

Historical Movies to Share with Friends and Family

In the past, it was believed to be important to help children and our nation's citizens understand history and even more importantly, to be inspired by virtuous behavior. Sadly, textbooks and entertainment have abdicated this responsibility, turning instead to tales of selfishness and victimization. Children need a sense of purpose and a sense of their place in this world. They need to understand that there are great forces at work - both good and evil.

Spend time with family and friends watching movies and discussing the values and driving forces. Following the movies, consider discussing some of the following questions:

How accurate was the history? Does it matter in this movie?

What were the character traits embodied by the heroes? The villains?

Is the movie important? Why?

How are you changed by watching this?

Here are a few movies to start your journey into exploring what is worthy of our attention. While some might not appeal to modern expectations for films, they are classics.

The Old West

- The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance - Rule of law and journalism in the old west
- How the West Was Won (1962) - Family saga covers decades of Westward expansion in the 19th century, including Gold Rush, Civil War, and building of the railroads
- High Noon - A town Marshall faces a gang of deadly killers, alone
- The Magnificent Seven (1960) - Seven gunmen join together to protect town from the private army of a destructive industrialist
- The Searchers, True grit or anything with John Wayne

Revolutionary War

- Turn (TV Series about Washington's spies) - based on true story (a few sex scenes)
- The Patriot - A reluctant South Carolina farmer is forced to fight the British
- Johnny Tremain - Disney adventure story based on children's novel
- Sons of Liberty - Three-part miniseries focuses on historical figures and pivotal events between the colonies and Great Britain
- John Adams - 7 part miniseries, a biopic of Adams and story of the first 50 years of the U.S.

Civil War

- Glory - based on true story of African-American regiment
- Gone with the Wind - classic film based on Margaret Mitchell's novel
- Lincoln - Stephen Spielberg's biopic of Lincoln's struggles during the Civil War
- Red Badge of Courage - Stephen Crane's novel: soldier struggles to find courage on the battlefield

WWI:

- 1917 - based on true story - life and death in the trenches
- The African Queen - Hepburn and Bogart on a quest to take out German warship
- War Horse - Follows a horse through the battles of WWI
- All Quiet on the Western Front - From Remarque's classic novel - a German soldier witnesses the horror of battle on the Western Front
- Lawrence of Arabia - T.E. Lawrence's adventures as a British officer working with warring Arab tribes to take down Ottoman Empire

WWII:

- Schindler's List - True story of using and then saving Jews during the Holocaust
- The Hiding Place - True story of a Dutch family that suffered for protecting Jews
- Dunkirk - True story of rescue of British troops, early in the war
- Hacksaw Ridge - True story of heroism of conscientious objector (very graphic - not for children)
- The Darkest Hour - Churchill's early days of WWII and the 1940 Cabinet crisis
- Saving Private Ryan - US soldiers go behind enemy lines to save man whose 3 brothers are KIA
- Band of Brothers miniseries - True story of a paratrooper unit from training to end of war
- Bridge on the River Kwai - Classic film about British POWs forced to build a bridge in Burma
- Empire of the Sun - British boy spends war in Japanese internment camp
- The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler - True story of social worker who saves lives of nearly 2,500 Jewish children in Warsaw

Other

- Amazing Grace - The story of William Wilberforce who led the fight to end slavery in Great Britain
- Hidden Figures - True story of three African American women facing racial and gender discrimination but their work at NASA was pivotal to the early space program
- October Sky - True story of Homer Hickam - coal miner's son inspired by first Sputnik launch to take up rocketry against father's wishes