

Zootopia

A conversation starter at NJ Synod Assembly

In the city of Zootopia, there is no longer predator and prey – everyone lives and works together. The old designations of predator and prey no longer determine one’s station in life. Both predator and prey need to trust that this new reality is real in order for the city to work. When fear gets injected into the system, no one trusts anyone anymore, old prejudices flair up, and relationships unravel. This parable about identity speaks to us today. While not perfect, this movie can help us get into conversation about stereotypes, prejudices, and systemic racism.

1. What are some of the stereotypes present in the movie? What are the results of those stereotypes?

2. How does humor help get at the deeper issues in the movie? How has humor helped you have deeper conversations? When has it backfired?

3. The movie makes the point that we can fight prejudice and systems can change – how is this true in your own experience?

4. When Judy Hopps is called “cute”, she says, “oohh, you probably didn’t know it, but a bunny can call another bunny cute, but when other animals do it, it’s a little....” Have you experienced a similar situation? How did you handle it?

5. We see in the movie how just one suggestion of fear and suspicion about another can affect everyone – as one character says “fear always works”. How do you counter those who sow fear of “the other” in our society? When have you been the sower of that fear? When have you been the one feared?

6. One lesson from the movie is that connecting across our differences makes the world a better place for everyone. How has this been true for you? Where have you failed at this? What helps you make connections with others?