

Reel Appeal: The Spiritual Parent's Movie Companion

Welcome to Reel Appeal: The Spiritual Parent's Movie Companion. Each month we'll suggest a film for family viewing that correlates to one of the 10 principles in Mimi Doe's book, 10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting. Each film title will be accompanied by a corresponding, specially-created discussion/study guide for use in your own family or Spiritual Parenting group.

We hope that the films we highlight will nurture your children's souls and link your family more closely with God. We also believe that our unique, thought-provoking study guides will encourage lively, engaging spiritual discussions. Please do use them!

And, as always, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

Happy viewing!

TIPS: How to Use Reel Appeal Companion Guides

These film companion guides are designed to supplement, and correspond to, the corresponding chapter in Mimi Doe's 10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting. We believe they'll work best with children ages twelve and under, but they're easily adaptable for use with your teen.

If possible, we recommend that you read through the entire guide first, before you watch the movie. Also, read the corresponding Principle in "10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting." Later, you can pick and choose from among those questions and topics which resonate with you, your children, or your group. Remember, as Mimi says, there are no tasks, only offerings! Reading the guide first may also help you see and appreciate the film in a way you never have before -- especially if you've seen the movie many times or haven't seen it in quite a while.

If nothing else, try to take a look at the movie quotes we've selected or at the Parents' Insight Building Exercises we've developed -- they make great affirmations and meditations!

Useful Tips for Viewing & Discussing

- Seeing movies should be FUN for everyone. If there's any tension around watching a particular movie, put it off until another time. This isn't another "to do" to add to your long parental list. It's simply another tool to deepen your discussions, create more family traditions, and further foster the spirits of those you love.
- Try to create a comfortable, quiet, sacred space in which to experience the "magic" of the movies. Make popcorn, dim the lights, don your jammies, unplug the phone.

- Use your viewing of the movie as a gift or reward of some kind, or to acknowledge a special event within your family. Perhaps even reserve one night a month as “Spiritual Movie Night.”
- Try to watch the movie with “child eyes.” Look for the film elements that your children respond to, the scenes and places where they laugh or gasp or cry. This will also aid you in your discussions later.
- Don’t feel obligated to discuss the movie during, or right after, viewing. Talk about it in the car, over dinner, before bed. Children often process movies and talk about them much later, surprising and delighting you with their thoughts.
- If you’re not sure how to “launch” a spiritual movie discussion, or if your children seem unresponsive to the questions from the guide, begin with some more generic questions to kick-start things. “What was your favorite part?” “Which character did you like the most?”
- During your discussions, listen and stay open to new opportunities. You may find yourself talking about something interesting that you hadn’t intended to talk about, or stumbling upon a chance to address something you’d always wanted to bring up with your child. As Mimi reminds us, try to strike a balance between what it is you’re there to teach your children and what it is they’re there to teach you.
- When your child asks you a question, remember to try to turn the question around first: “Well, why do you think the water made the witch melt?” Remember, “Why?” is a wonderful question (even for parents!).
- If your child really enjoys the movie, whenever possible, get the book on which it’s based and read it together. Extending the message and characters through literature adds rich dimension.