

Juno (M)

About the film

Juno stars Ellen Page as the title character, a whip-smart teen confronting an unplanned pregnancy by her classmate Bleeker (Michael Cera).

With the help of her hot best friend Leah (Olivia Thirlby), Juno finds her unborn child a “perfect” set of parents: an affluent suburban couple, Mark and Vanessa (Jason Bateman and Jennifer Garner), longing to adopt.

Luckily, Juno has the total support of her parents (J.K. Simmons and Allison Janney) as she faces some tough decisions, flirts with adulthood and ultimately figures out where she belongs.

Review

“Juno is directed by Jason Reitman, whose last film was the scathingly brilliant satire *Thank You for Smoking*. The new film is, if anything, even better than his previous effort, and it works equally well as a story of pre-mid-life crisis—when, exactly, did Gen-Xers like Mark abandon the mosh pit for mortgages and families?—and as a straightforward high-school comedy, with hints of possible romance as Paulie shyly suggests that he and Juno should get back “together” on a long-term basis.

Note to those who may be drawn to the movie by the pro-life elements: It would be a stretch to say that Cody or Reitman intended this to be a “socially conservative” film. Juno and her friends are still teenagers, with all that that implies, though the jokes they tell never stray outside PG-13 territory. (This isn’t a crass Judd Apatow film, in other words.) Also, it is worth noting that, when all is said and done, neither Juno nor her child end up in a traditional family, as such. But in a way, that just underscores the film’s implicit pro-life sensibility. Life is life, and deserves to be nurtured, even—if not especially—when everything around it is broken.”

Peter Chattaway - ChristianityToday

Discussion Questions

1. Juno’s dad says, “I thought you were the kind of girl who knew when to say when,” and Juno replies, “I don’t know what kind of girl I am.” How does keeping her baby affect Juno’s sense of her own identity? How do her choices shape her? How do you think things would have turned out for her if she hadn’t kept the baby?
2. Juno’s stepmother says, “Someone’s going to get a special blessing from Jesus in this garbage dump of a situation.” In what way is the baby a blessing? Who is blessed by the baby? Juno? Vanessa? Mark? Juno’s father and stepmother? Are pregnancies ever bad? Are unwanted pregnancies ever good? How can good come out of possibly bad situations like this? (*Genesis 45:4-8; Romans 8:28.*)
3. What does the film say about pregnancy and abortion? Does it neatly fit into a “pro-life” or “pro-choice” category? Why do you think the film deals with the subject the way it does? What difference does it make that babies have “fingernails”?
4. What does the film say about relationships, marriage and divorce? Note how Juno discusses her birth mother in the opening voiceover. Note also how Juno wishes it were possible for relationships to last forever. Is she naïve? Is she tapping into a certain truth? Why don’t some relationships last? What should people do when they don’t?
5. What does the film say about the current attitude toward sex among teenagers? If everyone is doing it, then why does Juno cringe at the term “sexually active”, or at the way adults try to get kids to use condoms, etc.? Is this portrayal accurate?

