiano (see pages 8-9). Thomas Clarkson, and a few Quakers. More and her fellow guests urge Wilberforce to lead their efforts to abolish slavery. Hannah More was also very involved in the education of poor children in Great Britain and in other cases.

James Stephen

James Stephen was trained as a lawyer and practiced law in the West Indies. After personally witnessing slaves being burned alive before an unfair trial, Stephen was so outraged that he decided to write to Wilberforce, documenting the crimes. A partnership and friendship grew as Wilberforce asked Stephen to write of his “firsthand account of the burnings, beatings and scalgings on the sugar plantations.” In the film, Stephen supplies Wilberforce with evidence of illegal activities in the West Indies. Stephen then later becomes a Member of Parliament himself.

Think About It

The first to care?

- Among the first people to be heavily involved in the abolition movement—in Great Britain and in the United States—were members of religious groups like the Quakers. Why do you think this was so?
- What is your reaction to the life and work of William Wilberforce?

Could you do it?

- What skills would be important for a statesman like Wilberforce to possess in order to get a bill to become a law? How would someone learn these skills?
- What character traits or virtues would be important? Why?
- Do you think these traits are still important to people doing social justice work today?
The Duke of Clarence

The Duke of Clarence was born William Henry, the third son of King George III. He started his naval career at the age of 13. He eventually became a captain in his early twenties in the West Indies and was later named the Duke of Clarence in 1780. He supported slavery because it was extremely profitable, and because he genuinely believed that British slaves were treated well. In the film, while playing cards with Wilberforce, the Duke of Clarence requests that his African coach drive be a substitute as a form of payment. William Henry ascended to the British throne, becoming King in 1830.

William Pitt

William Pitt was elected Prime Minister at the age of 24. His friendship with William Wilberforce began when they were teenagers. Pitt can be credited for encouraging Wilberforce to lead the abolitionist movement through political means. In the film, Pitt pleads with Wilberforce saying “Wilber, I want you beside me all the way. You’re the best fighter in the House, and the best speaker.” In 1793, however, when France declared war on England, William Pitt fell under political pressures to withdraw from the abolitionist movement to instead focus on the war, and the two men’s friendship suffered. But when Thomas Clarkson and Wilberforce drafted an anti-slavery motion disguised as an anti-French bill, they reunited with Pitt and fought slavery together once more. Pitt died in 1806, just a year before the slave trade was abolished.

Henry Thornton

Henry Thornton was Wilberforce’s cousin and friend, banker, and campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade. Thornton was the financial brains behind many social reform campaigns of the time. His father financed the first publication of the hymn Amazing Grace. Thornton and his wife Marianna introduced Wilberforce to Barbara Spooner. Wilberforce and Spooner were married in 1797.

The United Kingdom Parliament

The United Kingdom Parliament consists of two chambers: 1) the House of Commons and 2) the House of Lords. Today, there are 645 MPs (Members of Parliament) in the House of Commons. They are elected to represent residents of a particular constituency, or seat in England, similar to the way in which the United States House of Representatives elects members from each Congressional District. There are nearly 700 members of the House of Lords, each appointed by the Prime Minister. These members are chosen based on their expertise or experience in a specific subject matter. Parliament’s main duty is to approve or reject bills. Parliament also looks to see that the governing party (ministers) are running the country in an orderly and fair manner. The governing party is selected from the most represented political party from the House of Commons. The governing party manages and carries out the laws that all of Parliament enact. A proposed law is called a bill. For a bill to become a law, both the House of Commons and the House of Lords must agree on the proposal, much like the Senate and the House of Representatives in the United States. When it passes through both chambers, it receives approval, called a Royal Assent. Bills suggested by individuals are rare and uncommonly become laws versus bills suggested by groups of members in the government. To learn more about the United Kingdom Parliament, see its official Web site: http://www.parliament.uk/

Make the Case

Write a scene in which William Wilberforce calls on a witness or witnesses to testify that slavery should be eliminated. Those who testify should be convincing to the House of Lords that slavery is unlawful and inhumane.

How will each witness make the case for abolition? What evidence will be presented? What lines of argument will be used? How will each witness appeal to the humanity of those in the House of Lords?
Timeline of Important Events

Here is a timeline of important events in the story of the abolition of slavery in Great Britain.

