

How to Use Films to Express Your Faith

The creators of *Masterless*, a movie that mixes problems from the 21st century with imagery from feudal Japan to tell a timeless story of faith, have launched a YouTube channel to help viewers gain an greater understanding of how the film can be used as a tool to discuss challenging concepts of faith.

The launch of the YouTube channel coincided with the home-entertainment release of the film. The DVD can be purchased at Walmart stores or ordered at [Amazon](#) and [iTunes](#). Movie fans also can watch the film via streaming video on iTunes and video on demand on DISH TV, DIRECTV and Comcast, among other outlets.

Each episode is narrated by *Masterless* star Adam LaVorgna (*7th Heaven*, *Brooklyn Bridge*) and concludes with a series of discussion questions designed to engage those who may not practice the Christian life.

“We wanted to do this because of the allegorical nature of the story,” director/writer Craig Shimahara said. “When people of faith understand the symbolism, the movie and the YouTube channel together become a meaningful resource.”

Masterless has received high praise at independent film festivals, including being named the “Best Overall Feature” at the 2015 Fort Worth Indie Film Showcase.

LaVorgna plays the dual role of two lost souls searching for meaning: Kane Madison, an architect in Los Angeles whose master is his work, and his spiritual counterpart, an 18th-century Ronin, a samurai with no lord or master, who is wandering a netherworld of masked demons and Japanese swordsmen.

On his journey, the Ronin encounters many obstacles, including

a mysterious madam played by Kaho Minami, a well-known Japanese actress and the wife of actor Ken Watanabe, in her first English-speaking role.

The film is Shimahara's first full-length feature, and he sets the contemporary story in the competitive world of architectural design, a field he knows intimately as the owner of an architectural illustration firm, Shimahara Illustration, in Los Angeles.

Shimahara Illustration produced all of the visual effects for the film. A team of more than 30 artists in three time zones worked for a year to digitally create all of the "Spirit World" backdrops for more than 600 green screen shots.

The filmmakers discovered the Japanese armor worn by the characters in the film at the Warner Bros. wardrobe storehouse. It was originally designed for the 2003 epic, *The Last Samurai*, starring Tom Cruise and Watanabe.