



46 of the Best Fatherhood & Family Films



**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

46 of the Best Fatherhood & Family Films

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“If a picture is worth
a **thousand** words,
then a video
is worth a **million.**”

—Barry Levinson
(Academy Award-Winning Director,
Screenwriter, & Producer)

Introduction >

Looking for films you can use to motivate, inspire, or make you think? How about films you can reference in your fatherhood program sessions?

We have listed some of the best movies dads can watch with their children to inspire deeper conversation.

Fatherhood practitioners can also use these films to supplement a fatherhood program (e.g. to deepen a point of discussion from your sessions) as a central activity to connect father and child, during a father-family event, or during an event to recruit dads into a fatherhood program.

The films are in alphabetical order. Some films are new. Others are classics. And they include films in the action, drama, family, and comedy genres.

Before selecting a movie, check its rating and description to ensure it's appropriate for your setting.

Take 1

GENRE > ACTION

Take 1 > Genre > Action

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
After Earth	A crash landing leaves Kitai Raige and his father Cypher stranded on Earth, a millennium after events forced humanity's escape. With Cypher injured, Kitai must embark on a perilous journey to signal for help.	Father and son, survival	2013	PG-13
Captains Courageous	Harvey Cheyne is a spoiled brat used to having his own way. When a prank goes wrong onboard an ocean liner Harvey ends up overboard and nearly drowns. Stranded on the boat he must adapt to the ways of the fishermen and learn more about the real world.	Children need time, not 'things'	1937	N/A
Cast Away	A FedEx executive must transform himself physically and emotionally to survive a crash landing on a deserted island.	Priorities, family first, tragedy of living life alone	2000	PG-13
The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	A meek Hobbit and eight companions set out on a journey to destroy the One Ring and the Dark Lord Sauron.	Loyalty, fear of failure, friendships, mentors	2001	PG-13

Take 2

GENRE > Drama

Take 2 > Genre > Drama

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Chasing Mavericks	When young Jay Moriarity discovers that the mythic Mavericks surf break, one of the biggest waves on Earth, exists just miles from his Santa Cruz home, he enlists the help of local legend Frosty Hesson to train him to survive it.	Mentoring, Fathers and sons, haunted by the past	2012	PG
Courageous	When a tragedy strikes close to home, four police officers struggle with their faith and their roles as husbands and fathers; together they make a decision that will change all of their lives.	Fatherhood, Faith	2011	PG-13
Field of Dreams	An Iowa corn farmer, hearing voices, interprets them as a command to build a baseball diamond in his fields; he does, and the Chicago White Sox come.	Strained relationships, reconciliation	1989	PG
He Got Game	A basketball player's father must try to convince him to go to a college so he can get a shorter sentence.	Legacy, father & son relationship	1998	R
It's a Wonderful Life	An angel helps a compassionate but despairingly frustrated businessman by showing what life would have been like if he never existed.	Life of purpose, accepting disappointment	1946	PG
Miracles from Heaven	A young girl suffering from a rare digestive disorder finds herself miraculously cured after surviving a terrible accident.	Struggle, child sickness	2016	PG

Take 2 > Genre > Drama

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	A naive man is appointed to fill a vacancy in the US Senate. His plans collide with political corruption, but he doesn't back down.	Paying price, stand by principles	1939	N/A
My Life	A terminally ill man prepares for his death.	Lessons beyond the grave	1993	PG-13
Road to Perdition	Bonds of loyalty are put to the test when a hitman's son witnesses what his father does for a living. Every boy wants to grow up to be like dad, but what if dad isn't the guy you think he is?	Father and son	2002	R
Stand By Me	After the death of a friend, a writer recounts a boyhood journey to find the body of a missing boy.	Seek good company, life with purpose	1986	R
The Godfather	The aging patriarch of an organized crime dynasty transfers control of his clandestine empire to his reluctant son.	Fatherhood, growing up in crime	1972	R
The Notebook	A poor and passionate young man falls in love with a rich young woman and gives her a sense of freedom. They soon are separated by their social differences.	Lifelong love, sacrifice, & family	2004	PG-13

Take 2 > Genre > Drama

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
The Pursuit of Happyness	A struggling salesman takes custody of his son as he's poised to begin a life-changing professional endeavor.	Fathers & sons, determination, never give up	2006	PG-13
The Rookie	A Texas baseball coach makes a Major League Baseball team after agreeing to try out if his high school team made the playoffs.	Overcoming your reputation, true friendship	2002	G
To Kill a Mockingbird	Atticus Finch, a lawyer in the Depression-era South, defends a black man against an undeserved rape charge, and his kids against prejudice.	Not judging a book by its cover	1962	N/A
We Were Soldiers	The story of the first major battle of the American phase of the Vietnam War, and the soldiers on both sides that fought it.	Faith, family, & importance of leadership	2002	R
When the Game Stands Tall	The journey of legendary football coach Bob Ladouceur, who took the De La Salle High School Spartans from obscurity to a 151-game winning streak that shattered all records for any American sport.	Mentoring, fatherhood, coaching	2014	PG
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Take 3

