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What is this site about? Why does it exist? Who are you?

I'm a Canadian who grew up in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I was raised in a Mormon family, and I served a two year mission when I was nineteen. I am still an active, faithful, believing member of the Church, so let's get that out of the way right now. Suffice it to say, I consider myself to be in the mainstream of the Church, despite the 'fringe' connotations inherent in the name "Mormon Fray."

There were not many Mormons my age growing up. I have fond memories of watching TV with my family; stuff like The Muppet Show, The Cosby Show and Family Ties. I remember one particular episode of Family Ties, where Jennifer (Tina Yothers) is confused by her male friend's behaviour. Her mother tells her, by way of explanation, that her friend has "hormones coursing through his veins." Later, when Jennifer confronts her friend, she repeats, "You have Mormons coursing through your veins!"

I recall being thrilled when I heard that line. I was a Mormon! I'd never heard Mormons talked about on the TV before. In my mind, the reference was so esoteric, it seemed like this joke was meant just for me. In my limited experience, my perception was that there were very few Mormons in the world, and barely anyone knew what we believed, or that we were a Christian religion. I'd always had to explain Mormonism to my friends who wondered why I wouldn't curse, or had to decline birthday parties held on Sundays, or any of the other things that make young Mormons peculiar to their peers.

The next reference I remember hearing was in Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Captain Kirk, in explaining Spock's strange behaviour, explains to an onlooker that Spock had done "too much LDS in the 60's". Again, my perception was that only my and my family knew that LDS stood for "Latter-Day Saint", and hence, the reference was meant for us alone.

I've remembered that line from Family Ties, (and that scene from Star Trek) ever since. Especially as I've continued to enjoy movies, TV and other pop cultural ephemera, and noted other references to Mormonism. I still get a little charge out of it, although some of the references I've noticed have not always been as innocuous as the two I mentioned.

I decided recently to see if anyone had catalogued these kinds of things. On the Internet, surely someone, somewhere had taken it upon themselves to do so. Maybe there was a forum somewhere, or a wiki or something... I found two sources. The first site was a forum ([here](#)) which I found because my initial Google search had been for that Family Ties line, and it appeared that someone else had remembered it, too. ([That forum](#) provided other examples, some of which I had heard, many others I had not.)

Ultimately, the second (and most authoritative) source I found was on one of the pages at [ldsfilm.com](#). Their list is great and fairly comprehensive, although they seem to have given up adding to their database sometime in 2005. Many of their references were vague however, without season or episode numbers, or much help should anyone actually be interested in tracking these references down. They occasionally included detailed descriptions or transcripts of

the relevant scenes, but I never saw anywhere on the Internet that actually linked to the clips in question. I decided to see if I could track down these references, and post the relevant portions of the actual video. I thought there might be people like me who would be interested in actually seeing the different ways in which Mormonism is invoked in popular culture, and to discuss reasons why Mormonism is referenced in art.

I'm not a genius, and I'm probably the wrong person to undertake this project. I'm hoping the bulk of constructive deconstruction can take place in the comments, assuming anyone ever finds this site, and/or bothers to take the time. I mostly just wanted to make sure these videos existed and were aggregated somewhere.

Why don't you have such-and-such on here?

For the record, I'm primarily interested in incidental references to Mormonism in mainstream films and television shows. That is, I will be ignoring most short films, documentaries, straight-to-video features, movies older than sixty years, and shows where Mormon characters or Mormonism is a major or primary focus, like [Latter Days](#), [Angels in America](#), or [Big Love](#). Or [Orgazmo](#). A book called "[Peculiar Portrayals](#)" by Mark T. Decker and Michael Austin deals in a scholarly way with those specific portrayals and more, although I have not had the pleasure of reading that book (yet). (Also, as I mentioned, a relatively comprehensive list of these references already exists at [ldsfilm.com](#).)

