

At the Movies

WALL-E



GATHER

The film *WALL-E* was Pixar's ninth major motion picture and, at the time, considered its most ambitious. Preceded by blockbuster stories about talking toys, bugs, monsters, fish, cars, and superheroes, *WALL-E* sets a different tone with main characters who are robots who don't really speak. In fact, the first human dialogue doesn't occur until thirty-nine minutes into the film. Nevertheless, this movie portrays deeply meaningful relationships between creatures of all kinds and explores themes of love, hope, and restoration.

ICEBREAKER: WHAT ARE YOU CONSUMING?

Before participants arrive, make a chart on the whiteboard with sixteen columns and six rows. Label the columns with hourly time stamps between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Label the rows: <1 week, 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years.

Gather where everyone can see the whiteboard. Invite youth to consider how many disposable products they use in a typical day.

1. Explain that the columns show the average hours people are awake each day and the rows represent how long certain objects are used before they're thrown away.
2. Ask group members to name the materials they come in contact with each hour of the day. Start with the first waking hour of the day, 7 a.m. Write down their responses in the appropriate row. For example, a toothbrush might go in the 6 months row, and toilet paper might go in the <1 week row.
3. Continue until there's at least one response per column. Wrap up after about 5–7 minutes by inviting kids to count how many disposable products were listed.

WATCH

Introduce the film *WALL-E* to the group. Point out that even though it is rated G and was released more than a decade ago, this film covers complex themes. Encourage the group to pay special attention to the relationship between the two main characters, the way the planet is cared for, and how humans are represented throughout the film.

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard
- Markers
- Index cards
- Pens

DID YOU KNOW?

WALL-E was named the best Spiritual Film of 2008 by Beliefnet.com.

SUPPLIES

- *WALL-E* (2008) movie
- Video source

Play the film.

Discuss the film:

- The movie depicts a bleak future where the planet earth is full of garbage and has been abandoned. How did it get that way?
- Discuss the relationship between WALL-E and E.V.E. How do they show love to each other, especially at the end of the movie?
- What did you think about the way humans were portrayed?
- Andrew Stanton, the director of this film, said that the premise of this film was “irrational love defeats life’s programming.” How was that theme expressed in the film?

DID YOU KNOW?

WALL-E was nominated for six Academy Awards and won Best Animated Feature Film.

RESPOND

WALL-E features themes of caring for creation that connect with the story of God creating the world in Genesis 2:4b-25. Read this story aloud as a group.

1. Review the chart on the whiteboard. Invite youth to circle items they could live without or that they could use differently. (For example, buying cereal in bags instead of boxes reduces cardboard waste while still being able to enjoy cereal.)
2. On the whiteboard, have the group develop a list of ways they could reduce the amount of waste they generate.
3. Distribute index cards and pens to each person. Ask them to write three of the ideas developed by the group that they can commit to trying for at least one week.
4. Invite everyone to place the index card in their planner, notebook, or Bible so they can refer back to the list often.

Questions to consider as you work:

- Genesis 2:15 gives humankind the responsibility of caring for the planet. How are we doing? What are some signs of concern and signs of hope?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how concerned are you about the future of our planet? Explain why you chose that number.
- What responsibility do you think Christians have in taking care of creation?
- How do you experience God’s irrational love in the midst of life’s difficulties?

End with prayer:

God of new life, you’ve blessed us with an abundant creation filled with life and love. Help us to be good stewards of everything you’ve given us. Thank you for being patient and gracious when we fall short. Amen.

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard from Gather
- Markers
- Index cards
- Pens