

At the Movies

Ron's Gone Wrong



GATHER

Disney's *Ron's Gone Wrong* is the story of Barney, a socially awkward middle-school student, and Ron, his new walking, talking, digitally-connected device. Ron is supposed to be Barney's "Best Friend out of the Box" but Barney learns there's a lot more to friendship than he first thought. Ron's hilarious malfunctions lead the pair into a thrilling journey that teaches them both about the limits and the gifts that come with technology. Themes of love, acceptance, and friendship are delved into deeply through this creative film set against the backdrop of the social media age.

ICEBREAKER

1. As they gather, guide attendees to sit together in small groups of three people.
2. Give each pair or group some sticky notes and writing utensils.
3. Ask participants to name some of the specific things they do to make friends. Give them three minutes to write their responses on their sticky notes, one idea per sticky note.
4. Hang a piece of chart paper at the front of the gathering space. Along the top write "How to make friends."
5. After three minutes, invite one person from each group to bring all the group's sticky notes to the front and place them on the chart paper.
6. Read through the ideas and ask them if they think that they would be friends with someone who did everything that was written on the paper.

WATCH

Introduce *Ron's Gone Wrong* to your group. Explain that while it is rated PG for rude material (middle school humor including a giant B-bot that "poops" a girl out), verbal and physical bullying, and language (two uses of the word "hell"), the movie holds important messages about friendship, lifting up one another, and embracing each other's uniqueness. Ask them to particularly pay attention to

SUPPLIES

- Sticky notes
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper
- Marker

DID YOU KNOW?

Barney's family has Bulgarian roots. His background is referenced throughout the film through details including flags and food.

SUPPLIES

- *Ron's Gone Wrong* (2021)
- Video Source
- Bible

how Barney's idea of what it means to be a friend changes through the movie.

Play the film.

Discuss the film:

- Barney is the only kid in his school not to own a B-Bot. This makes him feel as though he doesn't fit in with the other students. When have you felt like you didn't fit in? How did you manage to overcome these feelings?
- In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes about what new life in Christ looks like. Ask someone to read Romans 12:9-10. Paul encourages the Romans to show the world what love looks like by caring for each other and doing their best to go above and beyond when it comes to being a friend. Think about the scene when Barney fixes his pin board that shows how to be friends. How is this an example of the kind of love Paul is talking about? You can show them the clip of this starting at 1:00:00 through 1:01:25 if they need help remembering.
- *Ron's Gone Wrong* shows us the ways that we might need more than what we can do online to strengthen our friendships. What are some of the ways technology caused some of the characters to feel sad? What are some ways that technology helped the characters? Can you think of some ways that you might be able to use technology to be a good friend to others?

DID YOU KNOW?

Jean-Phillipe Vine, one of the directors, referred to Ron's behavior as being similar to the "Clippy" personal assistant from early versions of Microsoft Word, describing Ron as "cheerfully and annoyingly helpful all the time."

RESPOND

Ask someone to read Proverbs 3:3-4. When we are loyal to each other and faithful to God it helps us to be good friends to those around us.

- Have the participants write the text of Proverbs 3:3-4 on one side of the heart.
- On the other side of the heart have them write down things they will work on to be a good friend to others.
- They can punch a hole at the top of the heart and loop the yarn through the hole so they can hang the heart somewhere they will see it often.
- Together, name some ways they have seen others be bullied. Talk about ways that we can make a difference for those people who are being bullied. Ask how we might help those who are doing the bullying realize they can make other choices.

Questions to consider:

- One of this film's thematic elements is sacrifice. Ron is willing to sacrifice himself so that all the other bots can be upgraded to

SUPPLIES

- Construction paper hearts
- Hole punch
- Yarn in 12-inch lengths
- Markers

have the same code that makes Ron such a good friend. Jesus sacrificed himself so that we would be free to love and care for one another. What are some things that Jesus did in his life that show us how to care for others?

- At the end of the movie, Barney is back to being the only student without a B-bot but he isn't upset about it this time. Who or what has changed so that he doesn't feel so left out? How can we do the same for others?

End with prayer:

God of all the unique parts of creation, help us to love one another without needing rules for friendship. Be the friend of the friendless and empower us to do the same. Guide us to show our faith through how we live, love, and act that others can see Jesus in us. Amen.