

What Christian Parents Need to Know About ‘Ugly Dolls’

“Who told you that you were naked?”

God’s words to Adam and Eve from Genesis 3 echoed as I processed the themes of *UglyDolls*, the new animated musical from STX Films. Those words from a loving Father confronted a voice that attempted to shame them, much like what happens when happy, well-adjusted dolls from Uglyville venture beyond their safe community. As Moxie (Kelly Clarkson) and her cute and unusual friends encounter the perfect toys inhabiting Perfection, led by the narcissistic Lou (Nick Jonas), they’re told the true meaning of the word “ugly,” meaning they are unlovable and rejected.

With town names such as Uglyville and Perfection, and songs like “The Ugly Truth” and “All Dolled Up,” the message of the film isn’t particularly subtle, but that doesn’t make it any less important, especially for its intended audience. Comparison is a heartbreaking trap, and perfection isn’t achievable, so everyone should extend compassion, understanding and love to all, regardless of how they appear, “for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7b).

My three elementary school-age girls, who listened to every note and hung on every word of dialogue, will hopefully recall some of the lines and songs of the film as they encounter those who would seek to create confusion, doubt and insecurities. Growing up isn’t always easy, so a positive and encouraging message movie is something I as a parent can wholeheartedly embrace.

Clarkson and Jonas lead an all-star cast that also includes Janelle Monae, Blake Shelton, Wanda Sykes, Gabriel Iglesias,

Wang Leehom and Pitbull. Their musical firepower comes in handy with an impressive soundtrack of pop-infused songs that will appeal to kids and their parents alike. The opening combo of “Today’s the Day” and “Couldn’t Be Better” are as infectious and high-energy as The Lego Movie’s “Everything is Awesome,” if not more so.

UglyDolls, based on the toy line created in 2001 and directed by Kelly Asbury (*Shrek 2*, *Gnomeo and Juliet*), releases May 3 from STX Films.

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