Leader’s Hints: The Film Description is for you, not to be read to the group because it will spoil the movie. The Discussion Focus should be presented to the group prior to watching the movie so they can know some of what to focus on. Allow the group immediately after the film to give their own casual assessment (“that was great” or “I didn't think it would end that way”). When the personal assessments have died out begin with the discussion questions. The biggest mistake most discussion leaders make is that they do not allow enough silence. Give people time to think it through. Give encouraging words after someone shares but avoid comments that designate their statements as “right” or “wrong”. Encourage multiple answers to the same questions. Statements like, “That is really insightful, what does someone else think?” encourage others to expand on the answer. Be sure to read through the questions ahead of time and when personal examples are asked for think of one for yourself in case no one responds. When you are willing to share it really encourages others to open up. Be very careful to avoid sending the message to the group that you hold all the answers. The benefit of group discussion comes from the individual struggle to find truth for themselves not in the group landing on consensus. In other words, you may end up agreeing to disagree and that is fine. Keep the environment open and non-judgmental, we all come to truth in faith at our own speed. Allow some struggles to remain in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Please always end in a prayer.

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty - 2013, PG, Runtime 114 min.

Film Description: The manager of the negative assets sector of Life magazine, Walter Mitty, has been working for sixteen years for the magazine and has a tedious life, not going anywhere but from his home to his job and vice-versa. He is an escapist, daydreaming into a world of fantasy many times a day. Walter has a crush on the recently hired Cheryl Melhoff but he is too shy to invite her on a date and he is trying to contact her via online dating. The magazine is preparing to release its last printed edition and the loathsome manager of transition Ted Hendricks is preparing an inevitable downsizing over the next few days. Walter has been the liaison between the magazine and the mysterious independent photographer Sean O’Connell who has sent to him a package of negatives and a wallet as a gift for his work. Sean also suggests to the senior management the use of negative 25 for the cover of the last edition. However, Walter cannot find the negative that is missing. Walter has no means to contact Sean and finds a clue that he might be in Greenland. He decides to travel to Greenland to track Sean down in the beginning of an unbelievable adventure.

Discussion Focus: How should we live?

Content Advisory: Some crude comments, language and action violence.

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Additional copies at www.wesleyumc.net at Quick Links Movie Nights
1. At the start of the movie, we get a glimpse of the “Secret Life” of Walter which involves escaping to a fantasy world. Why do you think Walter escaped to this world?

2. Walter works for Life Magazine which has the following motto “To see the world, things dangerous to come to, to see behind walls, draw closer, to find each other, and to feel. That is the purpose of Life.” What about this motto do you think should be the motto for life (not Life, but life) and what would you add?

3. If someone asked you what was the quintessence of life, could you represent it in one picture?

4. Was there a God character in this film? If so who and why, what parallels do you see?

5. Read Jeremiah 29:12-14a “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.”

   What type of “captivity” do you think that Walter needed to be rescued from?

6. When referring to the elusive Ghost Cat, Sean O’Connell states, “beautiful things don’t ask for attention”. Do you find this to be true? What beautiful things are in danger of not drawing your attention?

7. Although Walters quest took him to lands beyond and to people and places that were way outside of his current existence the photo in the wallet led him back to his own piano. How do you see this entire story as a representation for the search for meaning that is the human condition?

8. There is a moment in the film when Walter is talking to Sean when we realize that the negative was in the wallet all along and it leaves Walter desperate to regain what he had thrown away. I think perhaps God may respond likewise when we turn to him and question him to give us meaning in life. He too looks at us with a twinkle in his eye and says without condemnation in a voice overflowing with grace “I already gave it to you, what did you do with it?”

   Read in Jeremiah 29:11 what God says about how he feels about his children. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

   Given that, describe how we, as God’s children, should engage in life?