

INTO THE WEST

Teachers notes

The following resource will be most useful to teachers and learners at Key Stage Two and is designed to support cross curricular learning on the topic of Anti-Bullying in response to the film INTO THE WEST. Cinemas across London have joined forces with the Anti-Bullying Alliance to offer a selection of screenings of INTO THE WEST as part of Anti-Bullying Week 2008 which focuses upon a theme of difference and diversity. Difference - actual or perceived - is a common trigger for bullying behaviour and schools are encouraged to use this film as a way of exploring and celebrating diversity in all its forms.

The resource contains activity ideas and discussion points to support learning during Anti-Bullying week and at other times of the year and is relevant to the teaching of (SEAL) Social and emotional aspects of Learning, Literacy, PSHE and RE at Key Stage 2. Some activities are suggested for Y2 at KS1.

About the film

A gigantic white stallion appears mysteriously to a Traveller grandfather and his two grandsons in an Irish slum. Since, puzzlingly, the younger of the two boys is the only individual who can control the horse, ownership falls to him and his older brother by default. There being no place for the animal, they move him into their high rise apartment where he is promptly removed by Police. The horse is then sold in a shady deal and ends up under control of a wealthy, underhanded horse breeder. The boys manage to retrieve him and escape on his back, but the stallion seems to have his own travelling agenda, sweeping them off cross country towards the west coast of Ireland. The movie combines gritty realism with magic and wonder, capturing the highs and lows of modern day traveller life.

INTO THE WEST is a powerful and uplifting film that explores the misunderstandings between two groups of people and the consequences these can have when allowed to develop into prejudice. The film is told from the point of view of the stigmatised traveller community who struggle to gain acceptance for their way of life from the settled majority. The film shows that with power and superiority often comes corruption and exploitation, but that in the end through humanity and realisation some form of acceptance and understanding can be achieved. Students and teachers will find this film useful for exploring the complex causes and effects of prejudice, tolerance and acceptance. The film triumphs the power of humanity and kindness and of understanding not only others but oneself.

Teachers Notes: Into The West: Brief overview and themes

Relationships between

- Ossie and his mysterious white horse from the 'eternal shores' and the links with the Spirit of his dead mother- he talks to and likes the horse, which is reciprocated so he can handle her better than anyone. He is the master
- the brothers ,Ossie and Tito who care for each other ; the questions they explore about loss, their mother, their father, and the adventures they share
- **Papa**, the boys father and his father in law, the boy's grandfather
- Grandfather and Ossie through **the stories** he tells and being true to the old ways of traveller life
- and his two sons Ossie and Tito
- and the settled community, the residents in the block of flats
- and the traveller community that he has left
- and his true friends in the traveller community
- the travellers and the settled community; belonging and not belonging; prejudice about difference and stereotyping
- people who are from different backgrounds and how they are treated
- the police and those in Authority, and the tinkers or outsiders
- those who write and those who cannot and how they are vulnerable to exploitation; Papa's mark, could turn his son into thieves.
- the businessman, Mr Hart and the police in a shady deal and the abuse of power , money, status and authority
- Ossie and God to whom he prays and the responses he gets to prayer

Journey theme-Outer

- Into the West – inner to discover an identity, culture and history and the outer journey on the horse to the magical and mythical West
- Contrasts between barren and bleak life in high rise tower block in Dublin and the journey through Ireland to the mystical West
- On the horse itself and the places they go to; e.g.The waterfall refuge;
- the grave of their mother where Ossie sees his birthday on her gravestone and asks more questions as he does not have a picture of her in his head
- That the horse is taking them on- **father questions** where the Horse is **leading** and asks his father in law if it is good or bad

Inner journeys

- **Universal quest** to find one's place, identity, belonging and purpose
- **Displacement** – the emotional displacement of Papa after Mary, his wife, dies; his chaotic and drunken response to her loss and the physical displacement he feels in the settled community; realises the strength of his love, for his sons when they are being tracked by the police
- **Cultural misconceptions;** attitudes as barriers to understanding, prejudice, inhuman treatment of the other, and breaks with convention
- Journey towards wholeness, **reconciliation** with the past and carrying out the traditions (burning the caravan)
- Towards a **benign Being** who cares, listens to prayers, saves Ossie in the water from drowning and reunites the family again

Literacy KS1 and KS2 – refer to the literacy objectives and adapt as appropriate

In these lessons the children can explore the drama of the film, the negative effects of misunderstanding and badly treating others and what they would do to make things better.

