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**'Take Me to the Movies' Workshop**  
2008 National FCE Lesson  
2008 Annual FCE Conference Oct 7, 2008  
Lesson formatted and presented by Connie Leavitt & Pat Wallin

## LEADER GUIDE

### Objective

The subject of the world of movies is a vast, multi-faceted, and a provocative one. This is a lesson with many guides to help the study group leader and member to decide what is advantageous for them and their children to watch and what is deleterious. This lesson has a fun game, websites, discussion, bonding, history, Hearth Fire, Rating cards, fun prizes, conclusions, and evaluations.

### Word Find

Pass out the Children's Movies 'word find'. Let members work on this for a few minutes; help anyone that needs it when everyone seems to be fairly well done.

### Bonding with Favorites

Have members pick a partner and write down each other's 2 most favorite movies of their lives and tell why and what they most remember about them; then the partners tell the class their partners choices and why.

### History of Movies

Tell the history of entertainment starting back to the Greek and Roman tragic plays, Shakespeare Elizabethan Theatre, the ancient Chinese puppet plays, Native American shaman presentations, etc. to the present day forms of programs we enjoy or that get our attention. Discuss progression of movies from silent screen, talkies, television to present day ( include Westerns, Science Fiction, Epics, Broadway Musicals, Religious, All Black, Hitchcock including mysteries and suspense, etc.

### Questions and Discussion

What is the fascination for scifi entertainment, death & skeletons? Explicit sexual scenes? Visciousness? Bloody? Etc. Discuss when members were children (their memories, with parents or not, frightening scenes, etc

### Hearth Fire #44

There is much information in the 'A Child is Asking.....Take Me to the Movies' that is included in this packet. There are 6 websites that are very good and valuable to this lesson that you should peruse.

### Rating Card

Also included in this packet is a rating card. Go over this with the members; this promotes much discussion.

### Conclusions

Hand out 'Kids First Film Festival' flyer. Discuss writing to your Senators about censorship and TV channel blockage. What are other things that can be done?

### Prizes

Both presenters made up a 'Take Me to the Movies' basket to use as door prizes. Have each participant put their name on a paper and into a basket. Draw 2 winners. The baskets contain things that you might have while being entertained: package of popcorn, various candy that would be at a theater, 2 cans of soda, 2 kids movies (from Goodwill), gum and Cornuts; make up anything that is easy and inexpensive for you. This part is only optional.

### Evaluations

It is valuable to use evaluations to know the efficacy of your presentation as well as sending the results to your State VP of Programs.

\*the Hearth Fire and the Rating Cards are available through your State VP of Programs, if needed for a nominal fee

A WORLD OF MOVIES: 70 Years of Film History, Richard Lawton, Vineyard Books, Inc, 1974

'Moving pictures' in America were at first shown in penny arcades (a penny dropped into the slot of a machine called the Kinetoscope allowed the viewer to turn a crank and watch a subject in motion). When screen projection became possible, they were shown in vaudeville houses, finally transferred to the nickelodeon: a converted store with screen, projector and chairs. By 1908 there were eight to ten thousand of these-but they were stuffy, ill-smelling places frequented by the poor and illiterate, and they would not improve until their product was good enough to attract a different audience. 1912 saw slapstick, then two-revelers presented the gag, the chase and-above all - the impossible. Pies, punches and policemen flew through the air. Clowns (comedians) such as Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, etc., kept things spinning.

Stars would become the major attraction at the box office. Initially, players had been unidentified. As the public acquired favorites, it supplied them with names. For stars who clicked, the rewards were great. Two of the most successful of all time, Charles Chaplin and Mary Pickford, are classic examples. Chaplin rose from \$150 a week in 1913 to over a million dollars for eighteen months' work in 1917. Mary Pickford went from \$25 a week in 1909 to the same million dollar bracket in 1917. Also a million a year by 1917 was Douglas Fairbanks. These three captured the public hearts. They founded United Artists Corp. In 1917 William S. Hart was the first of the great Western stars. Then came Tom Mix.

World War I had forced many European countries to curtail production. Germany, under government subsidy flourished - as well as Sweden and Denmark were active. Through the years of conflict movies were a means of 'escape', the middle class sought illusion. Neighborhood theatres sprang up, edging the nickelodeons out. In 1914 opulence took over when the Strand Theatre opened on Broadway with crystal chandeliers, thick carpets and rich ornamentation. Its 3300 seats, 30-piece symphony orchestra and sumptuous lounges delighted patrons, and inspired the building of plush movie houses throughout the country. There were 'motion picture cathedrals' like the Roy in 1927 and Radio City Music Hall in 1932, both seating over 6000.

Public taste dictated what Hollywood filmed-as it always would. When something caught on, it was repeated - ad nauseam. So while certain types of movies were staples (Westerns always made money) others were fads that expired when the public had had enough. For a brief period the war films were popular, but those dwindled when the war ended for the most part. Following the war, Demille sensed that audiences were tired of stereotype heroes, heroines, villains and vamps. Victorianism was giving way to the Jazz Age, sex and luxury. Demille introduced breaking from the Puritan tradition, to the New Morality. He introduced human fallibility and extravagance. His depiction of bath and boudoir raised the standard of living for some-longing for others. His sociological dissection of marriage was a first. He showed that husbands and wives did not always live happily ever after as had been supposed. Often they indulged in infidelity.

