

Parents & Leader's Guide:



A note from the Battlefields

Aria Appleton was dreamed up in the wake of a parental observation that many of the TV shows and movies available for our children were mindless or fruitless and that there was a shortage of films for families that capture a Christian worldview or even have Christians as characters. Like you, we enjoy many films produced by Hollywood ... until we realize there's an inappropriate message at the core. Sometimes it's just the language that we'd prefer not have to sit and listen to. And sometimes we even feel swindled by the message hiding inside. It's often difficult to discern when movies are so well crafted, glossy and impressive to experience. The technology and attention to detail is remarkable. The sizzle can hide something inappropriate or false so very easily.

I'm sure you agree, after several inappropriate "family" films of the last few years, and Bible films that have fallen flat — Hollywood has lost touch, doesn't care, or worse, is using the controversy to sell. We believe that A VAST majority of parents in the US still want to instill Christian values into their kids and would prefer more wholesome material for general family viewing.

Many of the family films that do exist in this genre suffer from a lack of quality in some area of production. It's a good story but the acting's terrible. It's a "meh" screenplay but it's shot well. We didn't want Aria to have to sacrifice on quality or heart simply because it was made for families. Though Aria Appleton was made with only five loaves and two fish, we were meticulous about the screenplay, the songs, and production and post production seasons. We assembled the best crew and actors we could find and we believe we created something that raises the bar. Our children deserve it and we owe it to ourselves to raise the standard for Christian and family filmmaking on the whole.

Reproducible Behavior

Some parents feel that movies that show characters demonstrating negative, reproducible behavior are inappropriate for children. I respect this position as I am also a concerned Dad who is on a mission to teach my children how to think, behave, and love well. I want them to know God and live a life of love just as Jesus called us to do.

Further, I am a proponent of the biblical idea that what we focus on and think about regularly is what we tend to create in our lives; what we think about and dwell upon is who and what we become. I want my children to focus on good things and make good for themselves and others. "As a Man Thinks in his heart, so is he."

Some would say that characters that represent negative reproducible behavior shouldn't be included in stories because our kids might emulate it. But what would Lewis' Aslan be without the High Queen of Narnia to do battle with? She turned a bunch of people to stone and killed Aslan, ya know? This is negative reproducible behavior in what's considered a Christian classic and it's downright murderous, evil of the lowest sort, but it teaches us something. Edmond betrays Peter, Susan & Lucy for a box of turkish delight just like Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, but even Edmond's betrayal and the rest of literary and movie history

antagonists teach us something about the great battle between good and evil and, when in the context of night-time story book reading or family movie night, they give us teaching opportunities for our kids. I'm reading the Chronicles of Narnia series with my daughter right now, so I'm daily experiencing her questions about the story and what it means. We've discussed Aslan's sacrifice. We've discussed Edmond's redemption. It's amazing, but we wouldn't discuss these things unless the Ice Queen was written so well.

I agree that exposure to certain ideas or demonstrated behaviors could create issues for both child and parent if the child is prone to imitation. Simply said, there are things we don't want our kids to see or imitate. And I think this is good and right. With good parental guidance, however, films like *Aria Appleton*, or Bible stories where Antiheroes abide, can create incredible family conversations and teaching opportunities. It's up to you, as a parent to decide whether to take on the challenge. Many of you are doing it already; but you're doing it retroactively. You take your child to a seemingly innocuous film, something inappropriate happens onscreen, and you're left having to explain or do damage control on the other side.

We sense, from time to time, that some of the movies or shows our daughter is interested in have an insidious motive to influence her (and everyone else watching), towards positions or ideologies we can't support or encourage. There are programs that simply exist as propaganda. These are more rare, of course, and most of the shows and films suffer more from a LACK of motive than from an evil one. But either way, you're left there trying to awkwardly explain it to your child, and then explain why it was ok to spend \$50 bucks to take it in with popcorn.

This dilemma drove us to create *Aria Appleton*, and I can assure you the film was created with OUR children in mind, and yours. We pressed the story through a fairly tight filter to ensure that it was appropriate for all ages and that each theme was treated with the respect it deserves. BUT, we didn't, however, sanitize the story so that the truth of the character or repercussions of her points of view, judgments, or her "reproducible, negative behavior" were omitted. It's all in there. And like Jesus' fictional but true parables, we believe *Aria* is true as fiction can be.

We leave you, as a parent or youth leader, to decide what to do with what we made. In this case, you have the opportunity to laugh, cry, and experience *Aria Appleton*'s transformation as a family or youth group and then discuss the themes for mutual edification and education.

This guide is a short assistant to help you share the film with your family or your youth group.

We are teaching our child to be mindful of what she's thinking about, feeling, and especially watching. We know you are too, and *Aria Appleton* is dedicated to this purpose.

For your kiddos, tweens, teens and your entire family,

Nathan D. & D'Lytha Myers
(AKA: The Battlefields)

Ps. Unlock the movie in the app to view and enjoy the *Aria Appleton* Parent and Leader's Guide with several pages of activities and devotionals you can use to discuss the movie and its themes with your kids.