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**Hogwarts and All**

Harry Potter and Friends All Grown Up

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**What Happened:**

On Nov. 19, 2010, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* was released to theaters. It made more than \$125 million in its opening weekend, and it'll certainly be one of the year's biggest hits—not bad for what's been called essentially a horror movie.

Many critics have talked about how dark and frightening *Deathly Hallows* is—reflective of J.K. Rowling's perilous book on which the movie is based. Though the books and the films were created with children in mind, the last installments have been far from sweet-and-innocent romps.

Harry, Ron and Hermione have grown up in the series before our eyes, and instead of dealing with how most effectively to wave a wand and the best way to treat a house elf, our protagonists are engaged in a complex, winner-take-all showdown with a terrifying evil.

“The initial innocence, playfulness and fresh discovery of magic is long gone,” critic Tony Macklin writes. “The pain and terror of the death of Harry's parents is now the tone. Horror now prevails.”

The process of growing up can be a pretty terrifying ordeal. While we may not have to deal with evil magicians, we learn many of the same lessons Harry, Ron and Hermione do: Suffering can make us stronger; the decisions we make matter; we need to have people in our lives we can count on; and we should never lose hope and faith.

Just as the Harry Potter characters have grown up, so have the actors who play in them. Daniel Radcliffe was 12 when he first played the title character in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. He's now 21. Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley) is 22. Emma Watson (Hermione Granger) is 20.

All three actors have steered clear of tabloid trouble so far, but their paths to adulthood have been very different. Radcliffe acted in a play that required him to appear on stage in the nude. Watson's been attending Brown University in the United States, saying she's “addicted to knowledge.” Grint bought an ice cream truck and jokes that once the Harry Potter series is done, he'll sell ice cream if he can't work as an actor. He brought it to the last day of filming the *Deathly Hallows* and served ice cream to everyone on set.

Still, growing up hasn't been easy for them either. "I wish I knew myself as well as I knew Hermione, because I feel...I know that character like the back of my hand, and I haven't got myself figured out quite so well," Watson told the Associated Press.

**Talk About It:**

The Harry Potter books and films can be controversial in Christian circles because of the use of magic. While the stories may have problems, they also show three friends growing up together and helping each other through some pretty tough times. Have you read the books? Have you seen the movies? If so, what did you take away from the stories?

For Harry, Ron and Hermione, growing up meant growing old enough to do battle with Voldemort, a very despicable wizard. For us, growing up is a little harder to define. When do you think we become adults? Are we grown up when we reach a certain age? When we get a driver's license or go to college or get a job? When do you think you'll feel like an adult? Do you feel adult right now?

Is growing up hard? Is it scary? What do you like about getting older? What do you miss as you mature? What do you worry about?

When it comes to growing up, how have the Harry Potter kids done? Do you think any of them have made mistakes along the way? How do they compare as role models to Miley Cyrus? Taylor Swift? Other young celebrities?

**What the Bible Says:**

"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (1 Cor. 13:11).

"...We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope; and hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us" (Rom. 5:3-4).

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).