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'Jesus Camp', A Documentary About Children Indoctrination

The Magnolia Pictures production doesn't come with any 'prepackaged point of view'

The first documentary ever to deal with the issue of faith on such a large scale is in talks of being released for public viewing in most of the cinemas, after it won more than a few prizes at documentary film festivals. Without taking any sides, the Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady film, focuses on a bunch of little children who attend reverend Becky Fischer's 'Kids on Fire' summer camp in order to be groomed and trained to become the next soldiers in the army of God. They learn, under the close guidance of the reverend, that 'science doesn't prove anything' and that they are to be the future rulers of America. The daily activities in the camp include, besides the now usual children-oriented summer games, speaking in foreign languages and smashing coffee mugs with the word 'government' imprinted on them. They are forced to pledge they will fight against abortion and to publicly confess their childish impure thoughts. At one point, the camp director even admits that she admires the way Islamic children are bred to give their life for their country and hints that this might actually be the purpose of the 'Kids On Fire' camp. And it's not her and the reverend's ideas that are most disturbing, but the way the two directors manage to capture its influence on the children's behavior. For example, 11-year-old Tori admits that she loves to dance to 'Christian rock', 9-year-old Rachel feels the need to walk up to strangers in the street and 'evangelize' them and all of them willingly accept to be placed on the Capitol steps with tape over their mouths as a sign of protest against abortion. And, yet, all along the runtime of the documentary, the directors' input or influence cannot be sensed by the viewer. The two shun away from passing any kind of judgment and limit themselves only to presenting the real facts, about a real group of people living in complete isolation from the mainstream in North Dakota.