

Parenting

'Babe' is fine 'dog'

The following are home videocassette reviews from the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcast.



Each videocassette is available on VHS format. Available on video are 2 U.S. Catholic Conference classification and Motion Picture Association of America rating. All reviews indicate the appropriate age group for the video audience.

"Babe" (1995)

Live-action barnyard charmer in which a kindly Australian farmer (James Cromwell) enters his unusual piglet (voice of Christine Cavanaugh) in a sheepdog competition, unaware that his farm animals can talk to one another as they pull together to make the little pig's dream of herding sheep come true. Director Chris Noonan's enchanting comic fable is filmed entirely from the animals' point of view, with delightful visuals and an endearing message of learning to live and work in harmony. The USCC classification is A-I - general patronage. The MPA of America rating is G - general audience.

"Operation Dumbo Drop" (1995)

Two cantankerous Green Berets (Danny Glover and Ray Liotta) in war-torn 1968 Vietnam are assigned to transport an orphaned boy and his orphan elephant across hundreds of miles of Viet Cong-infested territory to raise morale in a village outpost. Director Simon Wincer's fact-based story strains the limited comic elements of moving the big beast while also stressing multiracial harmony in earnest, heavy-handed terms. Some restrained military shootouts, a brief sexual reference and instances of scatological humor. The USCC classification is A-II - adults and adolescents. The MPA of America rating is PG - parental guidance suggested.

"The Big Green" (1995)

The economically depressed residents of a tiny Texas town get back their fighting spirit after a perky new teacher (Olivia d'Abo) from England, assisted by the local sheriff (Steve Guttenberg), shape the listless junior high schoolers into a winning soccer team. Writer-director Holly Goldberg Sloan's bland story of underdogs beating the odds is an innocuous, slightly amusing family film which never ventures beyond the thoroughly predictable. The USCC classification is A-I - general patronage. The MPA of America rating is PG - parental guidance suggested.

Mass helps parents share faith

"We're up at 7 a.m. on Sunday morning, and we still have trouble making it to the 11:30 Mass on time," my sister-in-law Rose told me during a recent telephone conversation. "Kevin can't find his shirt; Katy would rather be playing baseball; Kyle is trying on her third dress of the morning; Kyle doesn't want to go; Carly has taken off her shoes, which were just put on; and Claire decides she would like to be nursed as we're heading out the door!"

Rose, my brother Brian, and their six children live in Edmond, Okla. They are parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church. The parish has decided to accommodate its young families with a "cry room," a children's Mass and a nursery.

"Cry rooms are key for us," Rose said. "We can't go to a church unless they have one. When we lived in Florida, we drove 20 minutes out of our way just to go to a church where there was a cry room."

"As cry rooms go, the one at St. John's is great. It has two rocking chairs and huge glass windows so the kids can find daddy during Mass. There are certain Sundays though when the children get so out of control with all the things sitting in the cry room that I don't hear any of the readings."

I marvel at Rose and Brian's commitment to bring their six children to church together whenever possible; my husband and I can barely handle two little ones. Like Rose, many of us wonder sometimes why we bring our young children to Mass, when it seems so many parents and children are having a rough go of it on Sunday mornings. It can be emotionally draining



family matters

By EILEEN MARX

to bring babies, toddlers and young children to church - especially if there is not a cry room, or if the children's Mass doesn't fit into your family's schedule. Many parents worry about keeping their children quiet and well behaved during Mass, so they won't disrupt the other parishioners.

For many parents, their week has had its share of the pressures of work and family. They come to Mass hoping for a few moments to praise God with their parish community, to listen to his word, to receive the Eucharist, and to seek guidance and help for the week ahead.

This rarely happens. We're too busy strategizing about treats during the homily and the consecration. We're reminding our children that leaping from the church pews to the kneelers has not yet been classified as an Olympic sport, or we're telling them that they may not take money from the collection basket.

It would be easier for parents to keep their children home and go to separate Masses. But as I frequently need to remind myself, one of our most important roles as

parents is to be teachers of the faith. Although it can be maddening to bring children to Mass, in time they will discover that going to church, praying and serving the parish or community are all a part of their life as a family. It is only by taking young children to church that they learn how to listen and appreciate the Mass.

Although it's not an easy task caring for children at church, perhaps this is when the focus of our faith turns to our children, such as when we answer their questions and explain to them what is happening at different parts of the Mass. It is often through the simple acts that our children first come to know the Lord: lighting a candle after Mass, packing up a bag of food for the poor of the parish, or finding the face of Jesus in a stained glass window.

We live in a world of increased violence, injustice and isolation. As parents we have a responsibility to show our children that there is an alternative to hatred, fear and indifference. I can think of no greater way to bring hope into the lives of our children than by inviting them to pray with a community of believers who celebrate God's Word, his peace and his love for the poor and broken-hearted.

Rose agrees. "This is a part of our faith," she said. "I hope the kids don't see this as a chore. Maybe something will be planted in those early years that they will come back to as they get older, even if there is a time when they are away from the church."

Marx lives in Laurenceville, N.J., with her husband and two children.

Bishops continue movie line

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Based on their success last year, two media campaigns will receive renewed funding from the U.S. bishops' Communications Committee.

One, a toll-free movie review hot line, has tallied more than 113,000 calls since it was unveiled late last year.

The other, the "Good Values Make Great Kids" public service announcement series, reached 34 percent of the nation's TV audience in its first four months, according to media monitoring services.

The movie review line, (800) 311-4222, will be continued through February 1997 with the

\$350,000 of new funding.

The toll-free number offers reviews of six recent movies, plus a "family video of the week" and information about other Catholic communication efforts.

The capsule reviews come from the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting, which reviews movies, videos and TV shows on the basis of moral suitability.

An expanded version of "Good Values Make Great Kids" will receive \$600,000. It will go toward the production and distribution of TV, radio and print announcements in both English and Spanish.

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