



OwlTeacher
Teaching with Movies & Literature

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Good for the following school subjects:

- ✓ World History
- ✓ The Crusades
- ✓ History of Religion

Directed by Jeremy Kagan
1985; Rated PG; Family/Adventure; 101 minutes; Color;
Available from www.OwlTeacher.com bookstore

Synopsis: A young peasant blacksmith becomes knighted and embarks on a journey to help drive back the army of Islamic crusaders who have taken control of the holy city of Jerusalem in the 12th century. This is a movie about the Crusades between Christians and Muslims over control of the holy city.

Educational Benefits of this movie: No World History course is complete without a unit on the Crusades. This film provides students with a stunning visual of the Crusades. Students learn what each side was fighting for and how both the Christians and the Muslims felt about Jerusalem and why each believed they were the rightly occupiers of the city. The film also offers the human experience and suffering during the Crusades. Although some parts are fictitious, the premise is based on history and is an excellent addition to a unit on the Holy Wars.

Historical Background: The religion of Islam extended far from its birthplace in the modern nation of Saudi Arabia. The land where Jesus lived, Jerusalem, was controlled by the Muslims in the year AD 1095. However, Christians felt that this land was holy and believed with all their hearts that they should control it, not the Muslim “unbelievers”. The Muslims did not agree. As a result, a series of wars were fought between the Muslims and the Christians. The Muslims wanted to keep control and the Christians wanted to win back what they felt was rightfully their holy lands. These wars were started by the Christians and are known as the Crusades. The Crusaders (what Christian warriors called themselves), did not succeed in gaining control of Jerusalem. There were, however, other repercussions from the Crusades. Returning Crusaders told stories of other lands, cultures, and people. They persuaded their countrymen to look beyond their own villages and borders for the first time in history.

Written Assignment: As you view the film, think about how the Christians and the Muslims are portrayed. Do the filmmakers appear to choose sides and show one side as being more brutal and undeserving of the Holy City? Historians have argued that, indeed, Ridley Scott does present Christians in a somewhat negative view. Others argue that “Kingdom of Heaven” equally and fairly shows both sides as having faults and virtues. Now, it’s your turn. Watch the movie and decide if the Christians are in fact portrayed in a bad light. Write a 500 word reaction paper that addresses these issues. You must watch the movie carefully and take notes on examples that will help you to prove your point. Remember that good reaction papers introduce your opinion and the story behind the film in the opening paragraphs. Then, you will try

to convince me of your opinion by using facts and examples from the movie. Your final paragraph restates your opinion and brings closure the paper.

- 500 word minimum
- PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, AND PROOFREAD!
- 1" default margins all around
- Times New Roman font ONLY
- 12 pixel size font ONLY
- double space
- In the upper right hand corner of your paper type your name, the name of the class, "Kingdom of Heaven" Reaction Paper, and the date it is due?

Project:

On a large piece of blank paper, create a Venn diagram. On one side label "Christianity" and on the other label "Islam". Based on what you learned from the film and other research conducted, come up with 10 differences for each of the religions and try to think of at least 8 similarities. Place your information on the diagram accordingly. Include a title for your project and images, quotes, etc. from the film to enhance your work. These will be displayed in the room for all to read, learn from, and enjoy.