



TRAGIC STORY with Happy Ending

A Film by
Regina Pessoa

A FOLIMAGE AND CICLOPE FILMES PRODUCTION, IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH
THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA AND ARTE FRANCE



Lesson plan prepared by Louise Sarrasin, Educator
Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM), Montreal, Quebec

Tragic Story with Happy Ending

Director: Regina Pessoa

Producers: Jacques-Rémy Girerd, Patrick Eveno, Abi Feijò, Marcel Jean
2005 - 7 min 40 s

Technique: photocopies with images scratched into India ink on glossy paper

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Canada 1 800 267-7710

Web site www.nfb.ca/animation

TRagic STORY with Happy Ending

LESSON PLAN

Objective

Help students to become more open to differences and to respect them

Target audience

Students 10 to 12

Connections

Languages

Social sciences

Arts education

Materials

VCR, television set, white paper (flip chart type), and plastic arts materials

Summary of lesson plan

This lesson will help students tackle the issue of differences among human beings and reflect on how each individual can experience those differences. The activities will allow students to debate the issue in an atmosphere of respect, as well as to demonstrate openness to differences and explain the attitudes that promote their expression.

Start and preparatory activity

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

The lesson could begin with a discussion of differences, followed by a game. First, ask the students what the word *different* means to them. Then, ask them to make a list of the differences they have noticed in the people around them. Write their answers on a large sheet of white paper, then continue the discussion using the following questions:

- What makes a person different?
- In your opinion, what differences seem to be best accepted in our society? What differences are less well accepted? Why?
- How could one person feel different from others?
- How does the way that people look at someone different change how that person feels about being different?
- What situations have you been in where you felt different? How did you react?
- What are the positive aspects of being different?

Game: If I were an animal

Tell the students they have the power to change themselves into an animal. Divide the class into teams of four. The first student in the team names the animal he/she wants to be, without saying why. This person then asks other members of the team what that animal means to each of them, and then explains what the animal means to him/her. Each team member then does the same thing. When all the teams have finished, bring the teams together and reiterate all the animals named, explaining the reactions they induced in others.

Discuss their discoveries with the students, making sure you point out that an animal can mean one thing—even a very significant thing—to one person but mean something completely different to someone else. The point of the exercise is to discuss perceptions, not to be judgmental about the animals selected.



ACTIVITY: Different and proud of it!

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Step 1: Before screening *Tragic Story with Happy Ending*, ask the students what they think the title of the film suggests. Then, explain that the film is a fable, a tale of a little girl whose heart beats faster than normal. They will see why the little girl experienced this as a tragic story.

Step 2: Screen the first few minutes of the film. Stop it after people say: “What is she saying? Poor girl... She won't last...”, when the little girl is trying to explain that she is living in a body not her own, and that is why her heart beats so fast. Ask what the little girl could be feeling when the people around her respond that way. What would they do in her place?

Step 3: Screen the film until the end. Ask the students to go back into teams of four—the same teams they had for the preparatory activity—and think about the following questions in more depth (you can write the questions on the board or hand them out on a sheet):

- Why does the little girl feel different?
- In what ways is she different, or not different?
- In what ways do you identify with the character?
- How did people react to the little girl at the beginning of the film? How did they react at the end of the film? How can you explain their reactions?

Step 4: Bring all the teams back together to conclude the discussion using these following questions:

- How did the director portray the character? In your opinion, what would explain her choices?



- What aspects of the film lead you to believe that the little girl is different from everyone else?
- What event changes the course of the story?
- What role do images play in this film? What role do words play?
- What does shooting the film in black-and-white—rather than colour—add to it? Give examples to illustrate your answer.
- How is the film like a fable?

Recap

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Suggest that the students prepare an artistic depiction of someone who wants to show he/she is different, like the character in the film. Exhibit the students' efforts in class.

Reflective sharing

Encourage the students to explain what difference is and how it can be manifested. Ask them to talk about the attitudes that would make someone proud of being different, or that would make someone hide his/her difference. Since this is a very delicate issue, make sure that the students conduct the discussion with respect.
