



Disney AND WALDEN MEDIA PRESENT  
THE CHRONICLES OF  
**NARNIA**  
PRINCE CASPIAN

The Chronicles of

# Narnia Prince Caspian

Movie Review



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As far back as ancient Greece people were utilizing books as methods for working through various ailments. The term, bibliography, is what we pair with the phenomenon of using media, specifically books, to help people suffering from trauma or psychological issues. While the Transfiguring Adoption is NOT claiming to be professionals in the psychological or mental health arena, we do believe that families can glean from this concept in using movies, video games, and, naturally, books, to help foster or adoptive children process their story.

## Section I

### **Why are we using books, movies, and video games to help children?**

- **Partially disengage mind from fear/problems**  
Immersing yourself in media helps you to escape from reality for a bit. This can give our minds a partial break from the worry and stress so that we have more energy to attach the issue when we come back to it.
- **Introduced to new solutions**  
We might discover new solutions to problems as we experience a character in media conquer an issue.
- **Emotional vocabulary**  
Discovering more ways to express how we feel and think can help us to communicate our own thoughts and feelings. Overall, more effective communication allows us to ask for better assistance with our feelings and issues.
- **Identify with characters/stories**  
You have heard the saying, “no man is an island.” No person wants to feel like they are alone in their thoughts, feelings, or experiences. When we discover a character in media struggling with similar issues as our own, it helps to “normalize,” our life situations and feel comforted. This can also help us to discover our own identity as a character goes through a process in their life.

## Section II

### **This Only Works TOGETHER - Parent & Child.**

Here is why it is IMPERATIVE that a parent or trusted adult walk through these questions and media with a child:

- **Trauma Triggers**

An event or language in a piece of media might remind our children of past events in their lives which were traumatic. If we are to assume that they have not yet had enough life experience to successfully walk through these situations and make sense of them, then they will need a safe adult to be able to process feelings and emotions.

Some caregiver might be nervous or scared to discuss the details of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and so on. Our children are also scared but have no choice but to live through it. Our children need an adult who can help them process through issues by listening. They need an adult who knows when information needs to be given over to a trusted therapist and other professionals.

- **Reliving Trauma**

Some media might not simply suggest or bring up past trauma but could expose a child to a similar situation as what they have experienced. If a child is exposed to such media, it goes without saying that they will need a safe adult to help them process their thoughts and emotions. They will even need a safe adult who may not have the right answers but can get the child to a professional who can help.

- **Living in a Dream World**

As much as negatively living through trauma can have a devastating effect on our children, too much of a good thing can also have a poor effect when it is experienced on their own. Some children who have come from traumatic backgrounds may have trouble separating fantasy from reality. When given media where the main character is always rescued in the nick of time, the waif always marries royalty, or all problems are solved in a neat package, our children could be given over to considering this is how the world operates and that the solutions of the characters will produce similar fantastical results. It is important to have a trusted adult on duty who can applaud the fun of a tale but also bring everyone back down to reality.

- **Never Really Find Results**

Again it can be a pitfall for caregivers to be nervous about a topic and simply hope that children will learn by experiencing a book or movie on their own. The problem is that many of our children lack the life experience to be able to connect the dots to see how a character's struggles and life solutions could be compared to their own life.

A trusted adult can help a child to glean solutions and conversations from a piece of media to make real life change begin.

## Section III

### How To Use Our Discussion Packets:

#### 1. **Exposure as a Family**

Watch, read, or play the respective media this packet discusses together before you begin the conversation. It is important that parent and child experience things together. Natural bonding and teachable moments come about when we experience things together.

#### 2. **Wait for the Right Time**

As foster and adoptive parents, many of us want to help our children so badly that when we get a new resource we want to try it out faster than a child wants to open up presents on Christmas. However, it is important to judge when your child is ready to talk about issues brought up by media.

If your child is struggling with habitual lying and just reprimanded earlier in the day at school, there might be intense feelings of guilt and embarrassment. It may not be the correct time to point out that Pinocchio gets in trouble when he lies and try to begin a discussion about how lies can harm your life. Instead wait a day or two when everything is going right in your family's world, and then try to begin a conversation.

People who are hurt, angered, frustrated or depressed due to a topic are not going to be open to having a dialogue about the issues.

#### 3. **Nudging Toward Identification**

If we look at this conversation as a swimming pool, "Nudging Toward Identification" is going to be the shallow end of the pool. The goal is to simply notice - just notice - similarities you might see in a character's life and your child's life. This step is helping our children to see that they might be able to relate with a character. The media is going from merely a source of entertainment to something we possibly - POSSIBLY - could connect with in some manner.

