

FEATURE

Parenting

MONTHLY FEATURE



Dino-tale rules recent releases

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 USCC classification and Motion Picture Association of America rating.



The Land Before Time

Delightful animated adventure in which five young dinosaurs of differing leaf-eating species band together against threats from meat-eating dinos while making their way to the Great Valley in search of food. Director Don Bluth offers some cute little characters, quality animation and a lovely message of solidarity and courage. The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The MPAA rating is G — general audiences.

Angus

Formula comedy in which a tubby teen (Charlie Talbert) must overcome low self-esteem and taunting classmates before finding courage to talk to the girl of his dreams (Ariana Richards). Cardboard characters and Patrick Read Johnson's dull direction result in a preachy, predictable tale. Some sexual innuendo, comic roughhousing, crude slang and a needless instance of rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Gold Digger: The Secret of Bear Mountain

A vacationing city girl (Christina Ricci) pals around with a local tomboy (Anna Chlumsky) in the wilds of the Pacific Northwest where they risk their lives searching for a lost gold mine. Directed by Kevin James Dobson, the story is less about the search than the relationship between the two young teens and their widowed moms. Life-threatening perils from nature and an evil human. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.



'Beau' jests

Mr. Beau the Clown, the alter ego of Holy Name of Jesus' youth minister Pat Donahue, will celebrate his 21st year of clowning in November. Above and right, he entertains children at the Rundel branch of the Rochester Public Library July 8. He thrilled the children not only with his juggling, joke telling and balloon animals, but also his transformation into Mr. Beau, applying his makeup and climbing into his suit before their eyes.



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Even adults hold on to 'blankies'

"Blankie" is pale pink, stained and literally coming apart at the seams. The hundreds of miniature hearts that once brightly decorated blankie are now faded, and its stuffing hangs on by just a few threads.

But to my daughter Teresa, there is no object more prized than this 2-by-3-foot piece of frayed material. After a fall, following a tantrum, while meeting someone new or when getting ready for bed, we frequently hear Teresa say, "Where's my blankie?"

Blankie was a handmade gift for Teresa from her Aunt Nancy, and for the past two years blankie has been at her side. Like pacifiers, teddy bears, "lovies" and other stuffed animals, blankie brings security, permanence and comfort in the ever-changing world of a little girl.

It can be difficult as well as exciting for children to go through changes in their lives, especially because these changes are occurring so rapidly.

For parents, change in our own lives can be just as challenging and exciting as it is for our children. But change can also be a time of great anxiety. When we make major changes in our lives, our decisions can get very complicated. The change is no longer limited to, "How will this affect mom and dad?" but "How will the change impact the lives of our children?"

Today's families are faced with many changes and decisions. Some are carefully thought through and others come into our lives without warning: One mother leaves her job, another mother returns to the work force; an elderly parent moves in, a child moves out; one father takes a new job, another father is laid off, one couple marries, another divorces.

Change will often bring stress and turmoil into the life of a family even when the change is positive. But change can also bring about growth, self discovery, and a



BY ELLEN MARX

family matters

greater sensitivity toward others. We would be miserable creatures if we never changed. Change gives meaning and direction to our lives.

A few years ago, when my husband Joe and I contemplated a move to a new town less than an hour away, I was humbled and in awe of people like Abraham, Moses and Elijah who often made split-second decisions to follow God's word alone and move to a new land.

Whenever we are faced with a change, we need to remind ourselves of the importance of prayer and listening to God as we grapple with all the issues involved in our decision. We may stumble, we may even make a change for the worse, but God will always be with us.

For Teresa's birthday, I asked Aunt Nancy if she would make Teresa a new blankie.

I thought we could gradually introduce the new blankie and use the old one as a backup in case the new one was left behind or lost. Nancy's daughter Nicole sewed by hand a beautiful blanket and matching pillow. When Teresa opened the new blankie she was thrilled and carried "purple blankie" around for the first week. But when the first real crisis struck, only the original would do. She wanted the blankie that had been with her from the beginning, the one that was comfortable, worn and tattered.

Sometimes we need to make a change because our lives are coming apart at the seams. Or maybe we're feeling a little worn and rough around the edges. We all have our days when it seems like our stuffing is being held together by a thread. Still, the life we have, for all its ups and downs, is all we know. It's our security blanket.

Children and adults need new challenges, new directions and new discoveries in order to flourish and grow. But often this means closing a chapter in our lives and this can be a very painful process. And as hard as it is to imagine, one day when Teresa is ready, she will have to say goodbye to blankie as she embraces the next change that will come into her life.

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

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