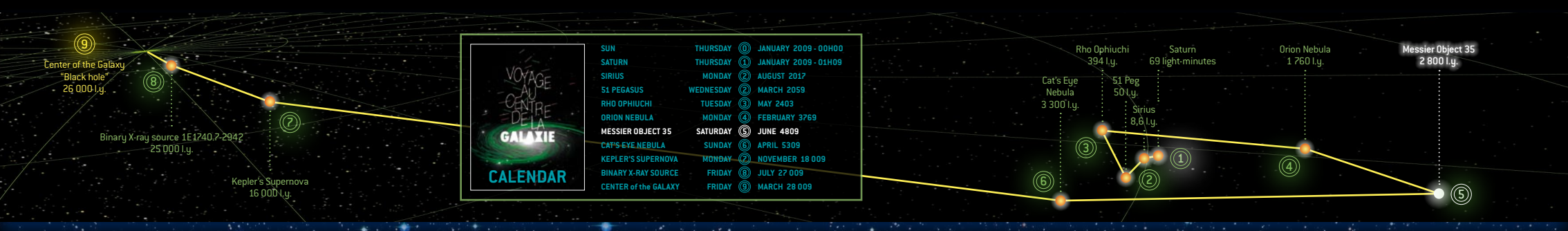

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Picture of the star clusters Messier 35 and NGC2158 in visible light obtained by the MEGACAM camera

The glorious life of stars

THE YOUNGEST STARS ARE THE ONES THAT LIGHT UP THE SKY AND ARE VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE

Stars are not born alone, but in **groups** of a few dozen at a time, within a vast cloud of interstellar dust and gas.

The **pressure** of the light of newborn stars eventually dissipates the cloud and they can be seen in **visible light**.

Grouped together in a **cluster** in the sky, they shine with a bluish light, which indicates their young age.

Zoom

Giant blue stars are generally predominant in the light of star clusters, as they are extremely luminous though they have short lives. The age of a cluster can then be estimated by identifying its blue, yellow or red star populations. The larger the number of blue stars, the younger the star cluster.
Messier Object 35 (M35) is a cluster of stars in the ***Gemini constellation***. It is located at a distance of 2,800 light-years from Earth and is composed of several hundred stars, spread out over a surface area of the sky equal to that of the Full Moon. These stars, surrounded by a blue halo, were all born around 100 million years ago. Another cluster, ***NGC 2158***, is visible in the background, at almost five times the distance. With very few blue stars, ***NGC 2158*** is ten times older than ***Messier 35***.

visible light

cluster

groups