This might come in the form of phrases such as:

- "Hey, did you notice that in the book Sally had to figure out how to make friends at school too?"
- "Tom's brother in the movie was really good at soccer just like you, right?!"
- "Too bad you're not in the story with Samantha, because you like learning about science as much as she does, right?"

#### 4. **Emotional Involvement**

In Step 3 we helped our child to consider that they might be able to connect with a character. During this step, if the atmosphere is still good for conversation, we are going to push the similarities with the media character a bit further. We are going to take a look at specific situations and emotions. We are going to take a look at issues that characters confronted and discuss solutions and emotional outcomes. Hopefully, through this step our children will be able to more deeply and emotionally be able to identify with a character.

We might ask questions such as:

- "Sally made up stories to try and make new friends. Do you think this was the right way to make friends? Why? What should she have done differently?"

- “How do you think Tom felt when he missed the goal and lost the soccer game for his team? What would you tell him? Do you ever feel like Tom?”
- “Which do you think made Samantha feel better, winning the science fair or making new friends at school? Do you ever feel like that? Why?”

#### 5. **Continued Conversations**

Always remember that helping children walk through trauma is not a sprint but a marathon. Do not get discouraged if the right time to talk about themes in a piece of media don't turn up right away. Do not get discouraged if your child doesn't want to talk about anything “deep” or life changing.

Some people have reported that their children might watch a movie, lightly discuss it, and then a month later begin asking deeper questions about a theme or topic in the media.

As parents our job is to create an atmosphere where learning and growth can happen AND CAN CONTINUE HAPPENING. We need to equip ourselves with the tools to be ready for those small windows of time that our children are ready to discuss and learn from us.

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## Comprehensive Review

### Transfiguring Adoption's Overview:

*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008) is the sequel to *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005), both of which were inspired by C.S. Lewis' book series. The movie travels at a faster pace than the book, as is typical for books-turned-movies, but this pace makes it very kid-friendly when thinking of younger attention spans. Though the film may shorten some parts of the film this does not take away from the emotional experience while watching the film. Georgie Henley (Lucy), Skandar Keynes (Edmund), William Moseley (Peter), and Anna Popplewell (Susan) return and deliver beautiful, relatable performances as the Pevensies return to a very changed Narnia with several new companions. I highly recommend viewing this movie as a family after seeing the first film installment, as several plot points from the first film are referenced. If your family enjoys the first film, you are in for another treat far more satisfying than Turkish Delight!

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**\*\* Spoilers Could Be Ahead \*\***

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### How Is This Relevant To Adoption & Foster Care?

While in the first film we primarily followed the Pevensie children, but this time we have another hero to consider. The film opens to the birth of a male child, which apparently means peril for the true, but young successor to the Telmarine throne, Prince Caspian X. This is due to his Uncle and Guardian, King Miraz, wishing for an easy claim to Caspian's throne. Thankfully for Caspian, his tutor Doctor Cornelius discovers the plot and warns Caspian in just enough time to help him escape and advise him on how to seek aid. In this exchange it is revealed the fairy tales Doctor Cornelius told Caspian in between lessons are the truest histories of Narnia and therein lies how Caspian can save himself and rescue the lost kingdom. Caspian receives a very familiar horn and escapes by horseback into the night. During his escape, he meets creatures he once thought were of fantasy and blows the horn for aid during an attack.

Meanwhile, we revisit the Pevensie children in London, who are struggling to adjust to common life as children one year after their return. Peter especially struggles with shedding his previous identity as High King of Narnia and being treated as a child after functioning for so long as an adult. Upon that horn being blown though, the children are whisked away to another Narnian adventure and must face the reality that their "home" in Narnia is no longer as they left it.



While none of our heroes and heroines are directly in foster care, all of the youth involved share some struggles with children and youth in care. Prince Caspian was orphaned and cared for by the man who killed his father and then in turn almost murdered him as well. If not for the love and intervention from a beloved mentor, his fate would have been very different. The Pevensie children have lived a life far beyond the experience of their peers and then struggle with being told to act as children, much like the children we serve in foster care communities. I know I have worked with many children who have had responsibilities wrongfully placed on their shoulders for so long that when help is brought they not only don't know how to accept it but no longer recognize this shift in identity as help! For this reason "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian" is a wonderful medium to use to talk with foster children and youth about their unique struggles.

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## **Discussion Points:**

- **Familial Trauma**

In Caspian's case, the very people who were supposed to love and protect him were the ones plotting his death. Though, hopefully, our children do not have relatives plotting their literal deaths they have walked hard roads with less support than needed to thrive in the face of adversity. King Miraz is an example of continued family-based trauma that can occur in the past and present. Caregivers should be aware of how trauma that is not transformed can be transferred to affect other members of the family system in a domino effect.

