

# Prairie Christian Academy Media Permission Form

Class: ELA 30 Teacher: M. Robertson

Name of Movie: The Matrix Rating: R

Learning outcomes to be accomplished through this film:

The culmination of our exploration of  
existentialism + philosophy in preparation  
for the material on the Diploma Exam,  
fulfillment of a film study in ELA, and defense of a  
Content review of film is attached:  Biblical Worldview.

Section of movie to be viewed (if a clip rather than the entire film):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Potential concerns in this section:

This film is used in many Christian  
theology classes to extract Biblical Allegory and  
defend the faith. This film will be dissected  
and discussed in such a fashion so as  
to strip it, and films/literature like it, of  
its pop culture attraction.

Teacher's Signature: Michael Robert

Principal's Signature: RP Wood

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Video Reviews



## The Matrix

"How would you know the difference between the dream world and the real world if you didn't wake from the dream?"

So goes the question posed in *The Matrix*. Is life real or illusion? Twentieth century life flows on as normal. Or does it? This is revisionist history—in the future. Late in the 21st century, man develops artificial intelligence (referred to simply as the Machines). The Machines take control of Earth. Man fights back. In the resulting power struggle, the world is decimated. And the Machines

After discovering they can subsist using electricity generated by the human body, the Machines create a grand illusion to fool humans into serving them. The world "seems" to still be normal, but in fact the bodies of humans are contained in chambers on large "farms" and their minds are linked into a worldwide virtual reality computer program called the Matrix. *Nothing* is real.

It's at this point that the film opens with a select group of men and women who have hacked their way out of the Matrix, discovering their true identity. They form a colony called Zion in the real world (which is otherwise lifeless). A few of them re-enter the Matrix to battle the Machines which present themselves in the form of humans. Since nothing is real inside, laws of physics need not apply. Everything centers on how much your mind can disbelieve. If you think you are falling from the top of a skyscraper, you are. If your mind can transcend the illusion, you can leap tall buildings in a single bound.

Enter Neo, the One whose appearance has been prophesized by the Oracle (an old woman with psychic powers). Plucked out of the Matrix by the freedom fighters, is trained to fight. Then reintroduced into the Matrix, Neo *must* defeat the Machines.

**Positive Elements:** Truth is worth more than life itself for the freedom fighters. Reality, regardless of how dreary, is better for man than the mindless exercise of comfort and luxury easily provided by the Matrix.

**Sexual Content:** Virtually none. (Pun intended.) A short conversation occurs in which one computer programmer offers Neo an interlude with a digital woman. Neo does not accept.

**Violent Content:** Excruciatingly drawn-out sequences feature slow-motion gun battles and hand-to-hand combat including kung-fu fighting. Bodies are repeatedly bludgeoned, ripped apart by machine-gun bullets, slammed through concrete walls, burned with electrical blasts, exploded and hit by a train. One man is stabbed in the head.

Blood drips from mouths as internal organs are pummeled in one scene, but the remainder of the fighting is highly choreographed and largely gore-free. That doesn't mean gore isn't a problem though. Especially when a bug-like creature penetrates Neo's belly and is later forcibly extracted.

Action is often shown with slow-motion dream-like clarity, firmly planting the images in moviegoers' minds. After over two hours of almost non-stop fighting, viewers are left with the feeling that the characters of the film have played a distant second to the special effects-filled action scenes.

**Spiritual Content:** Mysticism and prophecies play a large role in the freedom fighters' worldview. Almost everything they believe is based on what the Oracle says. Her psychic powers are trusted without hesitation.

A loose comparison to Christ is presented inasmuch as Neo is the "chosen one" destined to save mankind. One character even addresses him as his "own personal Jesus Christ." Universal ponderings abound, some of which parallel the Christian worldview. A defiled Eden. Intertwined realities. Messianic prophecies. A Judas figure. There's even a girl named Trinity whose kiss "raises Neo from the dead," a ship dubbed Nebuchadnezzar and a city of destiny called Zion.

But for every part Christian allegory, there are equal parts Buddhism, Greek mythology, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Terminator*—a contemplative stew lacking any purity of focus. As savior, Neo uses Jesus' name as profanity, hoists a middle finger at police and strafes buildings with gunfire, leaving countless corpses in his wake.

**Crude or Profane Language:** Amazingly, no f-words mar the dialogue of this R-rated film. But multiple uses of that particular vocal abrasion occur in soundtrack music by Marilyn Manson and Rage Against the Machine. A significant number of s-words (about 20) pepper the script, however. And there are more than a dozen inappropriate uses of the Lord's name.

**Drug and Alcohol Content:** Neo and a compatriot drink homemade liquor. Neo chokes and spits most of his swig out, not realizing how strong the concoction is. The hallucinatory drug mescaline is mentioned once as an escape from the drudgery of life.

**Other Negative Elements:** Portrayals of human infants attached to the Machines with tubes comes across as intentionally disturbing. A scene in which Neo's body is rescued from the human "farm" is a cross between a Marilyn Manson video and what it would be like if a full-grown man were to be born. Mucus, blood, suction tube: violence, etc.

**Summary:** Despite all the hype, I still have to chalk up this chaotically violent head trip as just another post-apocalyptic war thriller. It's a cyber-reality update of *Blade Runner*. It's an attempt to win the hearts of moviegoers who wish somebody would make another *Clockwork Orange*. Its visuals are unique and possibly trendsetting. But its flimsy allusions to theological truth are far from inspiring.

MPAA RATING  
R

GENRE  
Drama, Sci-Fi/Fantasy,  
Action/Adventure, War

CAST  
Keanu Reeves as Neo; Laurence  
Fishburne as the freedom fighter  
leader Morpheus; Carrie-Anne M