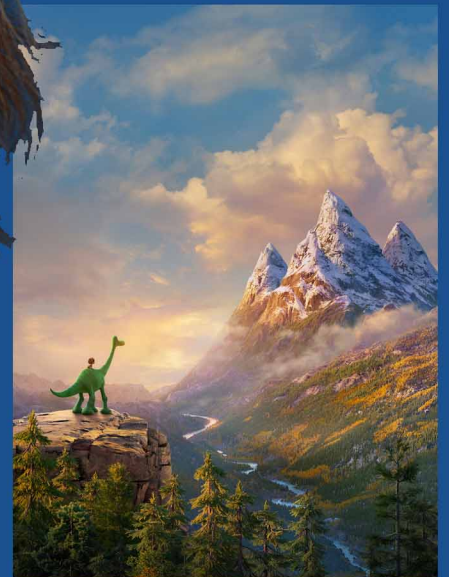




Family Discussion Guide

"The Good Dinosaur" presents viewers with an exciting alternate universe where the asteroid impact that supposedly destroyed the dinosaurs never took place. Centuries later, one family of dinosaurs lives a peaceful life on their small farm, raising and harvesting crops. Momma and Poppa have three children, including Arlo who wants to make his mark in both the family and the wider world. After a tragic accident leaves the family struggling to run their farm, Arlo gets lost and swept away by a flooding river, separating him from all he knows. His journey back is full of adventure, danger and an unlikely friendship with a human boy named Spot.



Make Your Mark



On the farm, Poppa builds a large silo in which the family stores their crops. He begins a family tradition by leaving one of his footprints on the outside wall of the silo. He tells his children that they can leave their mark there when they accomplish something significant. Arlo's older brother and sister complete tasks worthy of leaving their mark, but Arlo struggles to rise to the occasion. The family's practice of leaving footprints on the silo is an avenue through which we can think about our own lives. We all leave traces of our presence wherever we go, whether that be the first time we meet a new person, participation on sports teams and the accompanying win/loss records, or at a long-held job. What types of marks do we leave: are we kind and patient or are we rude and hurried? Are we selfless or selfish? Being mindful that we are constantly impacting the people and places we encounter can help us live lives that shape our communities and the world in positive ways.



Questions for Consideration

1. Who has made a lasting impression on your life? What did they do? How do you remember them?
2. Have you ever made a bad first impression? What happened? What did you learn from the experience?

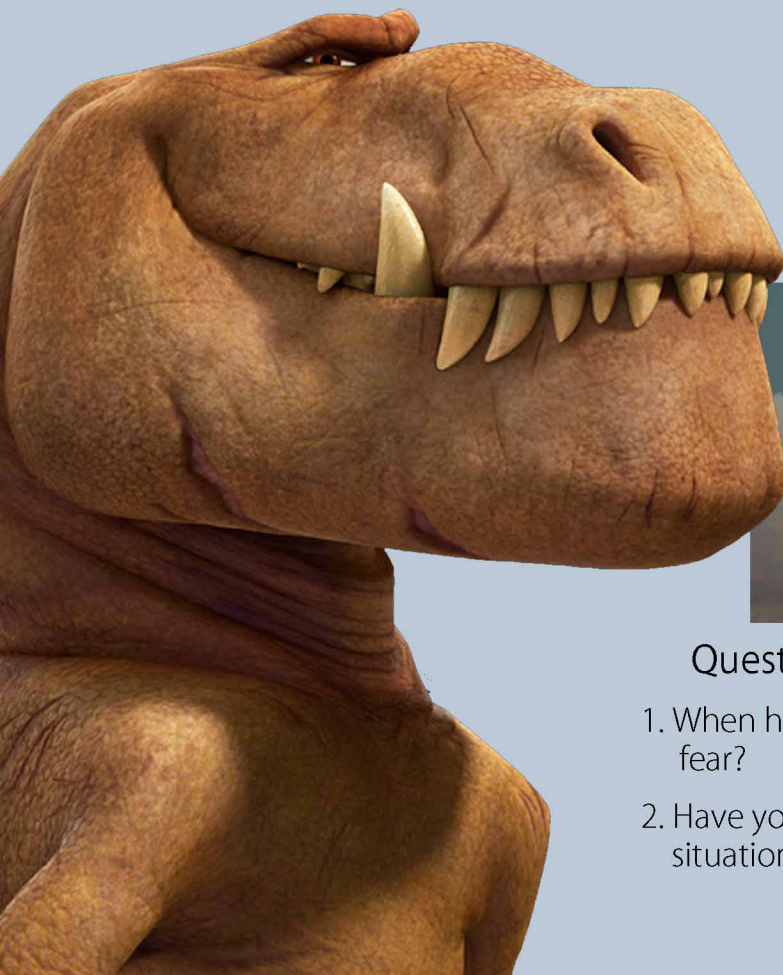


Face Your Fears



Arlo is a timid and fearful dinosaur, who is often frightened of sounds and his own shadow. Even though he is growing up to be a big dinosaur, the birds on the farm terrify him. Poppa tries to teach Arlo a valuable lesson: we must face our fears. It is through a exciting and dangerous journey that Arlo finally learns this lesson.

Arlo's fears are buoyed by natural dangers, from raging thunderstorms to flash floods to an out-of-control river. He also encounters other threats on his journey. Initially, Arlo tries to avoid these dangers by hiding or running away, but as his journey progresses, he gains the courage and wisdom necessary to face his fears.



Questions for Consideration

1. When have you been afraid? What helped you overcome your fear?
2. Have you helped others conquer their fear? What was the situation and what did you learn from it?