Gloria Swanson became Demille's 'emancipated woman'; she knew how to get laughs, but was a skilled dramatic actress. She projected glamour with beauty, satin, jewels, furs, and coiffures.

If the American woman was getting out of hand, it would take a different

approach from the American male to tame her.

Rudolph Valentino-most popular romantic idol of all time-provided it. So profound and unhealthy-an effect did Valentino have on his public that his premature death in 1926 produced world-wide hysteria and a number of suicides. High living was only a small portion of what appeared on the screen, however; the Western acquired new stature in 1923. James Cruse film re-created the pioneer hardships against vast panoramic settings. John Ford dealt with the construction of the transcontinental railroad. The pony express, the Indian wars and the Oklahoma land rush – all became material for the big-scale Western, one of America’s classic contributions to the screen.

Another American strength- comedy-reached a peak in the twenties. The comedians struck out on their own creating characters who survived in the harsh cruel world through a particular specialty. Outstanding at this time too was Lon Chaney, who’s first grotesque depiction was the crippled beggar in the ‘Miracle Man’. He specialized in the deformed and the demented with elaborate make-up, contortions and stunts that aggravated pain.

As technical equipment improved, thirties films acquired polish. There were gangster films; and depression films showing women living outside the law, too. Poverty and disillusionment or-simply-attraction to money, made rich men’s mistresses out of Barbara Stanly, Joan Crawford, Greta Garb and Marlene Dietrich. Unlike the gangster, who was killed for his transgressions, the errant female could repent and reform. But before the gangster ‘got his’ or the fallen woman ‘went straight’ they had a pretty glamorous time of it. Violence and sex looked extremely rewarding and-as the depression grew worse and attendance at the box office declined-producers exploited this even more.

Pressure groups became concerned. The rate at which heroines were having illegitimate babies was alarming; the popularity of sex symbols Jean Harlow and Clara Bow was even more upsetting; and the last straw was the appearance on the scene of Mae West. Shortly after her second film in 1933, the National Legion of Decency was formed and the motion picture industry was in for another cleanup.

Then came ‘message’ pictures in the forties along with escapist fare with Hope and Crosby. Abnormal behavior was presented in psychotic films: Hitchcock and Latvia portraying alcoholism, psychoanalysis and mental illness. Then in the 1950’s a result of another technological advance: television and it was free. The wide screen came in 1952 to movies, then 3D. Hollywood learned not only how to exist with television but also how to benefit from it, TV rentals.

With the rise of independence came the relaxation of censorship, and we know the rest to present day.

BACKSTAGE AT A MOVIE SET Katherine Wessling, Children's Press 2003

When you go to the movies, time slips away. It is fiction but a lot of the things happen in real life. Do you ever stay to watch the credits? To see where it was filmed? There are many times hundreds of names and jobs behind the scenes, and a very grueling schedule.

In 1889 Thos. Alvis Edison changed the world with movies. They were called a 'kinetoscope', a 30 second film in individual booths. In 1894 parlors opened and cost 5 cents, thus called a 'nickelodeon'. These were often a strong man flexing his muscles, horses running, etc. The Lumiere brothers in France made the first film in 1895 on screen. Early films were made in New York and New Jersey. Hollywood in So. California was desirable due to its many different terrains: mountains, ocean, desert, and forests close by and also the terrific weather which let studios shoot all year long. Sometimes the camera crew traveled to the city in the movie for one day.

Until the late 1920's, all movies were silent. They and no sound, often, words the characters spoke were printed on-screen for the audience to read. Theater owners knew that sound enhanced the pleasures of viewing films. So musicians were often hired to accompany the on-screen action. Example, a woman tied to a track with a train coming, the musician (usually a pianist) would start playing dark ominous notes. Larger theaters would employ full orchestras.

In 1927, Warner Brothers Studios produced 'the Jazz Singer' with a soundtrack. As the century rolled forward, movies made a deeper mark on our culture. Whether audiences wanted to watch romances blooming, action unfolding, or slapstick humor, movies provided the pleasures. The entertainment was affordable. Movies provided an inexpensive way to experience the magic of performance. Movies were relaxation and information for people and lasted several hours. It included a double feature, a newsreel, a cartoon, and previews of coming attractions.

The overall look of movies as changed over the years. Thanks to color in the 1960's, the films looked more vivid. Special effects had been a part of the early movies, but in 1977, they were taken to a whole new level. The movie STAR WARS hit the big screen and awed the crowds.

Each person's work is guided by the same basic plan – the screenplay or script, which contains a plot, character actions, and character dialogue. Screenplays can be original ideas, or taken from plays or books, these are called adapted screenplays.

A film's director and cinematographer collaborate on lighting each scene. Perfect lighting helps to set the mood. The crew may cast the villain in shadows to play up his evil nature. They may shine harsh lights close to the victim's face to indicate his fear.

Actors must usually audition for a role. Two lead actors may audition at the same time to see if there is a chemistry between them, then they do a screen test. After the movie is cast the rehearsals begin. The cast brings the characters to life. The skilled crew members work hard behind the scenes: the art director making up the physical scenes; makeup and hairdressing; costume supervisors, the producer is most responsible for keeping a film running on time and under budget, and hires all of the necessary crew members. \$20 million is a modest budget for a major motion picture.

Getting to the top of the film industry is a long climb. Many colleges offer courses in film making. Start with a video camera, make your own script.