

# Titles accentuate the positive

By MATT DEGEN  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Video games have long been blamed for contributing to violence and obesity in youth as well as a host of other social ills. Intelligent minds are hunkered down on both sides of the debate, and it's one that isn't likely to end anytime soon.

But some developers are doing more than standing on one side of the fence, arguing their point: They are taking action and creating games with positive themes.

Digital Praise has recently released two computer games based on the Focus on the Family radio series "Adventures in Odyssey." The games fall under the edutainment banner, mixing entertainment and teaching, but come with a twist: They aim to instill moral values in youngsters ages 8 to 12.

I checked out "Adventures in Odyssey and the Sword of the Spirit," and was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the production values and ease of use. Animation is crisp and clean, and the vocals are talented and witty.

The object of the title is to recover a historical artifact



"**SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**": Problem-solving emphasized.

before the game's villain gets his paws on it. As the adventure unfolds, youngsters will use the three characters – precocious Eugene and valedictorian Connie, along with the wise World War II vet Whit – to solve the mystery. The game's success hinges on puzzle solving and action sequences, while it teaches biblical values such as kindness, patience, love, joyfulness and self-control.

If you're looking for a safe and fun alternative to the violence and brainless activity in many other games, the "Ad-

ventures in Odyssey" titles are a smart choice. The games work on Windows and Macs, retail for about \$30, and can be found at various retailers and e-tailers. For more info go to [www.digitalpraise.com](http://www.digitalpraise.com).

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The United Nations is also getting in on the edutainment action with the release of "Food Force."

The game encourages children to feed, not kill, poor residents on the fictional island of Sehylan in the Indian Ocean.

"So many parents complain about the blood and gratui-

tous violence that kids are so frequently exposed to in video games. This is a fun, action-packed alternative," World Food Program spokesman Neil Gallagher told Reuters during last week's launch.

The object of the game is to bring much-needed relief to residents of the war-torn territory by dropping aid from helicopters and setting up farm projects. A team is sent in to step up the World Food Program's presence and feed millions of people.

The U.N. hopes the game will not only provide an alternative to violent fare, but will more importantly create an awareness in youngsters of how so many on our planet struggle just to have enough food to survive each day.

"Food Force" is free and works on Macs and Windows computers, and is available for download at [www.food-force.com](http://www.food-force.com). I encourage parents to check out the Web site with their kids; it also provides stats on poverty and various ways to help in relief efforts at school, at home and around the world.

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## DATES

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**Wild Things: Diamonds in the Rough** – Sony Pictures, \$24.96  
**The Winning Season** – Paramount, \$19.99  
**Young Man With a Horn** – Warner, \$19.97

### May 3

**American Dreamer** – Paramount, \$14.99  
**Back Roads** – Paramount, \$14.99  
**Battle of the Bulge** – Warner, \$19.97, special edition  
**Benny Hill: The Lost Years** – BBC, \$19.98  
**The Big Red One: The Reconstruction** – Warner, \$26.99, two-disc special edition  
**Blood Alley** – Warner, \$14.97, special edition  
**The Carol Burnett Show – Let's Bump Up the Lights!** – Paramount, \$19.99  
**The Chorus** – Buena Vista, \$29.95  
**Dawson's Creek: The Complete Fifth Season** – Sony, \$49.95, four-disc box set  
**Dinotopia: Quest for the Ruby Sunstone – The Movie** – GoodTimes, \$19.95  
**Dora the Explorer: It's a Party!** – Paramount, \$16.99  
**Enduring Love** – Paramount, \$19.99

**Everybody Loves Raymond: The Complete Third Season** – HBO, \$44.98, five-disc special-edition box set  
**Gilmore Girls: The Complete Third Season** – Warner, \$59.98, six-disc box set  
**Heart o' the Hills** – Image, \$29.99  
**I Love Lucy: The Complete Fourth Season** – Paramount, \$44.95, five-disc special-edition box set  
**The John Wayne Legendary Heroes Collection: Blood Alley, McQ, The Sea Chase, Tall in the Saddle, The Train Robbers** – Warner, \$49.92, five-disc special-edition box set  
**King of the Hill: Season Four** – Fox, \$39.98, three-disc box set  
**License to Drive** – Anchor Bay, \$19.98, special edition  
**Live in San Quentin** – Fox, \$19.98  
**McQ** – Warner, \$14.97, special edition  
**Naked City: Set 1** – Image, \$29.99, three-disc box set  
**National Treasure** – Buena Vista, \$29.99, special edition  
**The Phantom of the Opera (2004)** – Warner, \$27.95, single disc; \$29.95, two-disc special edition  
**Pocahontas: 10th Anniversary Edition** – Disney, \$29.99, two-disc special edition  
**Ron White, Jeff Foxworthy & Bill Engvall: Live From Las Vegas** – Starlight, \$14.99