An Unlikely Ally



As Arlo begins his journey, he receives help from an unlikely ally, a wild human boy that he eventually names Spot. It would be natural to assume that the boy would be terrified of Arlo, but instead of seeing him as an enemy, Spot sees a potential friend in need of help. Throughout Arlo's journey, Spot helps his dinosaur companion find food and warns him of danger. In return, Arlo defends and makes sacrifices for Spot.

Throughout our lives, we encounter people and quickly form impressions about them that may or may not be true. More often than not, as we begin to know people better, those first impressions drastically change. Where we imagined an enemy, we find an ally. Someone we thought to be worthless, proves that they are, in fact, invaluable. In life, we all have enemies, both real and imagined. Like Arlo and Spot, we might irrationally fear one another only to realize that our enemies are just strangers we haven't gotten to know yet. Once we push past the boundaries of first impressions, we might find that we can make each other's journey through life even better.



Questions for Consideration

1. Think about a time when you had a false impression of someone. Who were they? What did you first think about them and how did getting to know them change your opinion?
2. Think about a time when you knew you either made a bad impression or someone formed the wrong impression about you. What happened and how did you work through it?

Sacrificial Love



Over and over, during his journey, Arlo finds himself in danger. Most of the time, it's due to the weather or a natural predator, but at other times, Arlo puts himself in danger. He does so both in an effort to return to his family and out of his care and concern for Spot. Arlo is willing to risk his life to get back to his family. He loves them that much. He is also willing to risk his life to protect Spot, even if that means never making it home, because his human companion has become a friend.



We often define actions like Arlo's as sacrificial or selfless love, and while it certainly describes a willingness to risk your life for another person's well-being, it's not limited to that. Every day, we give and receive some form of sacrificial love. Parents sacrifice their own desires for the well-being of their children. You might give up buying new clothes or gadgets and donate those resources to people who are less fortunate than you.

Questions for Consideration

1. When have you experienced sacrificial love? What happened and how did that shape your life?
2. How do you show sacrificial love to others? If nothing comes to mind, what can you change to make it a regular practice?

Celebrate the Scars



On his journey home, Arlo meets a group of T-Rexes—Butch, his son Nash and daughter Ramsey. They're ranchers that herd long-horns, with a vested interest in protecting them from other predators. They all, to varying degrees, have scars to show for their troubles. At night, they sit around the campfire and celebrate these scars, sharing stories about how they got them—likely exaggerating a bit in the process. Arlo is amazed by these stories and the courage of these dinosaurs.

None of us make it through life without having a few scars to show for it. These can be both physical and emotional. You might have burned your hand on a stove and have a mark to remind you of it. You may have experienced the loss of a family member or friend and still experience times of sadness and grief that remind you that they are no longer here. While we do our best to avoid being injured, life happens. As you begin and continue to heal from painful experiences, hopefully you can take time to celebrate your scars by remembering the struggles you've endured, the trials you've overcome, and the lessons you've learned in the process.



Questions for Consideration

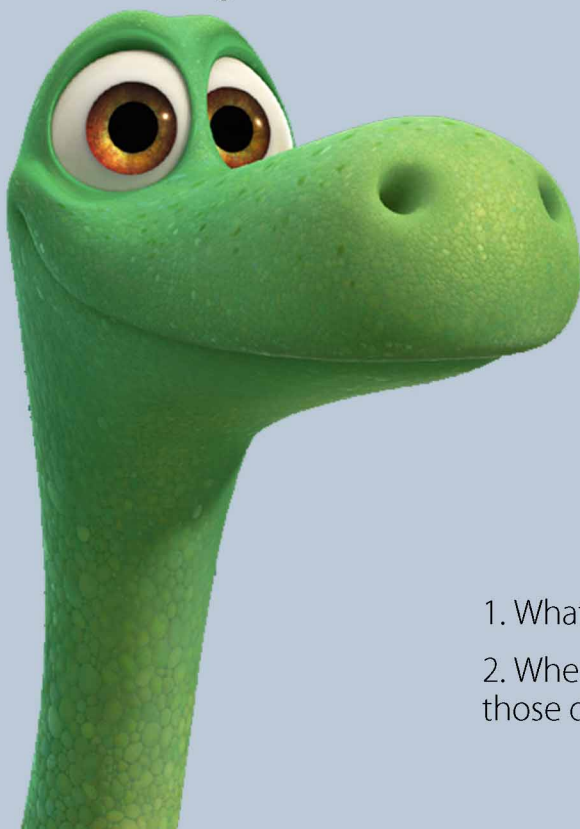
1. What are your scars? How did you get them?
2. Have you ever wounded anyone? How did you reconcile with them?



Keep Your Eyes on the Mountain



When Arlo is separated from his family, he is lost—really lost. Waking up on the banks of the river, he surveys his surroundings and recognizes nothing. He only knows that his home lies in the shadow of Clawtooth Mountain. As he begins his journey, he searches for the recognizable mountaintop. When he finally spots it, days later, he never loses sight of it. Clawtooth Mountain is the beacon that guides him to his goal.



Unlike Arlo, you're probably not lost in the wilderness, separated from your family. But, whether you know it or not, you're on a journey. You might be in school, slowly progressing to graduation. You might have a job that holds the promise of a promotion. You and your family might be planning an exciting new adventure. Wherever you are in life, it might help to think of it as a series of journeys with goals along the way. Whatever these ultimate goals are, there are beacons that can point the way. Unfortunately, we often get sidetracked: playing video games is more fun than studying, spending money is more fun than saving, and the list goes on. We can avoid these distractions by keeping our eyes on the beacons that keep us on the path to our goals.

Questions for Consideration

1. What are your goals? What are the beacons that guide your path?
2. When have you been distracted from your goals? What caused those distractions? Did you persevere through them?