

Trope 7: Cannon Fodder

Vocabulary

 **Cannon Fodder:** Soldiers regarded as just more tools or material to be used in war.

Prowess: Expertise in a particular activity.

Vicarious: Felt or enjoyed through imagined participation in the experience of others.

Sadistic: Getting pleasure from inflicting pain or suffering on others.

Extra: A person in the background of a movie or television show that has no purpose other than to be a member of a crowd.



Discussion Guide

1. Have you ever enjoyed a story that had lots of bad guys that the good guys could beat up? What are some examples of those types of bad guy characters?

You could list storm troopers from Star Wars, various Vikings from How to Train Your Dragon, orcs from The Lord of the Rings, and a lot of others, I'm sure!

2. Everyone you encounter has a soul. There's no such thing as a "background character" in real life. Have you ever treated someone like a background character without meaning to?

Perhaps you could mention how you may have treated people checking out your groceries or goods at a store. Is the voice on the other end of the drive-through speaker a person to you, or just a voice so you can get some food?

Use this to point out that even though we don't fight orcs every day (I'm assuming), sometimes we fall into thinking of other people as not really being people, but just background characters. But Jesus loved that person enough to die for them, too!

3. How many people did Jesus die for?

The point of this question is to get students thinking about how much Jesus loves even that person over there that you've never talked to before. Jesus cares about you. Yes! But he also loved the person in the car next to you enough to die for him. And he loved the woman who's walking her dog over there that you've never even said hi to. Each of those people is important to Jesus!

4. Is it ever okay to fight someone else?

God tells us to protect others. It takes wisdom to know how to do that well. He tells us not to act in anger, too. If we're fighting because we like fighting or out of selfishness or pride, we're sinning. But sometimes to protect others, we must stand between them and danger. We must defend others! And when we fail to do that, we turn to the cross. Jesus fought to defend us and laid down his life to protect us!

 **Teacher's Note:** There are many verses that talk about each person's value. These include: Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139:13-14; Isaiah 43:4; 1 John 3:1; 1 John 4:11; 1 John 4:16

5. Are you unimportant? How could you encourage a friend when they might feel like “just an extra”?

No! You're so important that Jesus died for you!

You could tell your friend, “You are important! And Jesus didn't make a mistake. He knew you before you were born and thought you were that important. I'm not going to argue with Jesus! He knows what he's doing!”

Memory Work

† 1 Peter 1:18-19

Teacher's Resources



Picture Books

- *Nobody Likes a Goblin* by Ben Hatke: Who likes a goblin? Not the farmer. Not the elves. But do you know who loves a goblin? His friends.
- *Who's the Grossest of Them All?* By Susan McElory Montanari and Jake Parker: Goblin and Troll ask common folks who is more gross. Everyone runs away, except...



Comic Books / Graphic Novels

- *Avengers Assemble Vol. 1* (Marvel Comics): Many of the foes the Avengers face have countless minions.
- *The New Teen Titans Vol. 1* (DC Comics): The Titans face the forces of H.I.V.E., which are faceless foes.



Novels

- *The Black Cauldron* by Lloyd Alexander: This classic fantasy shows the heroes hewing through scads of bad guys!
- *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien: Epic fantasy where heroes slay all the orcs!
- *Goblins* by Philip Reeve: A goblin is thrown out of his tribe. A young boy just wants to be a hero. When the two meet and team up, adventure awaits!



Television Episodes

- *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*: Are the clones cannon fodder, or are they people?
- *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*: The heroes often fight the Foot Clan, who have no personality outside of their villainous leader, Shredder.



Movies

- *The Lord of the Rings* (2001): This trilogy of movies features a lot of battle sequences with many dead orcs.
- *Marvel's The Avengers* (2012): In the climactic scene of this movie, the heroes must battle back endless alien hordes.
- *Labyrinth* (1986): Sarah must battle past countless goblins to save her little brother.