



Galaxy Quest

Rated: PG • **Running**

Time: 1 hour, 42 minutes

Starring: Tim Allen as

Jason Nesmith; Sigourney

Weaver as Gwen DeMarco; Alan Rickman as Alexander

Dane; Tony Shalhoub as Fred Kwan; Sam Rockwell as Guy;

Daryl Mitchell as Tommy Webber; Enrico Colantoni as

Mathesar; Justin Long as Brandon

Themes: Good vs. evil, teamwork, restitution, the obsessive adoration of pop-culture icons, how fiction can be miscon-

Story Summary

The *Star Trek* phenomenon takes an affectionate ribbing at the hands of this fresh, fun action/comedy. A team of typecast early-'80s television actors—in an extreme case of mistaken identity—is thrust into real-life space battle. Beleaguered aliens who have naïvely based their society on intercepted transmissions of the actors' cheesy science fiction series (the aliens call them "historical documents") land at a *Galaxy Quest* convention in search of war heroes. What they get are tired TV icons, including a smooth-talking prima donna (Jason Nesmith), an aging beauty (Gwen DeMarco) and a bitter, classically trained actor desperate to shed signature latex headgear (Alexander Dane).

As our story begins, on-edge former stars wait to take the convention stage. They're being held up by the late arrival of Nesmith, an arrogant, insensitive "leader" whose selfish behavior continues to alienate him from his colleagues. While the emcee stalls for time by pacifying the quirky, obsessed crowd with old film clips, the crew grouches about its plight. Jason finally arrives, and everyone makes their entrances. But the festive fan interaction that follows is marred when Jason overhears people mocking him and the short-lived cult hit that has been feeding his fragile ego.

The next morning, Thermians from the Klatu nebula swing by Jason's house to pick up the hung-over celebrity for what he *thinks* will be an autograph session. He's wrong, and doesn't realize how authentic the aliens are until he has already thrown the Thermians into full-scale war by ordering an attack on their arch-enemy, Sarris. Soon the entire *Galaxy Quest* crew is in deep space, unknowingly recruited to fight big, scaly space Huns. When reality hits, they've already reached infinity and beyond.

It seems Sarris wants the Omega 13, an enormously powerful weapon referenced in the historical documents. No one, including Jason and his team, is exactly sure what the device does (the show was canceled before that episode could be produced). Even so, that coveted piece of equipment could be the undoing of the Thermians ... and the actors.

strued as fact, overcoming insensitive narcissism, honesty, the impact of hurtful words, refusing to accept defeat

Cautions: Action violence ranges from cartoonish to more intense and realistic, on par with a *Star Trek* movie. There are about 15 profanities, most mild except for an unfortunate abuse of God's name (hit "mute" as Nesmith gets frustrated with a fan at the end of the autograph-signing scene). The film also includes a few subtle sexual references, low-cut tops and a scene in which Nesmith drowns his misery in alcohol.



In the battle to survive and defeat their reptilian enemy, our heroes encounter laser blasts, mine fields, odd creatures and a constellation of funny, self-aware genre clichés (Guy fears he'll die first since his character wasn't important enough to have a last name). Beyond the film's action and clever humor, poignant moments address the confusion between reality and televised fantasy, such as this exchange where the actors decide it's time to reveal their identities:

Gwen: We are not the people you think we are.

Mathesar: I don't understand.

Alexander: Don't you make any TV shows on your planet? Any theater ... films?

Mathesar: The historical documents of your culture!

Yes. In fact, we have begun to document our history from your example.

Gwen: No, not historical documents. They're not all historical documents. I mean, surely you don't think that *Gilligan's Island* is a ...

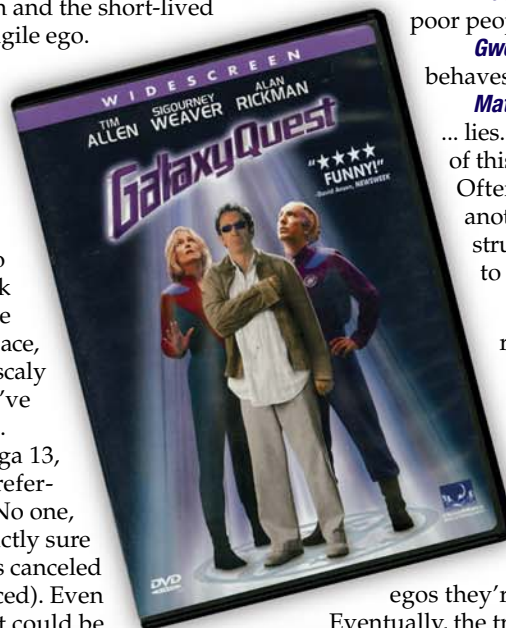
Mathesar: (suddenly mournful) Those poor people.

Gwen: Is there no one on your planet who behaves in a way that's contrary to reality?

Mathesar: You are speaking of deception ... lies. We have only recently become aware of this concept in our dealings with Sarris. Often Sarris will say one thing and do another, promise us mercy but deliver destruction. It is a concept we are beginning to learn at some great cost.

