Discussion Questions for *Pay It Forward* (2000)

123 minutes (2 hours, 3 minutes), PG-13 rating for mature thematic elements including substance abuse/recovery, some sexual situations, language, and brief violence

Summary: Trevor (Haley Joel Osment) starts a chain reaction of goodness for a social studies project with a plan to change the world for the better. In this film, Trevor is a high school student whose mother, Arlene (Helen Hunt), struggles with alcoholism and whose father is abusive. He rises above unfortunate circumstances with the kindhearted idea to do a good deed, but instead of requesting payback, asking the receiver to "pay it forward" to at least three people – and on and on. While the movie has a bittersweet end, the message is uplifting and powerful.

1. **Have you even seen anyone apply the concept of doing good for others simply because others have done good for them? Discuss.**

2. **How did Arlene's addiction impact Trevor?**

3. **Arlene "hits bottom" when she slaps Trevor. Describe your own "bottom" below.**

4. **The movie fails to show an important part of Arlene's battle to stay sober. What was it?**

5. **Do you think Trevor's family could have healed itself while Arlene was in active addiction? Why or why not?**

6. **How does the concept of "pay it forward" relate to addiction and recovery? Discuss.**