

Reel Appeal: The Spiritual Parent's Movie Companion Discussion Guide #6

Based on Principle #6:
Add Magic to the Ordinary
from "10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting"
by Mimi Doe

and

"E.T: The Extra-Terrestrial" (1982)
Screenplay by Melissa Mathison

Adding Extra Magic with a Little Extra-Terrestrial

Written by Jennifer Marquis & Edited by Mimi Doe

Note: This film is rated PG for language and some thematic elements. We here at SpiritualParenting.com recommend viewing this movie with your child.

This film is about a lovable, playful, charming little alien who is utterly enchanted by the most ordinary, everyday things -- umbrellas, tennis rackets, fish tanks, balls, old movies, Halloween costumes. Just like our own children! E.T. is a wonderful reminder that creating magic for our own kids need not be complicated. We just have to keep it simple, take time for ourselves, and stay open to the "magic" that already exists all around us.

I. Make Magic Out of the Ordinary (page 186, "10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting")

Elliot: "Oh, God!"

E.T.: "Elliot."

Elliot: "What?"

E.T.: "Elliot! Elliot!"

Gertie: "I taught him how to talk. He can talk now."

Elliot: "Wait. Can you say 'E.T.'? E.T."

E.T.: "E.T."

Elliot: "Aha!"

E.T.: "E.T.! E.T.! E.T.!"

Like E.T., our children experience the most ordinary objects and situations in intense and extraordinary ways. If we stay open to unplanned events and look for opportunities to create magic whenever and wherever we can, we stay aligned with the way our children think, and voila! We create magic.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **When did E.T. have the most fun in this movie?**

- **When did Elliot have the most fun in this movie?**

II. Ways of Making Magic out of the Ordinary (page 191, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

E.T.: “*E.T. phone home.*”

E.T.’s “magic” lies in his finger. He uses it to revitalize dying plants, heal cuts, and turn ordinary balls into spinning planets. Likewise, we must remember that our parental magic lies, literally, at our fingertips. Remember to think small and simple, not elaborate or expensive; it might be helpful to make a list of the things you do every day and then brainstorm fun, easy, no-cost ways to ways to make them more magical.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **What objects does E.T. use to make his communicator?**

III. Find the Beauty in Every Day (page 200, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

Michael: “*Maybe he’s some animal that wasn’t supposed to live. Could he be a monkey or an orangutan.*”

Elliot: “*A bald monkey?*”

Gertie: “*Is he a pig? He sure eats like one.*”

Remember the scene where Elliot’s mom peers in the closet and see E.T.’s face among all the stuffed animals? E.T. is quite beautiful here. Try to remember the way visuals and colors affected you as a child. Talk about the things your child considers beautiful and how lovely feelings are evoked by looking at beautiful things. Encourage your child to engage in beauty meditations.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **On Halloween night, what was E.T.’s reaction to the little boy dressed as Yoda from “Star Wars”?**

IV. Magic Through Your Senses (page 202, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

Elliot: “*How do you explain school to a higher intelligence?*”

Remember the scene where E.T, left home alone, watches television, listens to music, plays with toys, and gets into the refrigerator? Children love this kind of full-body sense immersion. Engage your child’s sense of smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight as often as you can.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **How did the bad guys know where to find E.T.? What kind of clues did they have?**

V. Create Family Rituals, Celebrations, Ceremonies (page 207, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

Man: “Where are you going?”

Gertie: “To the spaceship!”

Man: “To the spaceship?”

Gertie: “To the spaceship to the moon!”

Mimi reminds us that ordinary moments become memorable with a little enthusiasm. Remember that anything can be celebrated, and these celebrations often become magical family traditions.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **How does Elliot lure E.T. into the house? Does he do this every time? Would E.T. like him to do it every time?**

VI. Established Traditions as Your Own (page 209, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

Elliot: “He’s a man from outer space and we’re taking him to his spaceship.”

