

National Catholic Partnership on Disability  
*Threats to the Lives of People with Disabilities, Part II:  
Physician-Assisted Suicide*

**How to Discuss Movies About Assisted Suicide**

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Many films can be used to help discuss the Catholic Church's teaching regarding suicide and assisted suicide. People watching these movies may note that they have been listed as morally objectionable by the Bishops. Their use in a discussion group should be used with caution. It is also important to remember that among the viewers may be persons who have had suicidal thoughts or who have known people who have committed suicide. It is important to make sure that there are resources available to persons who need professional support on these matters.

Discussion Guide:

1. How did this film affect me? Did it make me more convinced that suicide and assisted suicide are wrong? Did it make me less convinced?
2. How did the film depict the person considering suicide?
  - a. Was the person dying? Was the person getting good pain treatment, hospice care, spiritual support?
  - b. Was the person disabled? Was there any therapy to help the person be as active and independent as possible? Was there good spiritual and physical support available?
  - c. Was the person significantly dependent on others?
  - d. Was the person elderly? A woman? Poor? Alone?
  - e. Was there any discussion of depression or other psychological issues?
3. How did the film depict the Church and Church teaching on assisted suicide?
  - a. Were Catholic teachings mentioned specifically? Were they accurately treated? Were there Catholic initiatives mentioned (disability advocacy, care for the terminally ill, spiritual care)?
  - b. Were Catholic priests or sisters in the film? Pro life advocates? Bishops? How were they depicted?
4. How did the film depict those asked to assist in the suicide?
  - a. Were they treated as compassionate, heroic, indifferent?
  - b. Were they assisting the suicide, promoting or advocating it?
5. Did the film have an agenda:
  - a. To promote legalized assisted suicide?
  - b. To be tolerant of the assisted suicide in the case presented?
  - c. To speak against assisted suicide?
  - d. To leave the viewer open to both sides of the issue?

Resources on the topic of suicide and assisted suicide can be found at the web pages for the U.S.C.C.B. document *To Live Each Day with Dignity* at [www.usccb.org/toliveeachday](http://www.usccb.org/toliveeachday) and the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org).