

# At the Movies

## SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE



### GATHER

The animated film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* tells the story of Miles Morales, a New York City teenager who is learning how to control and utilize his new superpowers. It's not just his body that's being tested. Miles's knowledge of biology and quantum physics prove to be as valuable as the abilities given to him by radioactive spider venom. This unique take on a familiar story is filled with coming-of-age symbolism and explores themes of community, spiritual gifts, love, courage, faith, and answering a call to serve others.

### ICEBREAKER: HOW STRONG IS YOUR WEB?

Before participants arrive, place 6-8 items of various size, shape, and weight on a table. Examples include a ping pong ball, water bottle, video game controller, basketball, book, or a cardboard box.

1. Have everyone stand in a circle in the center of the room. Hand the skein of yarn to one person. Ask them to hold onto the end of the yarn strand and toss the skein to someone across from them.
2. That person should hold the strand of yarn and toss the skein to someone else across from them. Repeat these steps until everyone is holding a strand of yarn.
3. Place one of the objects in the center of the web. Discuss with the group what changes to the web, if any, would make it easier to hold the item.
4. Remove the item and place another item in the web. Continue until each item has been in the web. At the end, consider placing all the items in the web to see what happens.

### SUPPLIES

- Yarn (one skein)
- Objects of various size

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse won the Academy Award, Golden Globe Award, and Critics' Choice Award for best animated feature film of 2018.*

## WATCH

Introduce the film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* to the group. Point out that, even though this is an animated action film, there are some complex scientific concepts being explored. Encourage the group to pay special attention to how Miles is making sense of the changes going on inside his body and brain in the early scenes, as well as how his self-confidence evolves throughout the film.

Play the film.

Discuss the film:

- Miles has a difficult time making friends in his new school. Can you relate? Share a time you've felt awkward about talking with people or finding a group that allows you to be yourself. How might your group at church help you, or others, find a sense of belonging?
- The phrase "leap of faith" is used several times in the movie. What does this mean to you? What's the difference between doing something obviously foolish and a leap of faith? How can you tell the difference?
- At the end of the movie, Miles is able to fully activate his powers when his father offers encouragement and Miles realizes how much he loves his father. When have you been motivated to do special things because of love for someone or something? How might your words of affirmation empower a person who is going through tough times?

## RESPOND

All of 1 Corinthians 12 is spent describing spiritual gifts and the importance of all members of a community. Read this chapter together as a group.

1. Give each person an index card and a pencil. Ask everyone to partner up and spread around the room.
2. Invite each partner group to write 3-5 similarities they share on one side of the index card. Encourage kids to think beyond the obvious ("we're both human and Christian") and consider gifts, interests, and abilities.
3. On the other side of the index card, have partner groups write 3-5 characteristics which make each person unique (e.g. Sam plays the cello, Sally can run 5 miles).
4. Gather the entire group together. On a whiteboard make a list of problems immediately facing your church, town, or county.

### SUPPLIES

- *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018) movie
- Video source

### DID YOU KNOW?

*This is the ninth Spider-Man major motion picture to be released between 2002-2018.*

### SUPPLIES

- Index cards
- Pencils
- Whiteboard
- Markers

Identify which one problem your group would like to address. On the whiteboard, make a list of how each person's unique gifts can be used in solving a shared problem. Commit to developing a strategy and start problem-solving in future weeks.

Questions to consider as you work:

- Mary Jane said, “we all have powers in one way or another” in her eulogy for Spider-Man (Peter B. Parker). When do you most enjoy putting your powers to good use?
- Spider-Gwen tells Miles, “it’s kinda nice not being the only Spider-Person around.” How do other people help you identify and use your gifts?
- In the last line of the movie, Miles says, “I’m not the only one. Not by a long shot.” When have you felt strength in knowing other people are having similar experiences?

End with prayer:

God, you give us each unique abilities. Help us to discover the gifts you’ve given us. Give us the courage to use our superpowers to encourage and support those in need. Amen