

Pointers For Parents

Action Stories Can Be More Than Child's Play

(NAPSA)—The next time you notice your youngster doing battle with the forces of evil—and you think it's too violent—check out the storyline. There may be more going on than meets the eye.

Experts say there is a lot of power in the idea that a youngster can become a hero by accepting a challenge with courage and embracing the virtues of duty and loyalty. Down through the ages, this message has been the theme of many myths and legends and is part of the plot of many of today's most successful movies.

It may also be one reason a particular group of videos, comic books and toys built around this theme has become so popular with boys ages 6 to 11.

The stars of Bionicle are called Toa. They were created by a team of talented designers and storytellers who work (and play) at the celebrated, Denmark-based LEGO Company. Inspired by the folklore of many exotic cultures, the team designed a rich and complex universe of mystery and mythology, which continues to enthrall millions of fans around the world.

The stories started as an interactive Web site. Then, a feature film was made. "Bionicle: Mask of Light" was a huge success and became one of the top 10 selling direct-to-video movies of 2003. The popularity of that film prompted a second movie in the series, "Bionicle 2: Legends of Metru Nui," available on DVD from Miramax Films and Buena Vista Home Entertainment.

The nonstop action and adven-



A new animated feature starring these Bionicle Toa can help children learn what it takes to be a hero in real life.

ture film has six courageous companions set out to prove they are heroes when mysterious dark forces threaten their glorious city.

When the movie was previewed at a major comic convention, the room was filled with boys eager to ask questions and make suggestions to the film's creators. Their questions showed the boys were deeply involved in the story. The fact that the boys had been watching the movie, reading the stories, chatting with each other online and creating action scenes with their friends and toys at home seemed to enhance their overall enjoyment, sparking story line suggestions that showed deepening bonds with the series' underlying values.

In keeping with this fan involvement, the new DVD includes a feature in which the production team answers fans' questions. It's just another way in which this unique new franchise can provide more than meets the eye as it inspires youngsters to imagine and to strive.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.bionicle.com.