

# Curious George



**Rated:** G • **Running Time:** 86 minutes

**Themes:** Patience, kindness, friendship, forgiveness, hon-

esty, the need for a father's approval, bravery, satisfying an inquisitive nature, overcoming jealousy

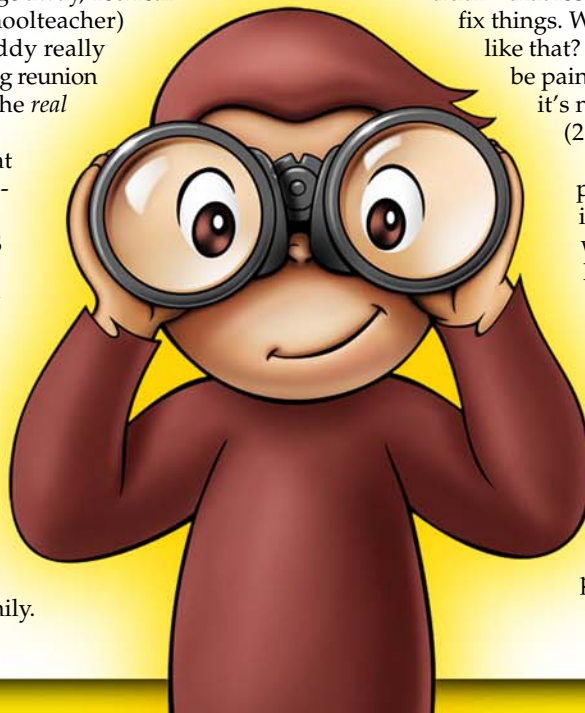
**Cautions:** Physical comedy includes George's impishness and mild slapstick violence. The opening musical number by Jack Johnson repeats the line, "We sing and dance to Mother Nature's song." A museum exhibit shows prehistoric men to be part monkey. Ted fibs in comic attempts to get out of tight spots, but comes clean when it's most important. A coveted artifact was used for idol worship.

## Story Summary

Times are tough for the Bloomsberry Museum. With attendance and gift shop sales down, Professor Bloomsberry feels pressure to sell the building to his son, Junior, a callous entrepreneur eager to tear it down and build a parking lot. This news shocks Ted, the museum's genial tour guide, who suggests they boost traffic by finding the legendary shrine of Zagawa, a 40'-tall idol shaped like an ape. Once in Africa, Ted finds only a miniature version of Zagawa no bigger than his thumb, and meets a playful chimpanzee who stows away on their voyage home.

Back in New York City, turmoil erupts. Bloomsberry, having assumed that the artifact would be full-size, has the entire metropolis anticipating a gigantic exhibit. Junior is out to embarrass Ted, envious of his father's admiration for him. Meanwhile, the plucky monkey (named George) proceeds to create havoc in the asphalt jungle not because he's malicious but because he's a curious free spirit who always seems to find trouble. After losing his patience and sending George away, Ted realizes (aided by a pretty schoolteacher) that he and his simian buddy really need each other. The ensuing reunion leads to the discovery of the *real* shrine of Zagawa.

One might assume that *Curious George* is a feature-length cartoon strictly for preschoolers—like the PBS series that followed it. It's actually a gem with plenty of charm and laughs for older audiences raised on H.A. Rey's books. (Wait 'til you see how Ted ends up wearing the yellow threads!) A puckish script and first-rate vocal work by Will Ferrell, David Cross and others make this wholesome film a delight for the whole family.



## Family Activity

At the triumphant unveiling of the museum's newest exhibit, Ted encourages the crowd to take a hands-on approach to learning, allowing their curiosity to lead them to new experiences. Ask your child, "Are you curious about anything, or interested in learning more about something in particular? If so, what is it?" Then plan an exploratory field trip together.

## Talking Points

1. Jealous of his father's fondness for Ted, Junior sabotages Ted and the Zagawa quest at every turn. Talk about our need to control envy. Ask, "Why was Junior wrong to treat Ted that way? What *should* he have done when his feelings got hurt?" During your family devotional time, read about how jealousy impacted biblical figures such as King Saul (1 Samuel 18:5-16), Haman (Esther 5:9-7:10) or Aaron and Miriam (Numbers 12).

2. Maggie cares enough for Ted that she tells him the truth—that losing George was his fault—so he can fix things. Who loves you enough to be honest like that? In what other situations should we be painfully honest with someone even if it's not what they really want to hear? (2 Timothy 4:3)

3. Before driving off the pier in pursuit of the ship, Ted says, "Luckily, movies have taught me exactly what to do in this situation." We laugh because it's such a silly stunt, but sometimes movies give us ideas about how to think or behave. Ask, "Have you ever tried something you saw in a movie, only to have it create more problems? What did that teach you?"

4. Junior's desperate need for Dad's approval shows the power of a simple pat on the back. Tell your children what makes you proud of them. —by Bob Smithouser

Draw lines from the pictures in the top row to the ones in the bottom row that have rhyming names. Oh, and if you're "curious" about what you'll get when you connect those dots, give it a try!

# Rhyme Time



Connect the dots in order, then color in the picture of this curious character!