1772
The existence of slaves inside of Great Britain officially becomes illegal, but Britain still dominates the slave trade overseas.

1780
William Wilberforce is elected to the House of Commons.

1787
Thomas Clarkson and other dedicated abolitionists establish the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

1788
The “Dolben Act” passes. The Act restricts the number of slaves on board ships. But horrible conditions aboard the ships persist.

1790
After gathering evidence for a year, Wilberforce presents the first Abolition Bill to the House of Commons. The petition to abolish the slave trade has more than 390,000 signatures, and Lord Charles Fox unexpectedly adds his signature to the list. But the bill still does not pass the House.

1779
*Amazing Grace*, written by John Newton, is first published.

1782
William Wilberforce seeks the advice of John Newton, his former pastor. Newton encourages Wilberforce to take the cause against the slaves. Later, Newton gives his own personal account of the criminal acts of slavery to Wilberforce, to be used for the cause of abolition.

1789
Olaudah Equiano publishes his memoir, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* or, *Gustavus Vassa, the African*. The book sells 50,000 copies in 2 months.

Think About It

Why did William Wilberforce seek John Newton’s personal account? How was Newton’s account helpful to William Wilberforce?
Timeline of Important Events (continued)

1793 – 1802
The Revolutionary Wars/ Napoleonic Wars between Britain and France deter the abolition campaign.

1797
Henry Thornton, William Wilberforce’s cousin and friend, with Thornton’s wife, Marianne, take care of Wilberforce while he is ill. They introduce him to Barbara Spooner, whom Wilberforce later marries.

1807
At 4 o’clock in the morning, the final count is 16 nos to the left, and 283 ayes to the right. The House of Commons finally votes to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire. William Wilberforce continues to fight the slave trade around the world throughout his whole life, since existing slaves still remained in custody of their owners.

1792
With 230 to 85 votes, the House of Commons votes in favor of the gradual abolition of the slave trade, but the bill is rejected by the House of Lords.

1796
William Wilberforce’s opponents give free tickets to four of his “loyal supporters” for a comic opera the evening of the vote on the Abolition Bill. The four men go to the opera, skip out of the vote, and Wilberforce’s bill is again defeated.

1803 – 1815
Napoleonic Wars between Britain and France last for 12 years.

1805
An anti-French bill that states “all ships flying the American flag be liable to search and seizure” is passed. This bill is actually a disguised anti-slavery bill to cut slavers’ profits and weaken the slave-trading business.

1833
Abolition of the slave trade of all kinds passes in July throughout the British Empire. William Wilberforce hears the news and cries: “Thank God that I have lived to witness the day in which England is willing to give £20 million [pounds] for the abolition of slavery.” Three days later, Wilberforce dies.

Think About It

Why do you think slavery within Great Britain’s borders was illegal, but was still permitted out of the country in areas under British control?

Think About It

What was happening historically between Great Britain and the American colonies? Why would this matter to Wilberforce? To members of the House of Commons?
OLAUDAH EQUIANO wrote an eyewitness account of his life as a slave and of his work in the anti-slavery movement in his memoir, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or, Gustavus Vassa, The African*. Published in 1789, this book was extremely successful and important because it was one of the first firsthand accounts of slavery. Different accounts exist of Equiano's early years. Equiano states that he was born in 1745 in Africa, while some historians claim that Equiano was actually born in South Carolina, and was born into slavery. With little evidence to prove either argument, this part of Equiano’s life is still debatable. Either way, Equiano was enslaved and owned by several different men, moving from work on a Virginia plantation, to an English ship, to the West Indies. Because of this, he witnessed many atrocities associated with the slave trade. But along the way, Equiano also learned to read and write, became a successful sailor and businessman, and adopted the religion of his masters, all while still being enslaved. Equiano eventually was able to save enough money to buy his freedom from one of his masters. He then embarked on many adventures. He also traveled to Italy, Portugal, the Greek Islands, Turkey, the West Indies, the Arctic, and Honduras on various jobs and expeditions. Equiano eventually returned to England and became very active in the anti-slavery movement. He spent the later years of his life traveling England and bearing witness on issues of slavery and the slave trade. Equiano worked tirelessly toward this cause until his death on April 31, 1797. Ten years after Equiano’s death, slavery was abolished in Great Britain.

