READY TO USE MOVIE

# The Simpsons (PG)

Season seven, episode four, ‘Bart sells his soul’. Watch the whole episode together.

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## Synopsis

Bart gets sent to after-church school after changing the lyrics of a church song. While there, Milhouse and Bart disagree over the concept of the soul, ultimately leading to Bart selling his soul to Milhouse on a piece of paper. Bart later feels like something important is missing and he goes on a mission to reclaim his soul.

I had a horrible realisation the other day when I discovered that nobody in my Year 7 class had seen a single episode of *The Simpsons*. A cultural phenomenon that was a big part of my childhood, *The Simpsons* is currently in its 34th season. The quality has declined over the years, so this session delves all the way back to season seven for an all-time classic episode.

To set the scene for the clip, ask you your people to discuss the following questions:

* Have you seen *The Simpsons* before? What did you think?
* Who is the best character and why?
* Why do you think that the programme has been so popular for so long?

## The film

This session focuses on the whole episode of ‘Bart sells his soul’. In the episode, at a church service, Bart becomes sceptical and mocks the notion of a soul, leading him to make a rash decision. In a trade with his friend Milhouse, Bart sells his soul for just five dollars. Initially, Bart dismisses the consequences of his actions, believing that the soul is nothing more than a myth. Soon after, Bart begins to experience strange occurrences that make him question the value of his soul. He starts noticing subtle changes in his behaviour, feeling empty and devoid of compassion. As Bart continues to struggle with the emptiness inside him, he realises the seriousness of his actions. Desperate to reclaim his soul, Bart embarks on a journey to retrieve it. He seeks guidance from various individuals, and along the way, he faces numerous challenges and situations that test his determination and resilience. After watching the episode, chat through the following questions:

* What do you think the concept of a soul means? Do you believe in the existence of a soul? Why or why not?
* Selling his soul leads Bart to lose his sense of empathy and connection with others. How important do you think empathy is in our relationships and interactions with other people?
* Bart realises the value of his soul and seeks redemption. What does redemption mean to you? Can people change and seek forgiveness after making mistakes? How can we make amends for our actions?
* The episode touches on the idea of morality and ethics. How do you define right and wrong? What role do moral values play in shaping our behaviour?
* Bart's experience prompts reflection on qualities like integrity and compassion. What do these qualities mean to you? How do they affect our daily lives and relationships?

## The Bible

Building on the clip from today and building on the idea of the soul, read out loud or together Matthew 16:26. Give some context for this passage, perhaps reading from verse 21 to the group. Afterwards, chat through the following questions:

* What do you think Jesus meant by this statement? How can we apply this teaching to our own lives?
* How can our society sometimes prioritise material wealth and success over spiritual wellbeing? How can we strike a balance between the two?
* According to the passage, what does it mean to ‘lose’ one's soul? Are there specific actions or choices that can endanger our spiritual wellbeing?
* How can we make decisions that prioritise our spiritual growth and relationship with God?
* Reflecting on the passage, how does it challenge our understanding of success and happiness? How can we find fulfilment and purpose in our lives while remaining faithful to our Christian beliefs?

*The Simpsons* is available on Disney+.

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