*Les Misérables*

[*Les Misérables*](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1707386/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1);Universal Studios, 2012; Directed by Tom Hooper; Starring: Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway, Amanda Seyfried, Eddie Redmayne; PG-13: Suggestive and sexual material, violence and thematic elements. [Watch the trailer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuEFm84s4oI).

Summary:

*Les Misérables* is a nineteenth century French novel by author Victor Hugo that was made into a 1980 musical which might be the most popular musical in world history. The actual story follows the sympathetic and recently released convict Jean Valjean and his involvement with a struggling single mother named Fantine, her daughter Cosette, and one Inspector Javert who pursues Valjean for years. The story of Valjean’s freedom and Javert’s manhunt is set against the 1832 Paris Uprising, passionately led by Cosette’s one true love Marius.

Themes:

* Love. The unconditional and sacrificial love Valjean has for Cosette, and Éponine for Marius.
* Forgiveness. The forgiveness of the priest for Valjean and, later, Valjean’s forgiveness for Javert.
* Christ symbols. References to or symbols for the gospel of Jesus Christ.
* Hate. Hate’s inability to coexist with forgiveness and compassion.
* Resurrection/Redemption. The frequent occurrences of “resurrections.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What guides individuals in moral situations that have little or no clear-cut moral choice?
2. Did the large number of close-up shots enhance the film or serve as a distraction?
3. What is the nature of forgiveness? What are the consequences of forgiveness on both the giver and receiver?
4. How does the priest’s forgiveness of Valjean serve as a model that changes his life? How does this compare and contrast with the gospel of Jesus? Do Valjean and Javert match up with a comparison to faith and reason?