

“Saturdays at the Sculley’s” - “Picnic at Hanging Rock” starring Helen Morse, Dominic Guard, Rachel Roberts, 1975, PG, 107 minutes

Major themes:

- Mystery
- Truth
- Beauty in the midst of devastation
- Legalism
- Suspicion

Scriptures:

Colossians 1:26 – 27 (NIV) – *“the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

Ephesians 3:4 (NIV) – *“In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ”*

Ephesians 1:9 (NLT) – *“God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure.”*

John 8:32 (NLT) – *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT) – *“Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.”*

1 Corinthians 13:4 – 7 (NLT) – *“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices*

whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) – *“Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”*

Major characters:

- Miranda
- Irma
- Marion
- Rosamund
- Sara
- Edith
- Mrs Appleyard
- Miss McCraw
- Mademoiselle de Poitiers
- Miss Lumley
- Michael Fitzhubert
- Albert Crundall

After the movie:

To this day, people continue to believe that this was a true story, and seek to investigate the mystery via archives, museums, and trips to the locations in the movie. Discuss how easy it is to believe a lie, to convince oneself that something is true, even if there is no factual evidence to support it.

1. The story was set on Valentine's Day, February 14th, 1900 on a Saturday. The actual day, in real life, was a Wednesday. This would perhaps, to most people, be the first clue the story wasn't at all true.
2. The characters in the story never existed. There are no records of their births, deaths or existence anywhere within Australia or overseas.
3. There are no police records of the events on Hanging Rock. However there was a story that the Police Station at Woodend had burnt down, destroying all records. This never happened and was a little too convenient for the story. Another clue that the story isn't real.
4. Appleyard College itself does not exist but was based on the school from the author's childhood in Melbourne.
5. Hanging Rock still suffers from its "haunted" story to this day. But the visitors are many and most suffer small accidents such as scrapes and scratches. There are no mysterious disappearances up on the rock.
6. There is an exhibit dedicated to the story of Picnic at Hanging Rock located at the site itself. This also gives the impression that it is a true story and does not make a statement anywhere that its pure fiction.

Discussion points:

1. How does mystery relate to our understanding of God?
2. Discuss how mystery relates to how we respond to the circumstances of our lives, and how we help others to do so.
3. In an age of relativism, discuss the word “truth.” What are some ways to impart truth to others?
4. Discuss the importance of striking a balance between truth and love.
5. This film focuses on beautiful things along the way – landscapes, insects, grasses, Valentine’s cards, people. Discuss the importance of noticing beauty in our lives.
6. How did you feel when you saw the way various characters treated one another?
7. Discuss the girls’ treatment of Irma after her recuperation. Share circumstances in our own lives where it is difficult to choose to believe the best about someone, in spite of appearances or unsolved mysteries.