

## Extra Credit

Apartheid was a whole system of laws that oppressed people and viewed people as sub-human. The fact that Mandela could forgive his oppressors and go onto call and prod his nation to reconciliation is what made him great. As president of South Africa, he established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which had 19 public hearings where victims of human rights violations as well as perpetrators of violence under apartheid were allowed to give testimony. Amnesty from prosecution could be requested at these hearings.

These movies tell the stories of people's experience under the apartheid system. Some survived, some did not. Some have happy endings, some do not. Pick one or two (or all of them) and watch it with your family. Afterwards write a reflection based on the questions below. The older ones are as good as the newer ones.

**Cry Freedom (1987)** - This film is about Steve Biko (black activist) and his friend Donald Woods (white reporter). Woods first thought Biko was destructive but sought him out to understand his view on life. Both men change through their relationship against South Africa's backdrop of violence and oppression. Woods has written several books about his time in South Africa (he had to flee) that are worth reading.

**Invictus (2009)** - Movie based on the book *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game that Made a Nation* by John Carlin. In 1995 the Rugby World Cup was held in South Africa. It chronicles how Mandela used the world cup to unite the nation and overcome South Africa's black population's view that the primarily white team represented apartheid.

**The Bang Bang Club (2010)** - When the apartheid system started to be dismantled there was much violence, not only black against white but also black against black, especially in the townships of South Africa. This film tells the story of four photojournalists who went into the townships during this harrowing time just before apartheid was dismantled.

**Skin (2008)** - This film is about Sandra Laning who had genetic Atavism. She was a woman born to white parents but who was classified as "Coloured" during apartheid because she looked like she had a mixed race lineage. This film tells the story of her life as she has to come to terms with how this "classification" affects her life and relationships.

**In My Country (2004)** - This film is based on the book *Country of My Skull*, by Ann Peacock. It shows what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sessions were like, both for those that committed atrocities and those that that they were seeking forgiveness from.

**Endgame (2009)** – Based on the book *The Fall of Apartheid* by Robert Harvey. The film chronicles the secret talks held by the African National Congress and the Afrikaner National Party (South Africa's political party in power during apartheid) in England. At the time companies with economic relationships with South Africa's apartheid government were being boycotted all over the world. One company used this to bring the two groups together which was one of many reasons apartheid was able to come to an end.

**A World Apart (1988)** – This film is based on the lives of Ruth First and Joe Slovo, white anti apartheid activists in the 1960s in South Africa. The story focuses on Ruth and her daughter and their relationship after Joe is sent into exile. Ruth was a defendant in the 1956 Treason Trial, along with 156 other people, Nelson Mandela included.

Reflection – Write a response to the film. Don't summarize (I have seen already) but instead write about your reaction to the film. All of these are based on real events. What did you think of the film? How did you feel after watching it? The US has racial injustice. How does life in South Africa under apartheid compare to life here in the US? These films looked at individuals and how they acted under duress. Does anything stand out to you about their actions in the film you watched? What do you think you would do in their circumstances? How can this film affect your life, your thinking or your actions?