

Review: 'The Croods' Offers Prehistorical Laughs

It's being hailed by some movie critics as "an animated Avatar," but the best compliment for *The Croods* is it's arguably DreamWorks Animation's most family-friendly movie and far from rude awakening—which should appease Christian families.

That's significant, considering DreamWorks Animation is known for using plenty of potty humor and risqué double entendres in movies such as *Shrek*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *Puss in Boots*.

In *The Croods*, the Crood family cave is destroyed, so the prehistoric family must embark on a search for a new home. Nicolas Cage voices overprotective patriarch Grug, whose credo is: "Fear keeps us alive. Never not be afraid." Despite his "fear is good; change is bad" philosophy, Grug loves his family, and his desire to protect them is admirable, powerful and true.

Grug's wife, Ugga (Catherine Keener), is the calm voice in the family, bringing clarity to the most chaotic moment in their lives. Eep (Emma Stone) is Grug's rebellious teenage daughter, who sees the world just as any teen would—"new" is awesome and "change" is exciting. Through her eyes, her father begins to see the difference between living life and just surviving.

Guy (Ryan Reynolds) is Eep's love interest and "the new guy"—much to Grug's dismay. As the catalyst for change, Guy is amazing, according to Eep. A teenage orphaned boy, he has learned how to make fire. His other inventive ideas—such as making crude shoes—expose the Croods to new possibilities—and a new world.

Because *The Croods* is set in prehistoric times, an onslaught of evolution dogma is to be expected, right? It doesn't

happen. Although there are winged piranhas and walking whale-like creatures, the evolution talk is, thankfully, very subtle and almost non-existent.

Rated PG for some scary action, *The Croods* is unlike some PG-rated movies, which had some really scary action and language, deemed family unfriendly by Christian parents, so that's another plus for the film.

The bottom line: *The Croods* is a very family-friendly movie! Far from a faith-based movie, *The Croods* touches on biblical themes and subjects such as genuine bravery, following the rules (living in fear of consequences and under the law) and following the light (living in wonder, grace and love).

Directors/writers Kirk De Micco and Chris Sanders should be applauded for a fun, warm and fuzzy movie. Think of the traveling Griswolds from National Lampoon's Vacation movie series—only as an animated cave family, without the rude humor.

Laugh-out-loud moments were strewn throughout, along with great threads of how strength, courage and love should be applied to parenting. Note to Christian parents: Present life as something to be lived fully, not just survived.

Content Watch: *The Croods* is rated PG for some scary action. There are definitely some scary moments, but they are on par with *Toy Story* or *The Incredibles*. Scary elements include volcanoes, lava, falling rocks, saber-toothed tigers and other prehistoric period perils. No blood. No swearing. The romance between Guy and Eep is real, but toned down.