- **Identity**

Though the struggles differ for each child, Peter and Prince Caspian especially struggle inwardly (and with one another!) over their identities as royalty in Narnia. High King Peter struggles with wishing to take part in great adventures in both London and Narnia after living as a literal adult and king for many years in his last visit to Narnia. He finds himself at odds especially with Prince Caspian, who is meant to assume the throne of Cair Paravel as the new king. For Prince Caspian, it is no wonder he struggles with his worthiness with the comparisons to legends such as the High King Peter and with the doubts of some rather vocal Narnians. Caregivers can learn from this film as many children in care have, in a sense, functioned as adults within their family of origin as caretakers to siblings and sometimes even bread winners. Caregivers may struggle with children who cannot believe they are no longer "in charge" as well as children who struggle with self-esteem.

- **Growing Up**

By the end of our adventure in Narnia, Caspian faces all his insecurities and painful past to confront his uncle and claim his rightful place as King. Peter and Susan learn that this will be their last time in Narnia. Lucy learns to trust in Aslan again and Edmund continues to grow from his experiences with Jadis. This film is filled with the themes of growing up, not only physically but emotionally as well. Even characters like Trumpkin (or "D.L.F." as he is nicknamed) and (my personal favorite Narnian) Reepicheep undergo intense heart-changes and maturing following their experiences in battle and in meeting Aslan. Much like many of the characters in the film, children in foster care have had to often grow up faster in some ways than we would hope and have stalled in other ways due to the things that have happened to them. Children can identify with coming of age themes experienced by the Pevensie children as well as the Narnians as they find a new normal within times of hardship and in recovery after finding safety in security with a loving caregiver.

## **Cautionary Points:**

- **King Miraz's Betrayal and Abuse**

This is the heart of Prince Caspian's struggles and may be difficult for children or youth with abusive familial relationships. Foster children and youth may not at first perceive a relationship as problematic until they have had some distance and therapy so be mindful that even if your child hasn't specifically voiced struggling with familial trauma in their relationships that doesn't necessarily mean it's not there.

- **Peter's Self Doubt and Aggression**

Peter's struggle with adopting a new identity in London and then another identity in Narnia leads to some poor, impulsive choices on his part and a few fist fights with others. Children who struggle with using aggression to cope with stress may be triggered by this.

- **Lucy Attacked by a Bear**

While walking through Narnia Lucy is attacked by a wild bear that she mistakes as being a Narnian (talking) bear and a battle ensues to protect her. This may be problematic for children afraid of animals or who have had traumatic encounters with animals.

- **Attempted Drowning**

Telmarine soldiers attempt to drown Trumpkin, which may be difficult for children who have had traumatic experiences involving water such as attempted drownings.

- **Violence in Battle/Chase Scenes**

Most of the violence is sword or arrow based but at one point the trees join in the final battle and are throwing Telmarines around like rag dolls. This may be difficult for children or youth who have witnessed domestic violence.

- **Death of Characters**

There is a moment of realization for the Pevensie children that all their loved ones from Narnia are long deceased as well as a few new character deaths that children and youth may have a hard time with due to past losses.

- **A Very Sad Goodbye Accompanied by Regina Spektor**

The ending was very fitting but the news that Peter and Susan will never return to Narnia and everyone saying goodbye in general was very sad. This may be hard for children or youth who have had to say goodbye too many times in life.

# Discussion Questions

1. **Prince Caspian has a lot of negative things that happened, but who helped him through his younger years and then his escape?**

Caregiver Note: Prince Caspian starts off with several disadvantages as an orphan and has a politically-volatile relationship with his Uncle, King Miraz. He receives emotional/cultural (because of the Narnia education)/affirmational support from his tutor, Doctor Cornelius. He needed this since the Telmarine education was clearly challenging the identity he would one day need to assume as King of Narnia. Doctor Cornelius was also very important in Prince Caspian's escape in that he got him out of the castle and provided him with important knowledge and tools (i.e. – Susan's horn) to get help.

2. **Who do you have who's like Doctor Cornelius that can help you when things are hard or scary?**

Caregiver Note: This is an important thing for children and youth to talk about as sometimes it's hard to sort through safe vs. unsafe adults on their own. Just talking about things aloud can help children process immensely. If they struggle with naming safe, loving adults in their circle offer assistance. Help them think of people around them now and back at home as well. This can help with planning ahead for if reunification occurs and they need aid again.

3. **Why was Peter not nice to Prince Caspian?**

Caregiver Note: Remember in the beginning of the film we see Peter struggling to adjust to being a teenage boy in London after being High King in Narnia through a Narnian adulthood. Upon returning to what was familiar, this identity was further challenged by Trumpkin's flippant remarks and others that doubt his identity due to his (and his siblings') age. This means having another "King" to compete with further fuels his feelings of inadequacy and jealousy. This goes much deeper than "just being different" or liking being in charge.

