

BEHAVIOR: GROWING VAMPIRE-FOCUSED TREND IN POP CULTURE.

DR. BETH ERICKSON, Ph.D., speaker and author based in Edina, Minn., can discuss the benefits and dangers of the growing vampire-focused trend in pop culture:

"Since Stephenie Meyer's 'Twilight' saga, everywhere you look, you see a new vampire 'something.' The reason 'Grimm's Fairy Tales' are so grim is that they give children a kind of screen on which to externalize their fears. To a young child, the world can be a scary place indeed, with the safety of parents being a child's only protection from big, bad 'wolves.' By the time children reach adolescence, they know the chances are slim of being baked in an oven or of grandma being a wolf, threatening to eat them. And they have learned from fairy tales like 'Little Red Riding Hood' to take precautions and leave a trail of 'bread crumbs' when they go 'hiking' through the forest of life. However, just because adolescents have outgrown their childlike fears doesn't mean the world is no longer a scary place from time to time. The recent spate of vampire movies provides adolescents an opportunity to face fears (vampires) they know are not real. Goodness knows, our country's economic climate has made this last 12 or more months scary for everyone. So vampire movies present the opportunity to be scared out of their wits while being worldly enough to know this threat is not real."

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