



Sense Making Faith p 95



The Meaning of Life certificate 15

Directed by Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam

Starring:

Michael Palin

Terry Jones

Terry Gilliam

John Cleese

Eric Idle

Graham Chapman

What this film is about

This film comes from the Monty Python team and offers a series of linked episodes on the different stages of human life from birth until death. The film persistently suggests that it is about the reveal the meaning of life, but never gets beyond absurdism, meaningless statements, follies and diversions. The film suggests that human beings are too shallow, stupid or otherwise too self-obsessed to spend any time on big questions and satirises a great deal of human behaviour, such as greed and making war. In the final section 'Death' the Grim Reaper comes to claim the guests at a dinner party. The guests are so obsessed with themselves and the social niceties of their party they cannot realise that Death has come to claim them and argue with him instead. Finally, they depart, get in their cars and drive to heaven where other characters from previous episodes are sampling 'After-Life Mints'. Naturally it is always Christmas

in Heaven with topless cabaret angels and a smiling, singing host.
Everything a person could want....

Major themes of the film

Meaning, absurdity, human ignorance, self-obsession, greed

Excerpts from the film to watch

The 'death' scene when the Grim Reaper comes to the house

The 'miracle' of birth

The chaplain's prayer

The tea party in the trenches

Eric Idle's mystery of the universe song

General issues for discussion

What does the film say about the search for meaning?

What does the film teach us about greed, ignorance, stupidity, human violence?

What is the significance of eating and drinking in this film?

What does the 'death' scene tell us about the way we might think about the afterlife?

Will it be Christmas in heaven?