

“May the Fourth be with you!”

I’m a huge Star Wars fan, but my love for a galaxy long ago and far, far away pales in comparison to that of my son Isaac. He is (almost) 5 and is infatuated with all things Star Wars. Though he has not seen even one of the movies (almost old enough, but not quite), he has played the Lego Star Wars video game, seen the Lego Star Wars mini-movies, and we are watching the Clone Wars cartoon series together. Oh, and he has inherited all of his older brother’s Star Wars Legos and added to them himself.

So, on this May the Fourth, a day celebrated by Star Wars fans all over the world, I wanted to ponder Star Wars and the gospel.

I’m always amazed that Isaac knows more facts about the Star Wars galaxy than I do. When he whips out an obscure character name in conversation, or tells me that today the medicine ball in the basement is the planet Kashyyyk (“you know, where Chewbacca comes from”), I wonder how he knows so much about Star Wars without ever experiencing it himself.

Some of it is that we have a house full of good Star Wars evangelists. We talk about it, talk about how exciting it will be when he finally sees it, have pictures and memorabilia around the house, and make Star Wars references around the house. And we’re not really into it as a family. We’ve just all experienced the movies and Universe in our time together and so it slides into our conversations. Isaac is part of that experience because of us.

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” – Rom. 10:14-15*

If we want people to be part of the experience of the Christian life, then we don’t have to have an answer for all their questions. We don’t have to have a catchy story that will explain the gospel. If we are part of the experience of the Christian life, then it will slide into our conversations, and our behaviors, and metaphors and stories and examples. Our faith is meant to become part of who we are, and then as people get to know us, they get to know Jesus as well.

We’ve all heard the statement, erroneously attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach always, and when necessary, use words.” Though not historically correct, the idea of it is sound. We need to share the good news with people through our actions as much as our words. And we need to share the gospel with people through our words as much as our actions. Neither is more important, but both are important.

Do people who hang out with you regularly get pulled into the Christian life, even just a little? Do they hear God in your metaphors, see Him in your doodles, experience Him through your behaviors? Are you what used to be called a “contagious Christian” (which means something totally different in COVIDland!)? As a disciple, you have been sent by God so let your life and words preach the gospel to others may hear God through your words and life and come to believe in God and call on His name and be saved (whew).

And May the Fourth be with you always!