

The Simpsons Discussion Questions

Homer the Heretic

- 1) How do you feel when your parents or friends force you to go somewhere you really don't want to go?
- 2) Were you ever forced to go to church w/your parents, the way Marge forces Lisa, Bart, Maggie and Homer (her true 4th child) to go to church with her? How did that make you feel?
- 3) Homer complains to God that the sermons are always long and boring; plus they remind him of all that he does wrong and the punishment of Hell. How does that relate to what you've experienced at church? And what you've heard from Christians?
- 4) Do you agree with Homer, that God is everywhere?
- 5) Why do people go to church?
- 6) At the end of the episode, Homer is saved by people in his community who loved him. They all happen to be people of faith. Could this be a more accurate picture of the way church is supposed to look? People who share their lives with each other, love one another, and risk their lives to save each other. If this was what church looked like, how would you feel about it?

She of Little Faith

- 1) The "re-branding" of the church seemed to bring more people and be more entertaining. Certainly more entertaining than the church Homer didn't want to attend in the last episode. And, as Rev. Lovejoy said, "It's the same message, just dressed up a little bit." So, why was Lisa so opposed?
- 2) Does Christianity clash with commercialism? Many of the high-profile Christians (televangelists, politicians) seem to be teeming with money; how does that reconcile?
- 3) Marge again tries to control the beliefs of her family members, but this time she's trying to bribe Lisa into Christianity. Do you ever feel like people are trying to "sell" religion? Does this approach work?
- 4) Richard Gere tells Lisa that a Buddhist can still celebrate Christmas, and respect other religions. Can a person be both Buddhist and Christian?
- 5) When Lisa encounters Lenny and Carl, it's obvious that they don't have a full grasp of Buddhism. Have you ever met someone who claimed a certain set of beliefs, but didn't seem to have a concrete understanding of it? How did you react?
- 6) Lisa is on a search for most of this episode; even after she finds Buddhism, she is still discovering what it means to her. Is this a realistic picture of authentic faith? If Christianity meant following Jesus, on a journey—not into a boring church—but on the most amazing and life-changing journey you could ever take, would you begin a search?

Left Below

- 1) Do you know about the Left Behind series?
- 2) What ideas do you have about the end times/afterlife? What other ideas have you heard before? How are these similar or different? What seems fair or unfair about the Christian idea of the Rapture? Which elements make sense?
- 3) What is your basic impression of what the Bible says about the end times? Homer didn't really even look in the bible for his predictions; do you think everything people say about this is based in the Bible? Why do we hear a lot about the end of the world and weird specific predictions about the Rapture? Is there more to the Bible?
- 4) Do you think certain world events will precede the end of the world? Have any of these happened?
- 5) When Homer learned about the impending Rapture he dropped everything to warn others. Is there anything you care about enough to sacrifice your normal lifestyle for?
- 6) Do you believe in heaven and hell? What do they look like? How are traditional views wrong? How are they right?