

Once Discussion Sheet



1. This movie connects with people on a deep level. Did it connect with you? Why or why not?
2. How significant do you think the music was to the overall message and power of the film?
3. The writer and director of *Once*, John Carney, said that the title refers to the many talented artists that he knew who put off their career by saying "once" they get this and that sorted out, but never succeed because they've put it off too long. How does this idea describe the main character? Is this problem of waiting for the situation to be right or for everything to be figured out an issue in other areas of life? How so?
4. The trailer for *Once* poses this question: how often do you find the right person? It answers: *Once*. What do you think about this idea? Do you agree or disagree?

5. When the main characters went to spend a day by the sea, she revealed that she was married. Did that revelation surprise you? During that same outing he asked her if she loved her husband and she responded in Czech but never told him what she said. She told him in Czech "No, I love you." How does that change your perception of the story?

6. *Once* is a non-traditional love story. The main characters don't end up together, even though they are clearly attracted to each other. What do you think of their decisions: his to go to London and try and repair his relationship with his ex-girlfriend and pursue his music career; hers to reunite with her husband and work on their marriage while they raise their daughter? Do you agree with the decisions?

Hollywood romances often follow the same pattern: two people meet; they fall in love and regardless of the obstacles – race, creed, prior relationships, marriages, and families – they end up together and live happily ever after. *Once* is very different. It depicts a much more realistic portrayal of attraction, relationship development and the effect that responsibilities and commitments have on them. At the beginning of the movie the guy admits that he is lonely and depressed and that is why he is so drawn to the girl. She speaks constantly of her responsibilities and though lonely herself has a strong desire for a relationship that will go well, unlike her relationship with her husband. The Bible tells us that we are all made to be in relationships – both with God and each other. Our struggles with loneliness are a reflection of this deep need in our lives. Though the main characters in *Once* don't end up together, for one week they got a picture of what relationships can be like and both resolved to return to their former relationships and seek reconciliation and the joy that they know is possible. These decisions reflect the reality that love involves both feelings and commitment. Without both components the relationship is doomed to failure. God loves people and is committed to love them even to the point of sending Jesus to die on our behalf. The Bible discusses marriage in similar terms: of a commitment of love. Jesus himself declared in Mark 10:9 "Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." This type of committed, unconditional love is what all of us long for. Perhaps we too can seek out the type of love that is both feeling and commitment in our lives – from God and from each other.

ABOUT CINEMA & SPIRIT: Damascus Road uses movies as a connection point to discuss spiritually meaningful topics. We enjoy watching movies and processing them together, discovering how God's truth may be revealed through their themes or characters. Since movies are a part of our popular culture, they can be a helpful common ground when discussing spiritual topics. We try to show high-quality, appealing movies about once a month.