**The Sandlot 2** – Fox, \$19.98, special edition  
**The Sea Chase** – Warner, \$14.97, special edition  
**Spaceballs: The Movie** – MGM, \$29.98, two-disc special edition  
**Star Trek Enterprise: The Complete First Season** – Paramount, \$99.99, seven-disc special-edition box set  
**Table for Five** – Paramount, \$14.99  
**Tall in the Saddle** – Warner, \$14.97, special edition  
**Three Amigos: Outrageous** – Buena Vista, \$29.95  
**Touched by an Angel – The Second Season** – Paramount, \$44.99, five-disc box set  
**The Train Robbers** – Warner, \$14.97, special edition  
**The True Stories Collection: And Then There Was One** – MPI, \$9.98  
**The True Stories Collection: A Killing in a Small Town** – MPI, \$9.98  
**The True Stories Collection: Darkness Before the Dawn** – MPI, \$9.98  
**The True Stories Collection: Fifteen and Pregnant** – MPI, \$9.98  
**The True Stories Collection: Too Young to Die** – MPI, \$9.98  
**The True Stories Collection: Untamed Love** – MPI, \$9.98  
**With Six You Get Eggroll** – Paramount, \$14.99

**World War II Collection: Battlefront Europe – The Big Red One: The Reconstruction, Battle of the Bulge, The Dirty Dozen, Where Eagles Dare, Battleground** – Warner, \$59.92, six-disc special-edition box set

### May 10

**Advise and Consent** – Warner, \$19.97, special edition  
**American Chopper: Season One** – Sony Pictures, \$29.96, three discs  
**American Chopper: Season Two** – Sony Pictures, \$29.96, three discs  
**The Americanization of Emily** – Warner, \$19.97, special edition  
**Appleseed** – Geneon, \$29.98; \$49.98, two-disc special edition  
**Assault on Precinct 13 (2005)** – Universal, \$29.98, special edition  
**Bad Apple** – Paramount, \$19.99  
**Bad Day at Black Rock** – Warner, \$19.97, special edition  
**Blackboard Jungle** – Warner, \$19.97, special edition  
**Burden of Dreams** – Criterion Collection, \$39.95, special edition  
**Café au Lait** – Koch Lorber, \$29.98

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## TOP VIDEOS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The following are the most popular DVDs and videocassettes as they appear in next week's issue of Billboard magazine. ©2005, Billboard Publications Inc. Reprinted with permission.

### DVD sales

1. **Sideways** (Widescreen), FoxVideo
2. **Spanglish**, Columbia TriStar
3. **Elektra** (Widescreen), FoxVideo
4. **The Incredibles** (Widescreen), Walt Disney
5. **Sideways** (Pan & Scan), FoxVideo
6. **Elektra** (Pan & Scan), FoxVideo
7. **The Incredibles** (Pan & Scan), Walt Disney
8. **Closer**, Columbia TriStar
9. **Finding Neverland** (Widescreen), Miramax
10. **Jay-Z: Fade To Black**, Paramount

### Tape sales

1. **The Incredibles**, Walt Disney
2. **Dora the Explorer: Big Sister Dora**, Paramount
3. **The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie**, Paramount
4. **Thomas & Friends: Sodor Celebration**, HIT Entertainment
5. **Bambi** (Special Edition), Walt Disney
6. **Shark Tale**, DreamWorks
7. **Dora the Explorer: Catch the Star**, Paramount
8. **Fat Albert**, FoxVideo
9. **Barbie: Fairytopia**, Lions Gate
10. **Barney: Let's Go to the Farm**, Hit Entertainment

### Tape rentals

1. **Sideways**, FoxVideo
2. **Elektra**, FoxVideo
3. **Spanglish**, Columbia TriStar
4. **After the Sunset** (Widescreen), New Line
5. **Finding Neverland**, Miramax
6. **Closer**, Columbia TriStar
7. **Ladder 49**, Touchstone
8. **The Incredibles**, Walt Disney
9. **Fat Albert**, FoxVideo
10. **Flight of the Phoenix** (Widescreen), FoxVideo

### Kid video sales

1. **Dora the Explorer: Big Sister Dora**, Paramount
2. **Thomas & Friends: Sodor Celebration**, Hit Entertainment
3. **Dora the Explorer: Catch the Star**, Paramount
4. **Barbie: Fairytopia**, Lions Gate
5. **Barney: Let's Go to the Farm**, Hit Entertainment
6. **Max & Ruby: Springtime for Max & Ruby**, Nickelodeon Video
7. **Dora the Explorer: Silly Fiesta**, Paramount
8. **SpongeBob SquarePants: Home Sweet Pineapple**, Paramount
9. **Dora the Explorer: City of Lost Toys**, Paramount
10. **Mulan 2**, Walt Disney