

MOVIE: TOY STORY 3

**** Please read the Introduction to Large Group Studies in order to best utilize this material**

Sub Topic theme:

WHAT IS A FAMILY: structure and purpose

Lesson objective:

Identifying some of the functions and attitudes that make groups of people families, as well as developing a sense of belonging that makes us a family member. This lesson is focused on the purposes of the family by looking at how the characters (in this case, mostly toys) relate to and support one another. Also included in this movie is a strong emphasis on belonging that is derived from their structure as a family, specifically, they are all ANDY's toys!

Intro to the Movie:*Toy Story 3*

Woody, Buzz and the whole gang are back. As their owner, Andy, has grown up since we last saw him, he is preparing to depart for college. When his mom asks what he's going to do with the toys, he eventually decides to put them up in the attic. Mistakenly, his mom thinks the large plastic trash bag where he has put Woody and the others is a bag of give-aways, and so his loyal toys find themselves in daycare where untamed tots with their sticky little fingers do not play nice. So, it's all for one and one for all in this family of toys as they join Barbie's counterpart Ken, a thespian hedgehog named Mr. Pricklepants, and a pink, strawberry-scented teddy bear called Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear to plan their great escape.

The toys reference the word 'family' to describe themselves several times throughout the movie. Their sense of identity comes from the fact that they belong to someone. They are Andy's toys! This unifying distinctiveness offers them a uniqueness and certain character traits that other toys don't have. There is a true sense of pride and respect derived from the family they are a part of, and this gives them strength to overcome the obstacles (some rather imposing!) they face. There are themes of connection, unity, hope, common goals, belonging – all things that military families need to cope with and overcome the challenges of stress,

deployments, and separations. These strengths found in this 'toy family' offer some powerful characteristics of resilient families, as well as how the identity of their belonging to Andy points to our belonging to the Creator as the author of our family!

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as unified goals, working together, building on strengths, overcoming obstacles and never giving up hope. Ask teens to notice the word 'family,' how it is used, and what it means. Help them notice a deep sense of belonging to someone that permeates the entire movie and how many times it is referred to.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the characters would you rather be and why?
2. Name some of the stresses and challenges that the toys faced that you recognized.
3. How was the term 'family' used in the movie? Do you think they were a family? Why or why not?
4. The toys were very clear about their belonging to Andy. What do you think this sense of belonging did for them? Have you experienced that same sense of belonging with your family or others?
5. Give some examples of the ways that the toys used their strengths to overcome the obstacles they were all facing? Could any of them have done it on their own? What does that tell you about facing challenges as a family?

Group input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *Identifying some of the functions and attitudes that make groups of people families, as well as developing a sense of belonging that makes us a family member. This lesson is focused on the purposes of the family by looking at how the characters (in this case, mostly toys) relate and support*

one another. Also included in this movie is a strong emphasis on belonging that is derived from their structure as a family, specifically, they are all ANDY's toys!

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

You may not realize this, but some people call you the Toy Story generation since most all of your life you have walked with Andy, Woody, Buzz, Jessie and the rest of the toys as your friends. While being such an impressive feat of animation, and you can see how the techniques develop from Toy Story 1 to Toy Story 3, there are also some amazing themes for you generation. Recent studies have shown that over 60% of your generation, when asked what was most important to them, answered "FAMILY." Second, at 23% was "Friends." And in this particular series of movies, you get a lot of emphasis on family.

You noticed how the word 'family' was used by the toys to identify their collective unity in the movie, and that is certainly one definition or way to use the word. Clearly they were not talking about the more traditional usage to describe a nuclear family of a mom, a dad and a kid or kids. This usage depicts more of a team or cohesive unit idea, which is also a form or structure of a family.

Some of the important purposes and functions of a family are clearly displayed. It doesn't take too much of a stretch to recognize the obstacles and challenges that this family of toys has to face as having some similarities with the kinds of stresses military families like yours or your friends might be facing with all the deployments and separations and hard-life stuff that comes your way. Using their strengths and working together as a family to overcome their problems is a great example to us in our military families. Listen to what Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV) says about that: "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Work together – the members of your family are not the enemy. The enemy is the enemy!

Lastly, there is such a powerful expression of *belonging* that is portrayed throughout the whole movie. These are Andy's toys and they have always been his. Being identified as Andy's is the main thing that makes them a family. They are a family because they all belong to Andy, AND as a family they all are that much more aware that they belong. It's a pretty cool both-and kind of thing.

It reminds me of what Scripture says about us and our families in Proverbs 14:26. "Reverence for the LORD gives *confidence* and *security* to a man and his family." Did you catch that? Offering reverence to the Lord is another way of saying acknowledging who you belong to, and it results in *confidence* and *security*. Knowing

who you belong to makes you part of the family, which makes you even more secure in your sense of belonging to the family. Now that's God's awesome design for us and our families...and it's all here in Toy Story 3!

Challenge:

1. Some time this week, have a conversation with members of your family about what specific things they think make you a family. Maybe even watch Toy Story 3 together and point out things you think are similar to your family when it comes to solving problems and tackling obstacles.
2. Talk to someone this week (chaplain, Club Beyond leader, friend's parent, mentor) about some things you're learning about families and how you feel about God's design for families. Describe to what degree you feel like you belong.
3. Write a poem or journal entry about what belonging to a family means to you.

Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey for further involvement with this topic of What is a Family.