

PARENTING

Factual film bests 'beasts'

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are home videocassette reviews from the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting. Each videocassette is available on VHS format. Theatrical movies on video have a U.S. Catholic Conference classification and Motion Picture Association of America rating. All reviews indicate the appropriate age group for the video audience.



"Apollo 13" (1995)

Fact-based story of the April 1970 moon launch aborted on its third day in space after a problem diminished the oxygen, power and computer systems, making the safe return of the three astronauts (Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton, Kevin Bacon) an almost insurmountable problem for Houston Mission Control. Director Ron Howard keeps emotional tensions taut and suspense levels high throughout this salute to the courage and perseverance of all involved in the dicey rescue mission. Fleeing sexual innuendo and minor profanity. The U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

"Congo" (1995)

Love, greed and scientific pursuits bring together a zoologist (Dylan Walsh), a tough corporate executive (Laura Linney) and a bogus philanthropist (Tim Curry) who hire a savvy guide (Ernie Hudson) to get them into and out of a abandoned camp in Zaire where a diamond mine and a previously unknown species of killer apes await them. Director Frank Marshall's visually impressive but contrived thriller pits humans against the forces of nature, but campy performances and plastic dialogue have a lame comic-book effect. Brief bloody violence, much menace and a few profanities. The U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

St. John of Rochester Church Nov. 17 hosted an evening of readings, music, and dance featuring the talents of the children of the Rochester Diocese. Above, the Polonaze Polish Dancers from St. Stanislaus Church perform. Right, James Keyes of the St. Charles Gospel players from St. Charles Borromeo Church in Greece portrays Jesus.

We shall rejoice



Daily life provides rich source of prayer

As the Powell family van entered the Beltway — a 63-mile stretch of highway circling the Washington metropolitan area — my friend Fran clutched the steering wheel tightly and asked her three small children, "Okay, who would like to say the 'Beltway Prayer'?"

On this outing, 6-year-old Will led this original family prayer:

"Dear Lord, please help mom to be a safe driver. Let her be kind and courteous to the other drivers on the road. Please help us to behave ourselves and keep us from arguing so mom can concentrate on her driving. Please make sure that the other drivers watch what they're doing. And bring us safely to our home. Amen."

We can often learn a lot from other families about how to find creative ways to pray together as a family.

Fran, Bill and their three children pray regularly as a family in the mornings and evenings. They also turn to God at times throughout the day asking for help, guidance or simply to say, "good morning," "thank you" or "I'm sorry."

"Our family prayer was born in desperation," Fran said. "It seemed I could never find enough time to pray with three small children and the personal struggles, demands and juggling acts we



BY EILEEN MARN

family matters

all have in life. For awhile I would pray silently and then the kids would ask, 'Mom what are you doing?' And then I thought, 'Why don't I include them? It's so important for the kids to see that the strength I have comes from God.'

Parents, religious educators and priests all seem to agree that the evening meal should be a time of prayer and conversation for all families. But while we strive to establish regular times for prayer, the most important lesson we can teach our young children is that God is a part of everything we do and that we can pray to Him whenever we want to.

In her inspiring and instructive book *And the Children Pray*, author Janaan Manternach offers parents and religious educators moving reflections and practical suggestions to help children to

pray.

"Prayer and church were always central to my family's lifestyle," Manternach wrote. "God was blessed and thanked for any and all of the good things that happened in our lives. When we were worried anxious or afraid, we placed the situation in God's care. If some thing of beauty made us catch our breath, we uttered a prayer of praise."

Another marvelous resource for parents looking for ways to pray together as a family is *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The book includes traditional prayers along with blessings for families on birthdays, anniversaries and days and seasons of the year.

"Begin to pray beside your children even when they are very young," the bishops wrote. "Pray in your own words by all means, but pray especially the words of the Church. Pray because you yourself need to pray. Then, as your children grow, invite them into this prayer."

And to all those families who live in Washington or who come for a visit, I think the bishops might add, "Don't forget to pray the Beltway Prayer." As 6-year-old Will can tell you, it might just work a small miracle.

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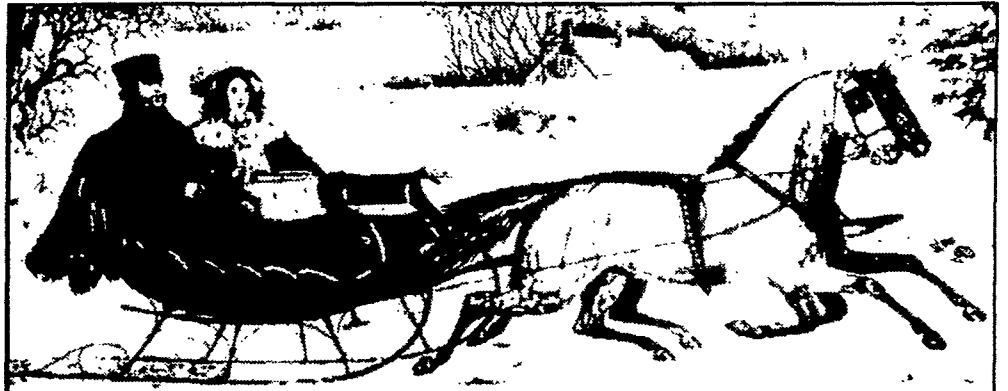
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