

# Lars and the Real Girl

Lars and the Real Girl is a 2007 film starring Ryan Gosling as Lars, a small town loner with a delusion that a life size doll is his real girlfriend. Rather than challenge this delusion, the local Doctor advises his family and the whole community to go along with it. Some critics have claimed that the film is unrealistic and overly positive in its depiction of human nature. Screen writer Nancy Oliver responded by saying that we buy into unrealistic conceptions of the world's darkness every time we watch an action film and we don't question it. Instead, she wanted to offer a positive 'What if?' 'What if we didn't treat our mentally ill people like animals? What if we brought kindness and compassion to the table?'" It is rated 12A for some sexual imagery and mild references.

## How To Watch

The film can be streamed using Apple TV, Google Play or Amazon Prime for £3.49. Otherwise you will need to order a hard copy of the DVD.

## How It Will Work

The plan is for us all to watch the film in the week before we are due to discuss it on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2025. Choose a time that is convenient for you, get together with others if you wish. On Jan 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm we will meet on zoom to talk about our experiences watching the film. There will be a short introduction but most of the discussion will be in small breakout groups. This is an open meeting so friends are welcome. To join send an email to [johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk) before Jan 21<sup>st</sup>.

## Top Tips

- You might want to prepare to watch the film in the same way you might prepare for a devotional time or a time of prayer- whether that is by having a short time of silence, lighting a candle or whatever your practice is.
- Some talented actors and artists are going to tell us a story filled with hopes, dreams, longings and loss. It can be helpful to prepare to listen the way we might with other forms of prayer.
- You may find the opening premise of this story off-putting—try and stick with it, the rewards will come!
- You may want to pay attention to the unfolding of the Church year- the film begins in the depths of winter and concludes at Easter as the themes of life, death and resurrection are considered.

## Questions For Reflection

1. Did you enjoy the film? Why/why not?
2. What stood out to you in the film? What resonated? What disturbed or jarred you?
3. Were there particular ideas, scenes or lines of dialogue that spoke to you in particular? Were any memories evoked?
4. Who were you in the film? Which character did you most identify with?
5. How satisfied were you with the ending? What did you want to happen next?