4. **Was there a time where maybe you felt jealous or insecure and instead expressed anger or spite against someone else? What would have been a better voice?**

Caregiver Note: This is a good way to address behavior children may be exhibiting out of insecurity or jealousy but struggle with attaching the feelings to the behavior. Help your child by using an example of your own and providing ways you could have better handled the situation.

5. **Why do Lucy's siblings struggle to believe Lucy about seeing Aslan? Even though she has never lied before?**

Caregiver Note: It's important for us to remember that though a group of siblings may come from the same situation that how they perceive the situation may cause each child to respond differently. For Lucy, when Aslan is silent or absent she continues to seek him because of the relationship she had with Aslan before being built on faith and trust. She, of course, has her struggles due to her siblings' disbelief but eventually is successful in finding Aslan. While Peter, Susan, and Edmund all love Aslan they are seeing Narnia through their own unique lenses and are relying on information from others around them to sort what they are perceiving.

6. **Edmund is reminded of his old allegiance with the White Witch, Jadis, when Prince Caspian is influenced to try to summon her for help. Have you had a time where you felt challenged by past mistakes/negative influences?**

Caregiver Note: Edmund, as we know from the first film, put his trust in the wrong person and ended up being very hurt and lost. Seeing the image of the White Witch again could understandably stir up many emotions lying in wait and cause a variety of reactions from Edmund. In Edmund's case, he used his experience to help someone else and he was able to do this after working through that hurt with loved ones. Focusing on being able to help others with our experiences can help children and youth have hope in the future in knowing that the things that hurt now won't hurt forever and could help someone later.

7. **At the end, Prince Caspian is crowned as King. Why/How does Peter reconcile this?**

Caregiver Note: It's important to note to children that Peter didn't have to stay angry and distant and that Peter and Caspian could work together. Peter didn't stop being High King just because Prince Caspian has stepped into his own role as King of Narnia, and it turns out in the end that the two had a lot in common. Often children and youth see relationships as good or bad and struggle with the idea of reconciliation and being able to have a positive relationship after conflict and talking about this can help them apply this to relationships in their own lives.

8. **Peter and Susan learn that this is the final goodbye before going home. How did they take this news? How can we help with hard goodbyes?**

Caregiver Note: The news that Peter and Susan would not return was certainly bittersweet. On the one hand, Peter and Susan need to go home and become the adults they are meant to be. On the other, this means saying goodbye again to friends and loved ones they have met while adventuring in Narnia. This is a good topic to discuss as children and youth in foster care sometimes don't get the chance to have a proper goodbye before transitioning into another stage in life. Emergency placement moves, being brought into custody, reunification all have their reasons for moving children but change can still be sad and scary because of various moves or feeling children and youth are "given away". This is a good change for you and a caregiver to establish love

and care no matter where the child goes and being someone they can trust.

**9. Activity: Reepicheep's Tail**

Caregiver Note: Reepicheep, a descendant of non-talking mice who freed Aslan in the last movie and because of this was gifted speech), is a fearless and brave swordsmouse that your children will love immediately! His one weakness and pride though is his tail, which as he points out is very important for balance as well as a part of his identity. Have your children draw a picture of themselves as a noble swordsmouse like Reepicheep. Have them pick a favorite feature of the mouse-sona and explain why this feature makes their swordsmouse unique. Afterwards, talk to your child about the unique things about themselves, as Sons and Daughters of Narnia (aka Humans) that make them special to you. Focus on some inward qualities as well as a couple of external qualities to help build your child's self-esteem.

**10. Activity: Susan's Horn – Calling for Help**

Caregiver Note: For this activity, take a piece of paper and have your child color and design their horn's exterior any way they chose. This can be Narnian-inspired or even covered in just things your child likes. Take the paper and wrap it around in the shape of a horn and tape it together. Explain to your child that if they are struggling with big emotions or any problem but don't know what to ask for or how that they can bring the horn to you for support. Explain that you will be there to listen to them and help them sort out the struggle and find a solution together.

## About the Reviewer

### **Rachael Rathe**

Rachael B. Rathe is an East Tennessee native with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology with a Minor in Child & Family Studies from The University of Tennessee Knoxville. She has worked in mental health since 2013 and in foster care/adoptions for a private provider agency since 2014. Rachael was inspired to work in the field after working with children and teens on a volunteer basis 2008 - 2013. Rachael's ideal self-care day involves snuggling on a couch with her kitties (Tabitha, Fergus, and Rufus) while enjoying a good movie or book. She also enjoys galavanting around conventions concerning all things nerd and geekery.