

The Croods (2013)

Rated PG. Our ratings: V -3; L -5; S/N -2. Running time: 1 hour 38 min.

O send out your light and your truth;

let them lead me

For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

I love it when a film far exceeds my low expectations, as does this animated tale of a prehistoric family living in fear in a cave. The Croods could be neighbors of the Flintstones, with papa Grug about as bright as old Fred. His biggest problem, other than the dangerous hunt for food, is keeping his rebellious daughter Eep from being victimized by her curiosity. He keeps telling her when she sneaks out of the cave to explore their surroundings, "Fear keeps us alive, Eep. Never not be afraid." But she wants to see what is beyond their cave, even though her father says, "New? New is always bad!" However, when seismic changes shake the mountains and destroy their cave, it is the new that the family has to confront—or die. Fortunately Eep meets an outsider named Guy, who has good news and bad news—he introduces them to the mysterious substance called "Fire," and he tells them that their world as they know it is about to come to an end amidst gigantic earthquakes. They must leave their devastated area and seek a new home.

The film's theme "follow the light" lends itself to discussion by church groups—or as the subject of a children's sermon. The film also becomes a character transformation one when, after surviving so many dangers, the hulky Grug grabs and hugs his daughter and, puzzled, she says, "This is good... what do you

call this?" He replies, "I call it... a hug. Because it rhymes with Grug; but you can always change it if you don't like it." "No, I like it," she answers. Indeed, by this time Grug has even changed his mind about the one whom he has considered the bane of his life, his elderly mother-in-law.

For Reflection/Discussion

1. Describe the main characters, especially the contrast between Eep and her other family members.
2. How can curiosity be deadly (as Grug fears), as well as important for growth?
3. How is Grug's enslavement to fear typical of much of human history? Indeed, how have Christian leaders too often used fear? (As I have recalled before, I remember years ago passing by every day a sign which read, "Quit playing with your soul! Repent to Jesus, or you'll burn in Hell!")
4. How is the fire that Guy brings more than just a means of keeping warm? What all can it symbolize?
4. How do we see that a community, such as the Crood family, is important for our growth and survival?
5. What do you think of the depiction of the old conflict between rule-followers and innovators in the exchange between father and daughter, "We have to follow the rules" and "The rules don't work anymore!" I think it is Eep who later replies to her mother's remark about something being "too risky" with, "No, we changed the rules." How was this important in the Gospel accounts of Jesus and the Jerusalem religious leaders.
6. The film brings in the old traditional mother-in-law jokes: how might this be considered sexist? Or, at least revealing of Grug's sexism, as his attitude does change. How is the development of Eep's character an antidote to such sexism (after all, it is she, and not her brother who is curious and

ready to welcome change)?

7. Reflect upon what could be considered the film's main theme, summed up the end comment, "No more dark. No more cave. From now on we'll stay out here where we can follow the light."

8. If discussing this film in a group, have the members, equipped with Bible concordances or laptops, look up the word "light" to see how many times and how it is used in the Bible.