

PARENTS GUIDE TO

movie messages: *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*

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Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY
TIM BRADFORD

The entertainment industry bombards us with obvious and subtle messages. But we often don't recognize them as worldviews or notice how they skew our thinking. To help you and your family identify varying worldviews in the culture, play this game of Movie Messages while watching the Oscar-winning *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*.





Directions:

1. Give every player a set of 10 worldview cards.
2. Watch *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* until you reach an incident on the game board. Then pause the movie.
3. Each player chooses a card that matches the worldview identified in the movie and places it facedown, and then everyone turns their card over to reveal their answer.
4. Find the answers on pages 7-9. The correct cards are removed from play. The cards deemed incorrect are returned to each player, and the movie continues.
5. This board game doesn't cover every worldview in this movie.* Players who have guessed wrong can catch up by calling out the correct worldview, if it comes up again in the movie. (This can only be done with worldview cards that have been removed from play.)
6. The first player to get rid of nine of their cards is the winner.

*The **Marxism** card is not a part of this movie's game board. If someone plays the Marxism card and wants additional information, read 2 Thessalonians 3:10, which says that anyone who's not willing to work should not eat either.

Note: For young children who aren't ready to play this game, a casual mention like: "That's scientism. Science is good, and God is real," is a good way to start worldview training.

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AUTHORITY BIAS convinces people to never question a leader.

CHRISTIANITY tells us that our life and salvation are dependent on God and our belief in and allegiance to His Son, Jesus.

Directions:

Cut out one set of either color or black-and-white cards for each player.

FASCISM is a political ideology that often centers on a dictator; individual rights are less important than the strength of the state.

FATALISM is the belief that there's no point in taking action because events are predetermined.

PRAGMATISM says that the right decision depends on what you get out of it.

KARMA is believed to be a good or bad force that affects you—either now or in another life—depending on the good or bad you do today.

MARXISM defines the constant power struggle between people who own stuff and those who make it.

PAGANISM revolves around nature worship or the belief in a deity other than the one true God.

MATERIALISM involves valuing stuff over people.

NATIONALISM is the idea that supporting your country is of utmost importance.

MOVIE REVIEWS

For a review of *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* and other titles, visit **PluggedIn.com**, Focus on the Family's media review and discernment website.

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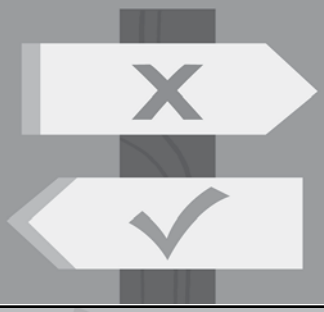


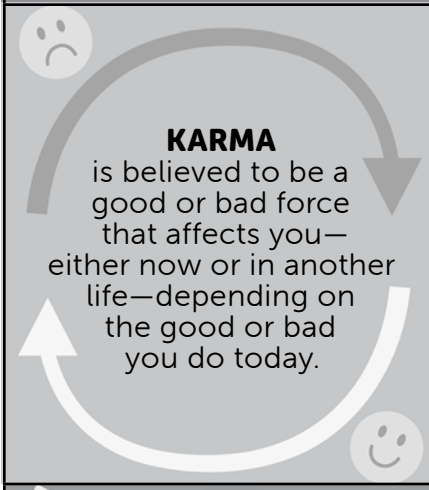
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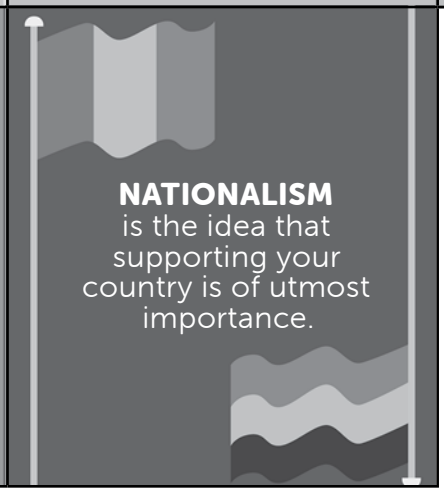


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Movie Stop 12:34

As floating eyeballs come out of the forest, Sebastian J. Cricket narrates, "In my many wanderings on this earth, I've learned that there are old spirits living in the mountains, in the forests, who rarely involve themselves in the human world. But on occasion, they do."

What it is: Paganism

Those eyeballs coalesce into what the movie calls a "wood sprite," who tells Sebastian that she cares for the "forgotten things." She apparently has the ability to give life to Pinocchio, because she does just that. Her "sister" in the afterlife tells us this life was actually a borrowed soul. The Wood Sprite has some physical attributes of biblical cherubim (and it seems to mean well), but Sebastian's narration makes it clear that the sprite harkens back to pagan and pre-Christian beliefs, when people thought that natural elements were imbued with supernatural forces.

