Film Title: The Bucket List

Year: 2007

Director: Rob Reiner

Original release form/venue: Theaters

Current Availability and formats: DVD

Genre: Comedy/Drama

Story elements: This is the story of two older men, Edward Cole (Jack Nicholson) a wealthy hospital owner and Carter Chambers (Morgan Freeman) a car mechanic, both of whom have terminal cancer, take it upon themselves to live out the last of their days living life to the fullest. Having created a mutual bucket list, a list of things to do before “kicking the bucket,” they head off in search of life. In their adventures together they begin to understand for the first time in their lives what is truly important in life. In an effort to find the things on their bucket list they both end up finding themselves, returning home to what truly matters. This is a character driven movie in which Nicholson and Freeman feed off of one another to create an amazing paring on screen.

Film Language elements: The film takes place all over the world as the two gentlemen go on their bucket list trip. The major prop of the movie is the bucket list itself. Lighting seems to play a significant role in the film with regard to mood and music does the same thing, doing a wonderful job of flowing with the mood of each seen. The movie seems to move at a rather slow pace, but the time that goes by in the life of the film is quite fast, turning weeks into minutes.

Audience/Cultural Context elements: I think the intended audience is middle to older adults, obviously Nicholson and Freeman fans, and then finally younger adults. I think the film challenges the audience to take a good look at priorities in life.

Theology is found: Within the film in the discussion of what they believe in. Outside the film, to be brought by us into conversation with touch-point scenes from the film.

Theological themes for conversation: Conversation about death, conversation about suffering, conversation about human condition, conversation about brokenness, conversation about healing (physical, emotional, spiritual), and conversations about theodicy.

Suggested type of conversation: I would use this film with youth all the way up to older adults. It would be an excellent film for discussion about priorities, looking at what we hold as idols in our lives. I would focus on the topic of healing and ask how the viewers see the progression of healing taking place and not taking place throughout the film. This
could allow us to move into a conversation about the human condition and our ability and inability to truly heal.

**Recommended Ways to view and engage the film:** The Bucket List is a great movie and I recommend that anyone see it, but it is not necessary for a viewer to see the entire film in order to understand smaller clips within the film. It is an easy film to give a plot summary to, that anyone would understand fully what was going on in a given scene regardless of having seen the entire film or not. I think it would be appropriate to use clips from this film to illustrate particular discussion topics.

**Concluding or summary remarks:** The Bucket List helps the viewer to understand that it is never too late to find yourself. As someone who really enjoyed the film it challenged me to look at the idols that I hold in my life and where I place my priorities. It also challenged me to think about the things that I would like to one day experience in my life, yet remembering that my life is still worth something if I am never able to do any of those things. The film challenged me to look at the forgiveness and the role of family in our lives. I believe this would be an excellent film to have theological conversations with.