James Stephens Writes to Wilberforce from a Caribbean Plantation

“The infernal fires are fuelled by the mash of sugar cane. The juice of the cane is boiled down in cauldrons over open fires, tended by women and children. The cauldrons have a tendency to explode. Many children, no more than seven or eight years old, are scalded to death by the molten lava. Others die of exhaustion or roll into the fires in their sleep. The fires burn all night long. The result in the morning is a few pounds of pure refined sugar...white in color.”

YOUR TURN

Look up the word witness in the dictionary. In what ways does the definition of the word witness apply to Equiano?
The Horrors of the Middle Passage

You have been kidnapped from your home in Africa, yanked from family and friends. You are forced to travel on foot with your captors. You do not understand what they are saying and you have no idea where you are being taken. Their skin looks strange and pale. You are taken on a ship. Your captors trade you for guns and other manufactured goods offered by slave traders. Then the slave traders take you aboard the ship and place you below deck. They make you lie in tiny spaces and put you in chains and manacles. It is suffocating, hot, and crowded. The stink of perspiration, human waste, and death overpowers your senses, as do the shrieks, cries, and groans of your fellow enslaved Africans. On this seemingly endless trip to the Americas, you watch in horror as slave traders throw people overboard, some of whom are dead, some of whom are still alive.

This was the journey known as the Middle Passage, the route of slave-trading ships from the west coast of Africa, where Africans were kidnapped away from their families, across the Atlantic to the Americas and the Caribbean. In this new land they were sold as slaves or, in some cases, traded for goods such as molasses, which was used in the making of rum. The Middle Passage was the longest, hardest, most dangerous, and most horrible part of the journey of the slave ships, a miserable voyage lasting two to four months. Incredibly profitable for both slave traders and their investing partners, the Middle Passage was a journey into injustice, cruelty, and unimaginable human suffering.

Illustration, copyright © 1998 by Rod Brown, from SLAVE SHIP TO FREEDOM ROAD written by Julius Lester and illustrated by Rod Brown. Used by permission of Dial Books for Young Readers, a Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, a Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 345 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. All rights reserved.

A Measure of Oppression YOUR TURN

Mark out the following measurements typically allotted to Africans on slave ships as William Wilberforce did: males—6ft. 11in. 4in.; females—5ft. 10in. x 4ft. 4in.

Lie in the area you marked. Describe what it would feel like if you had to remain in that space for two months, while travelling across the ocean.

www.mavgescapemovie.com | 9
Taking Action

Read about how abolitionist Josiah Wedgwood first used an emblem to bring injustice to the world's attention. Then, join the Amazing Change Campaign to learn about efforts you can take on behalf of social justice.


Josiah Wedgwood was born in 1730. He was very concerned with reforming British society, and in 1787 Wedgwood helped Thomas Clarkson form the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Josiah Wedgwood died on January 3, 1795—twelve years before slavery was abolished in Great Britain. But while alive, Josiah Wedgwood put his craft and his conscience to work, showing the world that something you wore could show where you stood. He created the medallion shown below.

This portrait medallion shows the founder of the Wedgwood Company, Josiah Wedgwood I (1730-1795). His bust is shown in white bas-relief on a pale blue background, surrounded by a mounded rosso (red) Jasper frame with black ornaments.

"Am I Not A Man And A Brother?"

Designed as a seal to be used by the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, the "Am I Not A Man And A Brother?" medallion produced by pottery maker Josiah Wedgwood became a symbol for abolitionists and the anti-slavery movement. Wedgwood reproduced the design in a cameo with the black figure against a white background. He donated hundreds of these to the Society for distribution. Thomas Clarkson wrote that "ladies wore them in bracelets, and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for their hair. At length the taste for wearing them became general, and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom."

Images of portrait (left) and anti-slavery medallion (right)
courtesy of The Wedgwood Museum Trust,
Barlaston, Staffordshire (England).

Benjamin Franklin brought the Wedgwood medallion to the United States from England. Leaders of the Abolitionist Movement in the United States issued a copper token showing a kneeling female figure bound in chains with the legend, "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?" The reverse side of the token reads, "United States of America—Liberty, 1838."