GENRE > Family

Take 3 > Genre > Family

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Brave	Determined to make her own path in life, Princess Merida defies a custom that brings chaos to her kingdom. Granted one wish, Merida must rely on her bravery and her archery skills to undo a beastly curse.	Fathers & daughters, raising strong daughters	2012	PG
Brother Bear	When a young Inuit hunter needlessly kills a bear, he is magically changed into a bear himself as punishment with a talkative cub being his only guide to changing back.	Being true to your beliefs	2003	G
Chicken Little	After ruining his reputation with the town, a courageous chicken must come to the rescue of his fellow citizens when aliens start an invasion.	Criticism, believing in your child even when he fails	2005	G
Despicable Me 1 & 2	When a criminal mastermind uses a trio of orphan girls as pawns for a grand scheme, he finds their love is changing him for the better.	Adoption, single father	2010/2013	PG
Finding Nemo	After his son is captured in the Great Barrier Reef and taken to Sydney, a timid clownfish sets out on a journey to bring him home.	Overprotective dad, friendships, & sacrifice	2003	G

Take 3 > Genre > Family

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Ice Age	Set during the Ice Age, a sabertooth tiger, a sloth, and a wooly mammoth find a lost human infant, and they try to return him to his tribe.	Let go of the past	2002	PG
Monsters, Inc.	To power the city, monsters have to scare children. The children are toxic to the monsters, and after a child gets through, two monsters realize things may not be what they think.	Overcoming fear	2001	G
Peter Pan	Wendy and her brothers are whisked away to the magical world of Neverland with the hero of their stories, Peter Pan.	Growing old before your time, enjoy life	1953	N/A
The Chronicles of Narnia	Four kids travel through a wardrobe to the land of Narnia and learn of their destiny to free it with the guidance of a mystical lion.	Good can win	2005	PG
The Croods	After their cave is destroyed, a caveman family must trek through an unfamiliar fantastical world with the help of an inventive boy.	Father protecting family, challenge of raising teens	2013	PG

Take 3 > Genre > Family

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
The Goonies	In order to save their home from foreclosure, a group of misfits set out to find a pirate's ancient treasure.	Not following the crowd	1985	PG
The Lion King	Lion cub and future king Simba searches for his identity. His eagerness to please others and penchant for testing his boundaries sometimes gets him into trouble.	Fatherhood, mentoring	1994	G
The Princess and the Frog	A waitress, desperate to fulfill her dreams as a restaurant owner, is set on a journey to turn a frog prince back into a human being, but she has to face the same problem after she kisses him.	Hard work ethic, father's dreams	2009	G
Toy Story 1, 2, 3	A cowboy doll is profoundly threatened and jealous when a new spaceman figure supplants him as top toy in a boy's room.	Jealousy, friendship, & family	1995	G
UP	Seventy-eight year old Carl Fredricksen travels to Paradise Falls in his home equipped with balloons, inadvertently taking a young stowaway.	Child's wishful anticipation for an absent father	2009	PG

Take 4

GENRE > Comedy

Take 4 > Genre > Comedy

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	Alexander's day begins with gum stuck in his hair, followed by more calamities. However, he finds little sympathy from his family and begins to wonder if bad things only happen to him, his mom, dad, brother and sister - who all find themselves living through their own terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.	Busy fatherhood, getting through life	2014	PG
Annie	A foster kid, who lives with her mean foster mom, sees her life change when business tycoon and New York mayoral candidate Will Stacks makes a thinly-veiled campaign move and takes her in.	Adoption, fatherhood, daughters	2014	PG
Cars	A hot-shot race-car named Lightning McQueen gets waylaid in Radiator Springs, where he finds the true meaning of friendship and family.	Pride, ego, mentoring	2006	G
Father of the Bride	With his oldest daughter's wedding approaching, a father finds himself reluctant to let go.	Letting go, imperfect parent	1991	PG
Liar, Liar	A fast track lawyer can't lie for 24 hours due to his son's birthday wish after the lawyer turns his son down for the last time.	Relationships & honesty, fatherhood	1997	PG-13

Take 4 > Genre > Comedy

Title	Description	Theme	Year	Rating
Parental Guidance	Artie and Diane agree to look after their three grandkids when their type-A helicopter parents need to leave town for work. Problems arise when the kids' 21st-century behavior collides with Artie and Diane's old-school methods.	Generational parenting/ fatherhood	2012	PG
The Odd Life of Timothy Green	A childless couple bury a box in their backyard, containing all of their wishes for an infant. Soon, a child is born, though Timothy Green is not all that he appears.	Parental expectations	2012	PG
The Pacifier	Disgraced Navy SEAL Shane Wolfe is handed a new assignment: Protect the five Plummer kids from enemies of their recently deceased father -- a government scientist whose top-secret experiment remains in the kids' house.	Learning to love & still be a man	2005	PG
The Sandlot	A new kid in town is taken under the wing of a young baseball prodigy and his team in this coming of age movie set in the summer of 1962. Together, they get themselves into many adventures involving rival teams, lifeguards, and a vicious dog.	Importance of a father's blessing to his child	1993	PG
We Bought a Zoo	Set in Southern California, a father moves his young family to the countryside to renovate and reopen a struggling zoo.	Starting over, Fathers & sons	2011	PG

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