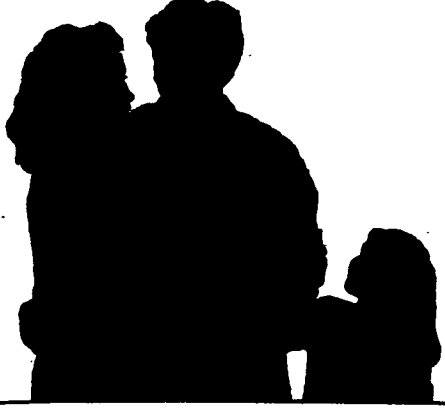


## FEATURE

## Parenting

MONTHLY FEATURE



## Films feature lived dreams

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. All reviews indicate the appropriate age group for the video audience.



## Into the West

When a magnificent white horse wanders into their Dublin slum, two motherless waifs (Ruaidhri Conroy and Ciaran Fitzgerald) ride off into the countryside, pretending to be Wild West cowboys with their sobered father (Gabriel Byrne) and the police in hot pursuit. Director Mike Newell presents a sensitive yet rousing tale of emotionally neglected children whose fertile imaginations help them transcend an impoverished home. Fleeting violence, children in jeopardy and a few profanities. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

## That Thing You Do!

Warmhearted comedy in which four clean-cut teens from Erie, Pa., form a rock 'n' roll band in 1964, then briefly rocket toward the top of the pop charts under the guidance of their business manager (Tom Hanks). Also written and directed by Hanks, the thin story brims with youthful exuberance in a vivid picture of a more innocent era. A few rude expressions. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

## First Kid

Lightweight comedy in which a genial Secret Service agent (Sinbad) assigned to guard the president's 13 year-old son (Brock Pierce) spends his time building the neglected youngster's self-esteem by teaching him to box, dance and be a regular kid. Directed by David Mickey Evans, the appealing story turns needlessly nasty at the end when a deranged individual sets out to shoot the boy. Some violence, deadly menace to a child and fleeting nudity. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

## Children teach us to respect the earth

"What are humans?" my son Bobby asked me as I began the usual search for my house keys on our front stoop.

"Humans? Oh that's just another word for people," I told him.

"Well then why are humans destroying the earth?" he demanded to know.

I wondered where this latest line of questioning was coming from. Then I remembered that a few days before, he had watched an animated movie called "Once Upon a Forest" at his cousin Patty's house.

In the movie, three friends, Abigail the wood mouse, Edgar the mole and Russell the hedgehog, find their peaceful lives greatly disrupted by humans. A chemical spill has destroyed Dapplewood and their young friend Michelle has become seriously ill from the toxic fumes. The three friends race against time and the yellow dragons (bulldozers) to save Michelle.

During the past year, Bobby has been on a mission to keep the earth clean. A few weeks ago while we were at the park, I heard Bobby call out, "Moooooomm." I wondered what rare discovery he had stumbled upon this time. Instead, he pointed to a crumpled-up candy wrapper on the ground and said with disgust, "littering!"

This month's latest environmental concern is graffiti. In fact we have been discussing it and pointing it out so often that Bobby's younger sister Teresa now yells out "GRAFFITI!" each time we pass by the large looped spray-painted letters.

As I listen to and watch my friends' children, it's easy to see that Bobby is not the only member of the recycle police. Many children are lecturing their parents about the importance of saving water and recycling glass and aluminum. These little enforcers of the environment already seem to understand that when someone does something to hurt the earth, it also hurts the people who inhabit the earth.

I care deeply about saving our planet and my husband Joe and I do all we can to respect the environment. But I must confess



family matters

BY EILEEN MARX

we have not always been our children's primary educators on the environment. From the time Bobby and Teresa began watching TV, they listened to singing and dancing water droplets on "Sesame Street" ask, "Are You a Waster-ooo?" In our car we have listened to the children's entertainer Raffi sing out, "It's a big beautiful planet in the sky; the earth's our home, it's where we live." And in a popular touring stage production, "The Great Dinosaur Mystery," the song, "Extinction Stinks," is the favorite of all the environmentally correct songs.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement by actors, musicians, politicians and advocates on behalf of the earth. Many of the children's videotapes, audiotapes, books, songs and TV programs stress environmental themes. Creative and committed people in the environmental movement have done a marvelous job at teaching children to conserve the earth's resources, protect the environment and keep the planet clean for future generations.

They have taught us that the way we can change attitudes and practices is to teach our children these right from the start and to reinforce these messages throughout their lives. Although the work is far from complete, we now have a younger generation who have been raised with a respect for the earth and its resources.

As we work to protect the earth, it's crucial for us to remember that the Creator not only asks us to love the earth, but also

asks us to "love one another." We need to be just as concerned about the broken lives of the poor and the homeless as we are about the broken bottles on our streets and in our parks. As we work to clean up the water and the air, we must also commit ourselves to cleaning up the hatred and injustice in our communities. And as we teach our children to respect and protect the earth, we must teach them to respect and protect the dignity of each human person.

In an important pastoral reflection, "Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching," the bishops of the United States explore the links between concern for the person and concern for the earth.

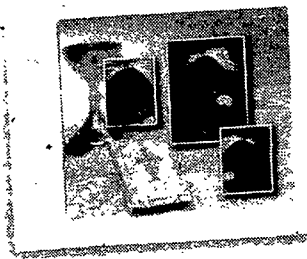
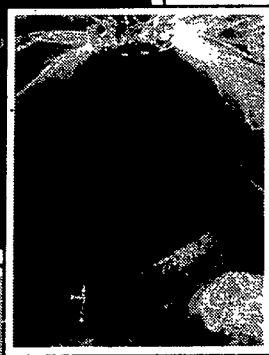
The bishops wrote, "The whole human race suffers as a result of environmental blight, and generations yet unborn will bear the cost for our failure to act today. But in most countries today, including our own, it is the poor and the powerless who most directly bear the burden of current environmental carelessness. Their lands and neighborhoods are more likely to be polluted or to host toxic waste dumps, their water to be undrinkable, their children to be harmed."

At the end of "Once Upon a Forest," Michelle is rescued thanks to the heroic efforts of her three friends. As Michelle surveys the damage from the chemical she says, "I guess nothing will ever be the same again."

The children's teacher Cornelius answers her, "If we all work as hard to save Dapplewood as your friends worked to save you, it will be the same again."

We too must have hope, for Bobby and all the world's children, that together we can stop humans from destroying the earth and start humans building a world where we are committed to protecting our people and our planet.

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



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