Your Turn

1. In the 18th century, abolitionists used emblems to bring attention to the inhumanity of slavery and the humanity of those bound in chains. How effective do you think these two emblems were, and why?
2. Research an important issue or problem in today's world. Then design an emblem for it. How effectively does your emblem convey its message? How successfully does it visually summarize an important social justice issue?
From Sources to Screen

Two Kinds of Historical Source Material

» PRIMARY SOURCES — firsthand information from persons who witnessed or participated in an event. Examples of primary sources include: diaries, memoirs, letters, official documents and records, original manuscripts, period newspapers, legal cases, transcripts, interviews, oral histories, speeches, and first-person narratives.

» SECONDARY SOURCES — descriptions by persons usually not present at the event and relying on primary source documents for information. Secondary sources usually analyze and interpret.

From Sources to Screen

For Amazing Grace, both the historical source materials selected and how they were used to tell the story were important considerations. Screenwriter Steven Knight and Wilberforce historian Kevin Belmore (author of William Wilberforce: Hero for Humanity) worked together to ensure a faithful and dramatic story. Here are some of the key sources used for the film, with brief descriptions of their contents. Decide whether they are primary sources, secondary sources, or both:

‡ John S. Harford, Recollections of William Wilberforce (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864.) Written by a close friend of Wilberforce's and based upon correspondence, dictations, and extensive notes taken by Harford during Wilberforce's lifetime. A memoir rich in Wilberforce's own words.

‡ Hansard's Parliamentary Debates is the daily printed record of the actual debates of Parliament. Political reformer William Cobbett introduced Britain's first record of parliamentary debates in 1819 but later sold his interest in the debates to the Hansard family, printers to the British House of Commons. Although the Hansard family only produced the record of debates from 1812 to 1888, the report retains the Hansard name, by which it is known today. Some of Wilberforce's most important speeches on abolition were transcribed from Hansard's, excerpts of which were then used in the film. For more information about Hansard's, go to: http://www.parliament.uk/hansard/hansard.cfm

‡ Sir James Stepen, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1840.) James Stephen wrote a famous essay on Wilberforce, first published in the Edinburgh Review in the 1840s. He was Wilberforce's son-in-law, and knew Wilberforce intimately. Stephen was also novelist Virginia Woolf's grandfather.

‡ Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, one-volume abridgement (London: John Murray, 1868). Contains many quotations from William Wilberforce's letters and diaries. Samuel was Wilberforce's third son.

Storyboards, concept art, and re-created historical documents, all used for the film Amazing Grace.

**YOUR TURN**

Create and give a presentation about a modern-day social justice hero or heroine. What primary and secondary sources will you need? Why these? How will they help you? (dialogue, character, etc.)

www.amazinggracemovie.com
ACTIVITY 1 The Amazing Story of Amazing Grace

Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies, Music, Character Education
National Standards:
Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 1: Reading for Perspective; Standard 3: Evaluation Strategies
Social Studies: NCSS Standard 1: Culture; Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity; Standard 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
Music: CMAEA Music Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
Character Education: Standard 6: Honesty and Truthfulness
Duration: Two 45-minute class periods
Materials: Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 1

OBJECTIVES
To read a summary biography about John Newton;
To read about Newton’s motivation for writing the lyrics to the hymn Amazing Grace;
To examine ways in which Wilberforce and Newton’s lives were intertwined;
To analyze some of the hymn’s lyrics for their meaning and relevance to John Newton’s life;
To reflect on why Amazing Grace is so beloved and so commonly used as a social justice anthem.

PROCEDURES
1. Play a recording of the hymn Amazing Grace for students, one which features the lyrics. Several different versions can be found at www.amazinggracemovie.com. The lyrics are found on page 2.
2. Encourage students to discuss events at which they have either sung this hymn or heard it played.
3. Reflect with students on why the hymn was played or sung at the events they mention from their own experiences.
4. Encourage students to bring in other recorded versions of the song.
5. Distribute copies of Activity 1 (two pages) to students.
6. Invite students to read the selection silently.
7. Discuss with students the reasons why Newton wrote the hymn.
8. Discuss the items in the section labeled Your Turn and the Amazing Facts About Amazing Grace.
9. Reflect with students on why Wilberforce felt that Newton would give him good advice and why Newton’s testimony was important in abolishing the slave trade.
10. Reflect with students on Newton’s honesty in examining his own past via Amazing Grace, and on why the hymn endures today.