At this point, Gwen and the others realize that sharing the truth may be more painful to their new friends than continuing "in character" while they try to restore order. Whether hunting for a new beryllium sphere or squaring off against Sarris' soldiers, the actors must trust one another, summoning the strength and confidence of the fictional alter egos they're known for playing.

Eventually, the truth about the historical documents comes out, crushing the childlike faith of Mathesar. The



exchange between Jason and the kind alien leader is touching. It makes an acute distinction between authenticity and fraud, addressing how entertainment can blur the line between them. The film's final showdown ends with Sarris' defeat and the realization that all involved have matured and grown closer as a result of their unscripted adventure.



Before You Watch

Prior to renting *Galaxy Quest*, find an episode or two of the original *Star Trek* television series and watch them together with your teen. The cheesier the better. By seeing this material played straight, young people will more deeply appreciate the film's clever send-up of the genre. While you're at it, talk through the plots, characters, situations and any moral dilemmas posed in those programs.

Bible Bookmarks Gen. 50:20; Ex. 34:14; Deut. 8:2, 15; 1 Sam. 18; Isa. 40:11; Matt. 15:14; Rom. 8:28, 12:19; 1 Cor. 12:14-20; 2 Cor. 11:2

Talking Points

1 Contrast the different leadership styles of Jason, Mathesar and Sarris. Which do you think is most effective? Why? Read Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 15:14, and Deuteronomy 8:2 and verse 15. Talk about "servant leadership."



2 The fact that the Thermians mistook shows such as *Galaxy Quest* and *Gilligan's Island* for reality is humorous because those series are so corny and fake. But other media inventions are more subtle—even intentional—about creating confusion (much advertising, news stories with an ideological slant, immoral lifestyles dramatically depicted as healthy). Discuss the often fuzzy line between truth and fiction on TV.



3 The same pyramid-shaped mines that disabled the Thermian spacecraft are resourcefully used later to destroy Sarris' ship. In what ways can God take things intended for our harm and use them for our benefit? (Read Gen. 50:20 and Rom. 8:28.)

4 Before the adventure, Alexander loathes his haunting catch phrase, "By Grabthar's hammer, by the sons of Warvan, you shall be avenged!" Yet he affectionately calls upon it late in the film. What causes the change? What does Romans 12:19 say about vengeance?

5 With which character do you most identify? Why do you think that is?

6 Victory requires that each crew member—and a few fans—use his or her unique knowledge and skill for the benefit of the group. How does their success illustrate what Paul sought to convey in 1 Corinthians 12:14-20? Was there

ever a time when you were part of a team effort like that? Talk about it.

7 Alexander resents constantly being upstaged by Jason. How does that jealousy come out in a self-defeating way? (See Saul's jealousy of David in 1 Sam. 18.) Contrast this with the righteous jealousy described in Exodus 34:14 and 2 Corinthians 11:2.

Clockwise from front: Allen, Rickman, Rockwell, Mitchell, Shalhoub and Weaver

8 Talk about the personal epiphanies experienced by the various people in the film. How did tensions and personality flaws improve by the end? What can we learn from those examples?

9 Guy spends a lot of time obsessing over his destiny, so fully convinced of his doom that it almost becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. How can we label ourselves "defeated" and rob ourselves of the chance to win in life, spiritually and otherwise?

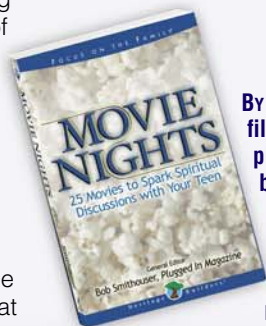
Follow-Up Activity

A day or so after viewing the film, reignite discussion while riding in the car or sharing a meal. Recall the costumed fanatics at the *Galaxy Quest* conventions and ask your teen to comment about the way people can embrace pop culture with such abandon that they come across as weird. Then ask if they've ever felt looked upon that way for being radically sold out to Jesus Christ. Discuss the differences between dedicating one's life to the dialogue and minutia of a TV series versus studying God's Word and passionately sharing spiritual truth.

Just for Fun

- Who's holding the bag? Fred Kwan, but not for long. As the away team starts rolling the large beryllium sphere toward the ship, tech sergeant Kwan is seen holding a brown paper bag in his teeth. Keep watching as the bag inexplicably disappears!
- *High School Musical* fans should pay extra-close attention to the actor playing young Tommy in those classic *Galaxy Quest* TV shows. If they've got their heads in the game, they'll notice it's Corbin Bleu. —by Mick Silva & Bob Smithouser

A **plugged** Resource
online



BY THE BOOK: "Adults often invite teens to view films for their great messages. To a teen, the phrase 'great messages' is tantamount to being told their blind date has a wonderful personality. The best films are fun to watch and think about."
—*Movie Nights*

You can request this resource by contacting Focus on the Family at 800-232-6459 (in Canada, 800-661-9800).