Read: Exodus 23:13

"Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips."

How to talk with tweens and teens

It can be tempting to look at this wonderful world God created and imagine that His creation has its own divine power. But God tells us that He alone is God, and He's the only one who can give life—though He sometimes allows others to use that power in His name.

What to say to young children

The Wood Sprite wants to help Pinocchio. But if this story were real, only God could make Pinocchio come to life. *These words are based on John 5:21.*

Movie Stop 17:12

The Wood Sprite tells Sebastian, "Well, in this world, you get what you give." And she promises that if he teaches Pinocchio how to be a good boy, she'll grant Sebastian one wish.

What it is: Karma

Karma is believed to be a force that affects people's lives based on their behavior. This life-manipulating power source, which is rooted in an Eastern religion, gives people some control over their future, based on their actions in the present. It means that good deeds earn rewards, and bad deeds are punished—in this life or another. The Wood Sprite seems to indicate that this is how the universe operates, which means that if you're experiencing something bad now, it may be because of your actions in a previous life or at an earlier time.

Read: Matthew 5:44-45

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

How to talk with tweens and teens

Do you always get what you give? Have you seen times when good behavior wasn't rewarded and bad behavior was? How did that make you feel? The Bible reminds us that the world isn't fair. It's a fallen world, corrupted and twisted by sin. But Jesus reminds us that He overcame the world. We're also told that we will receive rewards in heaven based on our belief in Him.

What to say to young children

Sometimes the world isn't fair, but in this house we'll try to be as fair as we can be. We also should be kind and treat others the way we'd like to be treated. *These words are based on Matthew 7:12.*

Movie Stop 24:44

Pinocchio's determined to go to Mass and does so against his father's orders. He doesn't know what to make of the service, and the parishioners don't know what to make of him.

What it is: Christianity

Pinocchio's Italy is largely Catholic. And certainly in this region of Italy, most of the townspeople go to Mass. Pinocchio doesn't know anything about church, of course, and he certainly doesn't know anything about Christ. His behavior is consequently disrespectful, and the priest and many congregants are horrified. They also suspect that Pinocchio himself may be the product of witchcraft, and the priest calls him an abomination. While the movie wants us to take Pinocchio's side, we should pause and acknowledge something important: If a living marionette walked into our church on Sunday morning, we should ask some pretty hard questions.

The priest eventually softens, and Pinocchio shows a lot of interest in Jesus. Sharp-eyed movie watchers may notice that Pinocchio shows a number of Christlike attributes as the film goes on—even being fastened to a cross.

Read: Leviticus 19:34

"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Read: Ephesians 5:11

"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."

How to talk with tweens and teens

How does the movie make Christians look? Is that fair? The Bible tells us to be kind to strangers, but not at the expense of God's truth and values.

What to say to young children

As Christians, we should always be kind to those we don't know. But we should always stand up for what we believe. *These words are based on 1 Peter 3:15-16.*

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Movie Stop 28:24

"Oh yes, I will obey if I get chocolate!" Pinocchio says.

What it is: Pragmatism

The "chocolate" referred to in the quotation is essentially a bribe that Geppetto dangles in front of Pinocchio to get him to behave. It's a tactic that some parents take with their own children. But Pinocchio's response is right in line with the philosophy of pragmatism—where we decide on a course of action based on how it will benefit us.

Read: James 4:17

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

How to talk with tweens and teens

At times we make choices for pragmatic reasons, but we shouldn't when we're making a moral choice. Pinocchio, of course, is still learning the difference between good and bad, but eventually he should make this choice based not on chocolate but because obeying his father is the right thing to do. Have you ever made a choice based on pragmatism? Have you ever avoided making a pragmatic decision because you knew it wasn't right?

What to say to young children

It's nice to get rewarded for doing the right thing—but it's even better to do the right thing because it's right, whether or not you get a reward. *These words are based on 1 John 3:7.*

Movie Stop 29:29

Podesta—the village's mayor—brags about his son. "Look at my boy, Candlewick," he says. "A model fascist youth. Proud and brave. Virile like his father."

What it is: Fascism

Fascism was a philosophy and system of government that was in vogue in the years leading up to World War II. It was born in Italy, and its founder and leader was Benito Mussolini, who appears later in the movie. He once said that "fascism is a religion." The hallmarks of fascism include a hyperzealous form of patriotism (which often includes racism), an emphasis on military might and a dismissive attitude toward personal freedoms and democracy. The state, not its people, is most important.

Read: John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

How to talk with tweens and teens

Podesta's conversation is the earliest reference to fascism in the movie, and the most overt (because it specifically mentions this ideology). But we see other instances of it throughout the movie as well. Podesta is a true believer, willing to sacrifice anything, even his son, to fascist Italy. Certainly, there's nothing wrong with taking pride in your country or wanting that country to be strong. But fascism's core elements are very different from Christianity's teachings on grace, mercy and love.