Greg: “Well, can’t he just beam up?”

Elliot: “This is REALITY, Greg.”

Think about some of the ways your family celebrates holidays and other events and ask yourself if there’s any way to make those times more magical and/or spiritual.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **How is our Halloween like or unlike Elliot’s Halloween? What is Halloween for?**

VII. Family Phases (page 214, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

Elliot: “You must be dead, because I don’t know how to feel. I can’t feel anything anymore.”

It is important to mark the “bridges” in the lives of those we love and allow them to bask in their own growth through the magical moments we create for them.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **Where is Elliot’s dad during this movie? Do you think E.T. helps Elliot feel less lonely? Why or why not?**

VIII. Turn Down the Volume, Turn Up the Peace (page 219, “10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting”)

[Mary hits E.T. with the refrigerator door]

Gertie: “Here he is.”

Mary: "Who?"

Gertie: "The man from the moon. But I think you've killed him already."

Mimi encourages us to create serene homes where magic flows in more easily. She suggests that we create spiritual "sanctuaries" by turning down our televisions, and adding color, children's art, and/or spiritual or other religious imagery.

ASK YOUR KIDS...

- **Why doesn't Elliot's mom see E.T. standing in her living room? What is she doing? Is the television on?**

VIII. Parents' Insight Building Exercises: For Personal or Group Use (p. 224, "10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting")

- Lie down, close your eyes, and breathe quietly for a few moments. Still your mind. Think of your most magical childhood memory. Remember how it felt. What it looked like. What it smelled like. Retrace every moment of that memory. Remember how you felt then, and hold that feeling for five full minutes, just breathing in and out.
- Pick out any household item. Close your eyes and imagine that you are a baby and you've never seen it before. Look at it. Smell it. Feel it against your skin. Taste it. Knock against it and see what it sounds like. Now imagine that you are a five year old, a ten year old, a teenager, a grown person, experiencing the object again each time. How do you use this object? How do you see the object? Return again to the imagination of the baby seeing it for the first time. Bring that awareness into your grown-up mind.

Parents' Check-in Questions

How did my parents make magic for me?

How have my parents created magic for my kids?

Am I open to all the immediate ways I can create magic for my children?

What's the most beautiful thing I've seen lately?

What's my favorite smell?

What activities does our family engage in daily? Weekly? Yearly?

What's my favorite holiday? Least favorite holiday?

Who in my family is undergoing a change right now? How can I acknowledge it?

Does our home feel alive, spiritual, vibrant, safe? What simple things can I do to create that?

Children's Guided Journey

Close your eyes and imagine that E.T. has returned to Earth to take you on a magic bicycle ride. Imagine riding your bike down the street with E.T.'s arms wrapped tightly around your waist. Feel yourself moving down the street, slowly at first, then building speed, until you are moving very fast. Feel yourself begin to lift above the ground and

fly above the grass, above the houses, above the neighborhood, above the city. Keep your eye on the moon and feel E.T.'s arms around you. Aim for the moon and ride purposefully towards it. Take a moment to look down and take in what you see. Remember that you are safe with E.T. and you can not fall. Look at the houses, the trees, the parks, your school, your friends' homes. Feel the wind in your face and notice the twinkling stars and the nighttime clouds. Soar there, above the city, for as long as you like, until you feel E.T. telling you in your heart that it's time to go home. Notice how you feel as you come down, and notice how everything starts to look bigger and bigger and closer and closer. Take your time and land gently, right back in your yard, right where you started. Thank E.T. for taking you on this magical, one-of-a-kind journey.

Children's' Check-in Questions

What is beautiful to you?
What is your favorite holiday? Why?
What do you think magic is?
What's your favorite memory?
What's your favorite smell?
How does our house make you feel?

Affirmations for Parents

I am creative and open to my creativity.
I am playful.
I am spontaneous.
I like to be surprised.
I see all of life as beautiful art.

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