Objectives

- Retell the story of the film to give the main plot in sequence and to pick out significant incidents
- Talk and write about the bits they liked best and the things they did not like that happened in the film
- Make an illustrated collection of significant words that relate to kindness and cruelty (put downs) inspired from the film as **warm** and **cold** words, in appropriate shapes
- Talk about how words that are unkind about being different, and **exclude** others make us feel
- Talk about how words that are kind about others to **include** them make us feel
- Make an illustrated Class 'Big Book' of the Into the West, choosing symbols the children like and remember about travellers and settled people
- Discuss the different characters, their feelings and behaviour and say if it is fair or unfair

e.g. the children interviewed to get their views ,said;

'My favourite bit was when they sneaked the horse into the cinema late at night and were feeding it'

'the brothers who helped each other and had adventures'

'I didn't like

' when the police wanted to take the horse away and sell it as it was not nice '

'the businessman who is more interested in making money out of the horse than the children'

- 'Treating people badly just because they are different from you'

- the father when he was a bit mean by not letting Ossie keep the horse

PSHE and SEAL

Key Stage 1

Links to QCA Schemes of Work in PSHE:

1) Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities; 1a,1b

4) Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people;

4a,c,d,e

Key Stage 2

PSHE: QCA- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people; 4:a, b, d, e, by exploring differences, stereotyping and understanding that the differences between people are related to race, culture, religion, ethnicity, diversity, gender and disability

SEAL: Say No to Bullying

Select appropriate units from the Blue; Green and Yellow sets of SEAL

KS2

Music

- Pupils can explore the ways sounds are combined to express and create atmosphere
- E.g sounds of celebration, and belonging, sounds of being excluded sounds of dislike and making trouble, sounds of adventure and journeys, sounds of nature, water, forests, fields, sounds of despair and hope and then decide which part of the film and the characters they could use their sounds for.

KS2 Art

Objectives

- Pupils can explore ideas and collect visual images and stimulus to express their work
- They can comment on similarities and differences between their own and others work
- They can adapt and refine their work to portray their own ideas of its purpose and meaning

First Impressions

An activity looking at visual images of different people in the world
Taken and adapted from the Union of Students of Ireland Anti- Racism and Multicultural Resource Pack

Objectives

- to discover how visual images can influence the way we see others
- to understand diversity and select images of people from magazines or the internet, from different backgrounds, ethnic groups, religions, disabilities, genders and ages
- to be aware of and challenge stereotypes

Process

- Each pupil selects at least one striking image from magazines etc
- Once images are selected the pupils are asked to
- Stick the pictures onto the top of an A3 piece of paper and leave room for comments
- Arrange the class into two or three circles of not more than 10 people
- Invite pupils to write their **first impression** at the bottom of the paper and to fold it up, before they pass it on to hide what they have written
- Ensure the pictures are moved around the group as quickly as possible
- Once completed unfold the papers and invite children to compare and discuss first impressions
- Did people have similar first impressions or different ones?

- What did the children base these impressions on?
- Were any of these surprising?
- Has anyone ever had a wrong first impression of other people?
- Has it affected the way that they treat people?
- How would that feel?
- What impressions are hurtful to people from different groups and what do we need to do to challenge these?

Give pupils opportunities to draw, paint and make collages of different scenes or characters from the film that portray

Relationships

- belonging and difference
- inclusion and exclusion

Journeys

- inner –related to thoughts and feelings of a character they choose
- outer places, that Ossie, Tito, Grandfather or Papa visit in the film

RE QCA Generic Units on Belonging KS1 1a

KS1

- Explore what groups we belong to – family; school, friendship, religious, country
- The symbols of belonging, badges, emblems, that can be made into a collection
- The clothes and symbols of belonging that people wear; e.g star of david; cross, kirpan, etc
- Identify what special things, families do to show they belong to a religion
- Make a class display of belonging

KS2 : QCA Generic Unit on Worship and Communities

- What is worship and what do religious communities do in worship
- why and how people use prayer within worship
- to understand the effect that faith adherents believe prayer has in their lives and the wider world - this can be linked to the notion that Ossie prayed and the effect it had in his life and in the lives of faith adherents around the world
- explore some prayers from different religions