For example, Katie Holmes' character in *Wonder Boys* is identified explicitly as a Latter-Day Saint in both the source novel and the screenplay, but since it's never explicitly stated in the film version, there's nothing to excerpt that demonstrates her mormon-ness, save one scene wherein she gently chides another character for being "under the influence". You can [read about](#) this aspect of *Wonder Boys* at [ldsfilm.com](#) in exhaustive detail, but simply *knowing* that Katie Holmes' character is Mormon doesn't serve the purpose of [MormonFray.com](#). It is strongly suggested that the hero astronaut in the film *Deep Impact* is LDS, but save for one scene where he video chats with his family in Utah, there is no explicit reference to his religion, and so *Deep Impact* is not on this website either. (Though you may likewise find [an entry for it](#) on [ldsfilm.com](#))

There are actually a number of movies that feature characters who are Latter-Day Saints, but whose religious affiliation is only obliquely implied, or simply never mentioned, like *Rain Man*, *Punch-Drunk Love*, *Melvin and Howard*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *Mean Creek* (which does feature CTR and Angel Moroni stickers), *Thumbsucker*, and others. (A [list](#) is available on [ldsfilm.com](#).)

I will also be ignoring so-called "[Mormon Cinema](#)" (In fact, with a few exceptions, I recommend most people ignore Mormon Cinema.)

For a list of films and television shows that I intend to feature on this site soon, check out the "[coming soon](#)" page. If something isn't on that page, and isn't in the [media archive](#), and you think I should know about it, [email me](#)!

Aren't you breaking copyright laws with all this stuff?

Thoughts on Copyright: The excerpted clips I am presenting here are done for the purpose of criticism and scholarly inquiry, and my use is thus legally protected by the doctrine of "[Fair Use](#)" in the United States (where I imagine most rights-holders reside) and "[Fair Dealing](#)" in Canada, where I live. Before sending a DMCA takedown notice to me, my provider, or anyone, please carefully review the laws that are in place specifically to protect this kind of use. See [chillingeffects.org](#) for more details. Incidentally, I think copyright is very valuable, and even necessary; but it all breaks down without reasonable limits. I feel strongly that [The Creative Commons](#) is a far more workable model in this day and age. I think the Digital Millennium Copyright Act is terrible. I also think the Sonny Bono Copyright Extension Act (aka the Mickey Mouse Protection Act) is absurd, but these are thoughts for another blog.

What about swear words in these videos? I don't want to hear that potty talk, because my ears are not toilets.

I know we're (probably) all adults, and I wondered about what to do when I inevitably got to those clips that contained foul or questionable language. Should I post an uncensored version and a bowdlerized version and let people choose according to their own personal comfort level? In the end, I decided I'd just mute the offending word. I kind of want everyone to feel comfy coming to this site and watching these clips. The missing words are probably obvious, and maybe I made the wrong decision, but when you start your archive of incidental references to Mormons and Mormonism, you can make it as filthy as you want. I came to this conclusion when I was preparing the clip from the Oscar winning [Hustle & Flow](#), in which Best Actor Terrance Howard calls Mormons "brave motherf***ers". It's kind of a compliment, but I censored the naughty part anyway.

To clarify, I'm talking about expurgating the big cusses; the F-bombs *et al.* If you can't even stomach the occasional "hell" and "damn", then you should probably use your own discretion about which videos you're going to watch, because I'm leaving those in. My favourite clip on this site (from [Cheers](#)) has Kirstie Alley saying "damn".

This website seems like a good place for me to insult Mormons and their beliefs. Is it?

A note on respect: This is my religion, and I believe it very deeply. I have no intention of insulting any else's religion on this website, so take it easy. As the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."

I would like to learn more about this "Mormonism" of which you speak.

A great starting place would be mormon.org.

Does anyone read FAQs anymore?

No.

Why not?

When the Internet was shiny and new, everyone was confused. FAQs cleared things up, but the Internet, while still shiny, is no longer new, and FAQs have, for the most part, outlived their usefulness.

What are we still doing here?

Beats me.
