

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Up, Up and Away!

Man of Steel Shows His Metal

By Paul Asay

What Happened:

Superman flies into movie theaters with the release of *Man of Steel*, a retelling of the superhero's origin story. In the movie, he's sent to Earth because his own home planet is dying. From the moment he arrives, he knows he's a little different.

He struggles with his abilities at first. He can't control his X-ray vision or super sense of hearing. The cacophony of sights and sounds overwhelms him. His super-strength can be problematic, too. When someone picks on him, it's so hard not to push back—only his *push* could send someone flying into the next zip code.

His parents train him to focus more effectively, allowing him to filter his senses. They tell him to hide his abilities and teach him to be humble and submissive. The world's not ready to know about Clark and his abilities, he believes.

At the same time, Jonathan believes the day will come when Clark should reveal himself. He was sent for a reason, Jonathan believes. "And even if it takes the rest of your life," he tells Clark, "you owe it to yourself to find out what that reason is."

"One day, you're going to have to make a choice," Jonathan says. "You have to decide what kind of man you want to grow up to be. Whoever that man is, good character or bad, it's going to change the world."

Clark grows up to be a pretty good man, as it turns out—thanks in large part to his parents' guidance. Not only does he change the world, but he saves it.

Talk About It:

In many respects, *Man of Steel* sets Superman up to be a Christ-like figure. His Krypton name, Kal-El, is translated by some to be Hebrew for "voice of God." His natural parents believe he will give humans an "ideal to strive toward." He's sent to Earth as a baby, raised in humble circumstances. He reveals himself at age 33, the same age Jesus was when He died on the cross.

In many ways, young Superman seems a lot like us. He doubts his place in the world. He sometimes hates the fact that he's so different than everyone else. However, what his father tells him—that "you have to decide what kind of man you want to grow up to be"—is the same thing our own parents could've told us, too. We all have to decide what kind of people we want to be.

Most of us want to be good people. What makes you good? What decisions have you made that indicate that's the road you're on? What choices have you made that you wish you could change?

Most of us don't have super strength or heat vision, but we all have attributes that are special. What makes you different? What sorts of talents and abilities do you have that you're proud of? Do those very same abilities sometimes make you feel as if you don't fit in? If you could change something about yourself that would make you more popular or well-liked, would you?

Clark Kent might've gotten his abilities from Krypton, but the stuff that made him a superhero—his character, humility and desire to help others—came from his adoptive parents. What are some of the lessons your parents have taught you? Have there been other people in your life that have given you good advice and/or taught you how to be a good person?

What the Bible Says:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23).

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).