



Family Movie Night



Goal:

To use movies to support conversations about grief, feelings, and memories.

In addition to movies being fun to watch together as a family, they can also be a good opportunity to discuss feelings, share memories, and explore each family member's grief in greater detail. Most movies touch on feelings and have at least one character who is experiencing a challenge. Some movies even have characters who die or who are grieving the death of someone close to them. While other movies may have a connection to your person, maybe it was a movie they liked to watch or a character that reminds you of them. There are many types of movies that are a good fit for Family Movie Night.



Watching a movie as a family, and then taking some time to talk about it can be an excellent way to connect, learn, and support each other.



Supplies Needed

- Movie of your choice.
 - Movie suggestions are included on page 2.
- Optional: Popcorn or other treats to recreate a "movie theater" experience.

Time Needed

Length of the movie & 10-30 minutes of discussion time

Instructions

- ♥ First, select a movie. Prior to picking a movie, it may be helpful to determine what you would like the focus to be. For example,
 - Do you want the movie to lead to conversations about feelings, remind you of your person, or focus on grief?
- ♥ Second, watch the movie.
- ♥ Third, discuss whatever you noticed from the movie, but, just like at Ele's Place, people should be allowed to "pass." Some family members may just want to watch the movie and not talk about it, which is OK, too.
 - Depending on the age of your children and/or your family's preference, you may want to:
 - Pause the movie and talk about things when they occur.
 - Point out something while the movie is playing (e.g., "Dad used to love to fish, too").
 - Wait until the end of the movie and talk about whatever the movie brought up for everyone (i.e., memories, feelings, thoughts, grief experiences, etc.).
 - Refer back to the movie at another time to help generate a conversation.
 - You may want to use the Discussion Questions included in this activity to support your family's conversation.

Discussion Questions

- ♥ What was your favorite part of the movie, and what was your least favorite part of the movie?
- ♥ I noticed [insert character's name] was [insert emotion], have you ever felt that way?
- ♥ Did you notice anything in the movie that reminded you of our family or yourself?
- ♥ Was there anything in the movie that you did not agree with, or you feel like has been different for you or our family? (e.g., Sometimes people experience the same thing, but have different thoughts and feelings, or their life changes in different ways.)
- ♥ Did anything in the movie remind you of _____?
- ♥ What do you think _____ would have thought of this movie?
- ♥ Is there anything else that you would like to say?
- ♥ What did you think of movie night? (e.g., Thumbs up/down)



Movies that Highlight Grief

Younger Children (PreK and older):	
* = a more detailed talking points guide is available on our Pinterest page (https://www.pinterest.com/ElesPlaceCapitalRegion/movie-time-feelings-grief-exploration)	Rated
• COCO*	PG
• UP*	PG
• The Lion King*	G
• Inside Out*	PG
• Frozen II*	PG
• Onward*	PG
• BIG HERO 6*	PG
• Bambi	G
• Charlotte's Web	G
Older Children (Upper Elementary and older):	
• Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone	PG
• Fly Away Home	PG
• Hugo	PG
• Old Yeller	G
• The Secret Garden	G
• The Yearling	G
• Bridge to Terabithia	PG
• My Dog Skip	PG
• We Bought a Zoo	PG
• Marley & Me	PG
• A Dog's Purpose	PG
• Hachi: A Dog's Tale	PG
• My Girl	PG
Teen & Adult	
• Rabbit Hole	PG-13
• Terms of Endearment	PG-13
• Evelyn	PG
• The Fault in Our Stars	PG-13
• Love Sarah	Not rated (recommended 16+)
• Lorenzo's Oil	PG-13
• Stepmom	PG-13
• The Bucket List	PG-13
• Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close	PG-13
• Beaches	PG-13
• Ghost	PG-13
• Burn Your Maps	PG-13
• The Boys are Back	PG-13
• Steel Magnolias	PG

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT TIPS

- Prior to watching the movie, parents and adult caregivers should read about the movie online. Each family has unique circumstances, values, and preferences that may make certain movies more appropriate for your family.
- Share with your children a brief summary of the movie, before watching, so they are prepared for the topics discussed.
- If a movie appears to be distressing a family member, pause the movie and explore if your family should continue watching the movie.
- Pay attention to your children's reaction, and ask open-ended questions (e.g., "I wonder, why do you think they are crying?")
- If you have children at multiple developmental levels, certain concepts may be understood by older children that are not understood by younger children. Asking questions, and providing answers, that are developmentally appropriate for each child is recommended. For younger children, we recommend simple, concrete answers.
- It is normal for family members to have different thoughts and feelings about the same situation, and/or person/character. Normalizing and embracing these differences is healthy and empowering for children.
 - All feelings are OK!
 - Talking about thoughts and feelings can help them become less overwhelming and distressing.