ADAPTATIONS
Students for whom English is a second language may wish to provide the lyrics to Amazing Grace in their first languages for the rest of the class. Other students may benefit from hearing the hymn sung or played in several versions.

EXTENSIONS
Challenge the class to find and bring in as many recorded versions of Amazing Grace as they can find. For a Select Discography of Amazing Grace, see Amazing Grace: The Story of America’s Most Beloved Song by Steve Turner, New York: Ecco Books, an Imprint of HarperCollins, 2002.

ASSESSMENT
Assess students on their ability to explain the meaning of John Newton’s lyrics and on their origins.
ACTIVITY 2  Who’s Who and What’s What?

Subjects  Language Arts, Social Studies, Character Education, Theater
National Standards  NCTE/IRA: Standard 1: Reading for Perspective; Standard 2: Understanding the Human Experience
Language Arts  NCSS Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity; Standard 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Standard 6: Power, Authority, and Governance
Social Studies  Chicago Public Schools Character Education Standard 2: Trait of Courage; Standard 6: Honesty and Truthfulness; Standard 9: Trait of Responsibility
Character Education  CNAEA (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations) Theater Standard 1: Script writing; Standard 2: Acting/character development
Theater  Two 45-minute class periods
Materials  Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 2; writing materials

OBJECTIVES
To read summary biographies of major characters found in the film Amazing Grace;
To read a summary of how the United Kingdom Parliament functions;
To write dramatic scenes based on factual historical information;
To present written scripts as dramatic scenes;
To explore through acting the character traits required to convincingly argue a cause in a public forum;
To reflect on the motivation and character of several historical figures.

PROCEDURES
1. Distribute copies of Activity 2 (two pages) to students.
2. Invite students to read these pages.
3. Summarize with students the workings of the United Kingdom's Parliament.
4. Ask students why they think Thomas Clarkson felt it necessary to demonstrate for Wilberforce how the devices used on slaves worked. What was his intention or goal in doing this?
5. Challenge students to reflect on what Wilberforce might have been thinking after his guests left.
6. Reflect with students on skills and traits Wilberforce would need in the abolition movement. Why?
7. Challenge students to reflect on whether these same traits are required of someone involved in social justice issues today.
8. Challenge students to work in small groups to write and dramatize scenes showing abolitionists making their case before Parliament.

ADAPTATIONS
• Some students may find it beneficial to follow along silently as you read aloud from transparencies of Activity 2.
• Other students may find it useful to familiarize themselves with the historical figures in the film by cutting out the pictures of actors, separating the summary paragraphs from the pictures. They can then play a matching game with two scrambled piles of pictures and biography paragraphs.

EXTENSIONS
• Challenge interested students to research and compare the United Kingdom Parliament with the United States Senate and House of Representatives.
• Students may compare British abolitionists described here with American abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucy Stone, Sojourner Truth, and others.
• Encourage students to research social justice issues in the world today.

ASSESSMENT
Assess students on the basis of whether (and to what extent) their written scenes and dramatizations offer solid evidence for the abolition of slavery and on whether they present solid arguments backed by facts, figures, and/or eyewitness testimony.
ACTIVITY 3 Timeline of Important Events

Subjects • Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts, Character Education

National Standards •
Language Arts • NCCTE/IRA: Standard 8: Developing Research Skills; Standard 11: Participating in Society
Social Studies • NCSS Standard 2: Time, Continuity, and Change; Standard 7: Production, Distribution, and Consumption; Standard 9: Global Connections
Visual Arts • CNAEA Visual Arts Standard 1: Understanding and Applying Media
Character Education • Standard 9: Trait of Responsibility

Duration • Two 45-minute class periods
Materials • Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 3; writing and drawing materials

OBJECTIVES
To read and discuss the benefits of a timeline of historical events as a summary tool;
To examine the reasons for the length of time it took for abolition to take hold in Great Britain;
To analyze ways in which historical events are related to one another (cause/effect);
To reflect upon the virtue of patience as a desirable trait in social justice work;
To illustrate several important events from the Wilberforce timeline;
To research and create a timeline of social justice milestones in one's own lifetime.