What to say to young children

Candlewick's father hates love and kindness because he believes they're a sign of weakness. But God encourages us to show love and kindness to others. *These words are based on Colossians 3:12-14.*

Movie Stop 39:56

"Book learning cannot compare to witnessing the wide world with one's own eyes from atop the glorious stage," Count Volpe tells Pinocchio while encouraging him to join his carnival. "You shall see all the nations of the earth as they bow at your feet."

What it is: Materialism

There's more at work here than just materialism, which is simply the love of material things. Volpe is also trying to tempt Pinocchio with fame, vanity and power. It's interesting that Pinocchio is far more interested when Volpe uses a materialistic argument, telling the wooden boy they'll have to find someone else to "eat all of our ice cream and popcorn and hot chocolate."

Volpe's temptations are rooted in the world's attractions (fame, vanity, power and hot chocolate), and when we chase them, we take our eyes off God. It's interesting that the movie clearly echoes Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, where the Devil promised Christ "all the kingdoms of the world" if Jesus would simply bow down and worship him.

Read: 1 John 2:15-16

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."

How to talk with tweens and teens

Count Volpe tries to lure Pinocchio with promises of fame—a very powerful temptation today. A few years ago, one study suggested that more than half of teens don't want a career as much as they simply want to be famous. But God tells us that it's far more important to love Him than to be rich or successful or even famous. And it's much more important to do the right thing—like going to school, as Pinocchio should've done—than chase after fame and fortune.

What to say to young children

There's nothing wrong with ice cream or hot chocolate. And there's nothing wrong with being famous. But when you chase after these things instead of doing what's right—like Count Volpe encouraged Pinocchio to do—it becomes a big problem because it takes us away from God. *These words are based on John 12:43.*

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Movie Stop 1:04:50
Pinocchio sings about fighting for the "glory of Italy."

What it is: Nationalism

Nationalism is all about making your country a top priority. While love of country is often a positive thing, it's never good to put that love over your love of God or what God tells you to do. Benito Mussolini, Italy's fascist leader, exhorted his people to have "a dagger between our teeth, a bomb in our hands and an infinite scorn in our hearts." That contradicts what the Bible teaches.

Read: Luke 10:27
"[Jesus] answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.'"

How to talk with tweens and teens
Nationalism can be a good thing if it follows biblical guidelines. Can you think of other philosophies and ideals that can be good but can also go bad? What do you think makes someone a good citizen of our country?

What to say to young children
It's good to love your country, but remember that our country shouldn't ever take the place of God. Following Him is always more important. *These words are based on Deuteronomy 10:12.*

Movie Stop 1:06:37
Count Volpe can't hide his excitement about Pinocchio performing for "our fearless leader, Benito Mussolini."

What it is: Authority Bias

Another element of fascism, as well as other totalitarian worldviews, is strong leaders who cannot be questioned. These leaders often develop almost quasi-religious cults around them, and Count Volpe is definitely a member. He proudly displays a picture of Mussolini and himself together.

Read: Psalm 118:8
"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man."

How to talk with tweens and teens
History tells us that Mussolini was not a guy to be trusted. But it can be hard to know whom to trust. Have you ever put your trust in someone or something you shouldn't have? Have you ever cared for someone who, in the end, wasn't deserving of it?

What to say to young children
Mussolini didn't deserve Count Volpe's love. Lots of people in your life are worth loving and trusting—especially your mom and dad. But even they can make mistakes. The only one who doesn't make mistakes is God. *These words are based on Proverbs 3:5.*

Movie Stop 1:32:04
"No, Pinocchio, no. There's no escape from this dreaded beast."

What it is: Fatalism

You can hardly blame Geppetto for being discouraged. He was, after all, trapped in the belly of a massive fish that, according to Geppetto, was about to sink down into the coldest, deepest, darkest part of the sea for several years. But in that moment, Geppetto's fatalism—the idea that your life is predetermined, and there's nothing you can do about it—could've prevented Pinocchio and Sebastian from figuring out a way to escape the fish.

Read: Philippians 4:13
"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

How to talk with tweens and teens
It's easy to sink into a fatalistic mindset when things go against you. But when we look at the Bible, we find plenty of spiritual heroes who could've given up but didn't. Have you ever lost hope for something to happen but kept fighting for it anyway? How did it turn out?

What to say to younger children
It took Pinocchio a while to learn what it meant to be a good boy and a good son, but he ultimately did. A lot of what made him so good and strong was his love for his father. Even when Geppetto was feeling like there was no hope, Pinocchio helped to save him. That's what we should always do for our family: encourage them and love them. *These words are based on 1 Thessalonians 5:11.*

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