PROCEDURES
1. Distribute copies of Activity 3 (two pages) to students.
2. Review with students the features and utility of a timeline as a summary tool in examining historical events.
3. Read with students the Wilberforce timeline pages, stopping to discuss the questions marked Think About It.
4. Challenge students to look at cause/effect in the chronology of historical events by posing the question, "How does one event lead to another on this timeline?"
5. Reflect with students on the role of patience as a feature of responsibility, and as an antidote to overcoming discouragement.
6. Invite students to work individually or in small groups to illustrate key events from the Wilberforce timeline. Encourage students to discuss and reflect upon the reasons for the events they chose and their visual representation.

ADAPTATIONS
• Students for whom English is a second language may find it useful to begin highlighting the names of historical figures they read about in Activity 2, reviewing their accomplishments as presented in the timeline.
• Other students may benefit from a review of the workings of Parliament, or from reading the pages about John Newton and the hymn Amazing Grace, and/or Olaudah Equiano before reading the timeline pages.
• Some students may wish to illustrate the Wilberforce timeline through collages rather than drawing.

ASSESSMENT
Assess students on their ability to highlight important events and dates from the timeline, their reasons for why they chose certain dates and events, and their ability to graphically and/or artistically represent timeline events.

EXTENSIONS
Challenge interested students to research and make a timeline of milestone social justice events in their own lifetimes. Other students may wish to go online to see the comprehensive timeline of abolition events at: www.amazinggracemovie.com.
**Activity 4: Witness to Injustice: Olaudah Equiano and the Slave Trade**

**Subjects:** English/Language Arts; Social Studies; Character Education  
**National Standards:**  
English/Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 2: Understanding the Human Experience  
Social Studies: Standard 8: Developing Research Skills; Standard 9: Multicultural Understanding  
NCSS Standard 1: Culture; Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity; Standard 9: Global Connections  
Character Education: Standard 2: Courage; Standard 4: Fairness  
**Duration:** Two 45-minute class periods  
**Materials:** Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 4; butcher-block paper, yardsticks and rulers, pencils

**Objectives**  
- To read a brief biography of Olaudah Equiano and an account of the slave trade.  
- To examine the character traits and virtues Equiano possessed in order to survive, and later, flourish.  
- To make inferences about Equiano’s effect on Wilberforce’s person and work.  
- To measure out the dimensions of the space allocated to one slave.  
- To examine the literal and figurative applications of the word *witness* to Equiano.  
- To reflect on why one group of human beings would inflict such suffering on another group of human beings.  
- To research similar instances of injustice in the world today.

**Procedures**

1. Ask students to close their eyes as you read the section of Activity Four called “The Horrors of the Middle Passage.” Invite students to reflect on what images came to mind afterward.  
2. Distribute copies of Activity 4 (two pages) to students.  
3. Discuss and provide time for students to work with the questions and activities marked Your Turn.  
4. Invite someone to read aloud the excerpt from James Stephen’s letter to Wilberforce. Discuss the effect of such words on Wilberforce.  
5. Reflect with students on why Equiano had such a profound effect on Wilberforce.

**Adaptations**  
Some students may benefit from first listening to an excerpt from Olaudah Equiano’s narrative read aloud as they follow along with the text on a transparency, or at their desks with handouts of the excerpt. See: The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or, Gustavus Vassa, The African, Edited and with Notes by Shelly Eversley, and an Introduction by Robert Reid-Pharr, New York: The Modern Library Paperback edition, 2004. Excerpts of this book can be found online at www.brycchanecarey.com/equiano/.

**Assessment**  
Assess students on their ability to articulate the characteristics or qualities that helped Equiano stay alive and even thrive from his experiences as a slave, and on their ability to describe Equiano’s impact on Wilberforce.

**Extensions**  
To hear and read accounts by African Americans who were former slaves, see Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation, edited by Ira Berlin, Marc Ferraez, and Steven P. Miller, New York: The New Press, published in conjunction with the Library of Congress and as a companion to Smithsonian Productions’s radio documentary: 1998.
ACTIVITY 6 From Sources to Screen

Subjects: Language Arts; Social Studies
National Standards:
Social Studies: NCSS Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity
Duration: Two 45-minute class periods
Materials: Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 6; writing materials; Internet access, access to primary and/or secondary research materials

OBJECTIVES
To define primary and secondary historical source materials;
To examine some source materials used for the film Amazing Grace and decide whether they are primary sources, secondary sources, or both;
To research a modern day champion of social justice, using primary and secondary source materials.

PROCEDURES
1. Give copies of Activity 6 (one page) to students.
2. Read with students the brief nonfiction discussion of source materials.
3. Invite students to define the source materials listed as primary, secondary, or both.
4. Challenge students to research a social justice hero or heroine and to create a presentation based on their research.
5. Ask students to analyze what kinds of source materials they will need for their research, and why.

ADAPTATIONS
Students for whom English is a second language may benefit from first examining actual primary and secondary source materials, and then discussing what defines these materials as such.

ASSESSMENT
Challenge students to discuss the source materials they used, and how they aided student presentations.

EXTENSIONS
Encourage interested students to make a gallery of their social justice heroes or heroines.

Additional Resources:
ACTIVITY 1: The Amazing Story of Amazing Grace Amazing Grace with Bill Moyers: This unique program presents adaptations of the enduring hymn, from country music to gospel to folk, in one of PBS’ highest-rated programs ever. It is available on DVD. For information, see: www.pbs.org

ACTIVITY 3: Timeline of Important Events National History Day, Inc. helps teachers meet educational standards; disseminates high quality curriculum material; and sponsors challenging contests that teach students critical skills for the 21st century. For more information, see: www.nhd.org


ACTIVITY 5: Taking Action For more information about the Wedgwood Slave Medallion, see the Wedgwood Museum’s Web site at: http://www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk/welcome.htm
Especially for Educators

ACTIVITY 6 From Sources to Screen

Subjects: Language Arts; Social Studies
National Standards:
Social Studies: NCSS Standard 4: Individual Development and Identity
Duration: Two 45-minute class periods
Materials: Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 6; writing materials; Internet access, access to primary and/or secondary research materials

OBJECTIVES
To define primary and secondary historical source materials;
To examine some source materials used for the film Amazing Grace and decide whether they are primary sources, secondary sources, or both;
To research a modern day champion of social justice, using primary and secondary source materials.

PROCEDURES
1. Give copies of Activity 6 (one page) to students.
2. Read with students the brief nonfiction discussion of source materials.
3. Invite students to define the source materials listed as primary, secondary, or both.
4. Challenge students to research a social justice hero or heroine and to create a presentation based on their research.
5. Ask students to analyze what kinds of source materials they will need for their research, and why.

ADAPTATIONS
Students for whom English is a second language may benefit from first examining actual primary and secondary source materials, and then discussing what defines these materials as such.

ASSESSMENT
Challenge students to discuss the source materials they used, and how they aided student presentations.

EXTENSIONS
Encourage interested students to make a gallery of their social justice heroes or heroines.

Additional Resources:

ACTIVITY 1: The Amazing Story of Amazing Grace
Amazing Grace with Bill Moyers: This unique program presents adaptations of the enduring hymn, from country music to gospel to folk, in one of PBS' highest-rated programs ever. It is available on DVD. For information, see: www.pbs.org

ACTIVITY 3: Timeline of Important Events
National History Day, Inc. helps teachers meet educational standards; disseminates high quality curriculum material; and sponsors challenging contests that teach students the skills for the 21st century. For more information, see: www.nhd.org

ACTIVITY 4: Witness to Injustice: Olaudah Equiano and the Slave Trade

ACTIVITY 5: Taking Action
For more information about the Wedgwood Slave Medallion, see the Wedgwood Museum's Web site at: http://www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk/welcome.htm
William Wilberforce's work is far from finished. There are still an estimated 27 million slaves in the world today. Modern day slaves are children and families working in rice mills, in brick kilns, on plantations, making rope, and in many other industries. These slaves are not free to come and go; they are beaten or threatened with violence. They deserve the chance to be free. The Amazing Change campaign gives students and communities a chance to make a mark on history by speaking up—as Wilberforce and his friends did.

At www.TheAmazingChange.com, you'll learn about the "two great objects" that were important to William Wilberforce:
- The abolition of slavery
- The reformation of manners (society)

On the site you will read stories of modern day slaves and of the heroes who are setting them free. You'll also find tools for your own social justice activism and educational efforts.

See www.amazinggracemovie.com to:
- Deepen the study of history with your students, using educational resources designed to increase their appreciation of what it means and what it takes to change the world;
- Connect the abolition movements in Great Britain and the United States;
- Explore other stories of abolition, freedom, and social justice—then and now;
- Examine primary and secondary sources materials important in the telling of abolition stories.