

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GROUP presents



Hope for the Future: STUDY GUIDE

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Central Theme

The central theme in *Hope for the Future* is about teaching peace.

Hope for the Future is an emotional feature-length film that documents the memorable journey to Serbia taken by thirty-two Canadian highschool students in 2005. Inspired by the documentary *Teaching Peace in a Time of War*, students from Nova Scotia and British Columbia set out on a mission to visit and learn more about Serbia, culminating with the Youth to Youth Peace Conference.

Produced and directed by Teresa MacInnes and Kent Nason, *Hope for the Future* is the direct result of efforts made by video students from Students for Teaching Peace. For many this was their first trip outside of Canada. Eager to meet new friends and learn about life in Serbia, the students equipped themselves with video cameras to document their experiences and record their thoughts and feelings. This film shows the transformation of students from two different countries. Through an experience like none other, these students open a dialogue about peace, achieving a common goal. An uplifting, emotional and inspirational film, it challenges all who watch it to “never be a do nothing person again.”

Curriculum Applicability

Hope for the Future can be used as an entry point into multiple subjects across the curriculum. Below is a general guide to subjects that are relevant to the issues raised in the film.

Sociology	Political Science	Career & Life Management
English	Global History	Global Geography

Background Information

Students for Teaching Peace Kids/Cast

Thirty-two students travelled to Serbia (twenty-nine from Nova Scotia). There were also two teachers, parents, Hetty Van Gorp (who was in the film *Teaching Peace in a Time of War*), and the filmmakers Teresa MacInnes and Kent Nason (*Teaching Peace in a Time of War*). Some students who play key roles in the film are:

Aleksandra (Serbian student) – She was featured in *Teaching Peace in a Time of War*. The new film returns to Aleksandra who also attends the peace conference.

Uros (Serbian student) – He was also featured in *Teaching Peace in a Time of War*. The new film returns to Uros who also attends the peace conference.

Sarah (student) – A young girl from Nova Scotia who is paralyzed by Multiple Sclerosis. The film explores her desire to create awareness for disabled persons and looks at the challenges she faces in wartorn Serbia.

There are various other students that the film returns to on numerous occasions including Brad, Matty, Harrison, Dave, Brea, Christina, Katy, Nicole, Zander & Shawn.

The Conflict in the Balkans

“The Yugoslav wars were a series of violent conflicts in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that took place between 1991 and 2001...affecting all of the six former Yugoslav republics.”(wikipedia.org) As the film mentions, from the early nineties, Serbia experienced three bloody civil wars, international sanctions, economic depression, seventy-eight days of NATO bombings, the end of Slobodan Milosevic’s dictatorship and the assassination of the elected Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in 2003. In 2005, Serbia still looks wartorn, with abandoned, bombed-out buildings as part of the day-to-day scenery that surrounds the population.

Yugoslavia Timeline (1991-2004)

DATE		EVENT
1991	June	Slovenia and Croatia each declare independence. Since 90% of the population of Slovenia was ethnic Slovenians, there was only a brief period of fighting. Since 12% of Croatia's population is Serbian, Yugoslavia fights hard against Croatia's secession for four years. As Croatia moves towards independence, it evicts most of its Serbian population.
1992	January	Macedonia declares independence
	April	Bosnia & Herzegovina declares independence. Bosnia is the most ethnically diverse of the Yugoslav republics (approximately 43% Muslim, 31% Serbian, and 17% Croatian). Eventually war breaks out in Bosnia. By 1995, Bosnia is divided into three ethnic regions. Serbia and Montenegro form the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Slobodan Milosevic is the leader.
1995	November	Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia sign the Dayton Peace Accord to end the war in Bosnia.
1998	March	Milosevic sends troops to Kosovo to quash unrest in the province. A guerrilla war breaks out.
1999	March	Peace talks fail. NATO launches air strikes on Serbian targets.
2000	January	United States imposes trade sanctions.
2001	April	Milosevic is arrested by Yugoslavian authorities and is turned over to the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal by June.
	September	United Nations Security Council lifts the last trade embargo against Yugoslavia.
2002	February	Milosevic's trial begins
2003	February	New government formed / elected
	March 12	Zoran Djindjic Prime Minister of Serbia, is assassinated. Extreme nationalists, organized crime and Serbia's own police and security services were implicated.
2004	March 17	Mitrovica, in Kosovo, experiences the worst ethnic violence in the regions since the 1999 war. At least twenty-two people are killed and another five hundred are injured. NATO sends in an extra one thousand troops to restore order. The violence began after Serbs claimed a Serb teenager was the victim of a drive-by shooting and ethnic Albanians blamed Serbs for the drowning of several Albanian children.

* data taken from www.infoplease.com

Discussion Topics

Before viewing

Discuss the differences between documentary film and fiction film, discussion points might include:

How are the storylines developed in a fiction film vs a documentary film?

How might the production process differ between the two?

What is unique to a documentary film?

What is unique to a fiction film?

What techniques does the documentary filmmaker use to influence audience response? (The filmmaker can shape audience attitudes and moods through the lighting of various shots. Brighter images tend to be regarded as positive; darker images are seen as more threatening and tend to make the audience uncomfortable. Events are shaped through camera placement, camera angle and camera perspective, all of which influence the audience's mental point of view, be it objective or subjective. Time is manipulated through the editing of film footage.

Looking through headlines only (not the bulks of the articles) from 1990 to 2004 on Serbian conflicts, have the students propose descriptions / judgements on the different groups involved in the conflict. After watching the documentary revisit this topic.

What are the impacts of war? Revisit this question after watching the film to see how students' perceptions have changed.

After viewing

What was the aim of the filmmakers of *Hope for the Future*?

(There are two groups to talk about: first there is the professional filmmaker and their purpose in making this film; secondly there are the students who wanted to film this experience.)

The Serbian student Aleksandra mentioned that "Peace is nothing to me because I don't have any peace... people have to change... it's hard to change, but it's not hard to try." Discuss the significance of this statement. By the end of the film, how do you think Aleksandra's feelings/opinions have or have not changed.

Discuss the significance of the statement "It's society that feeds on media."

The teacher Greg argues that "peace isn't about Nations, it's not about politics, it's not

about geography; it's about relationships." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

The film is about working toward peace. Yet on another level, the film is about Sarah, a young girl suffering from MS who has to face the challenge of being in a country where accessibility is not a priority. What issues do you think this film addresses regarding disabled persons?

At one point Hetty Van Gorp challenges the Serbian students regarding their belief that getting involved in politics will not help. Uros states that he isn't interested in voting because he does not have faith in the system. How would you change his mind and the minds of others like him. Have students brainstorm ideas of how they can promote peace in their lives or the lives of others.

What could you do? (Have the students brainstorm ideas on how they can promote peace in their lives or the lives of others.)

Lesson Ideas

1. Hope for the Future is an excellent example of students using film to convey their ideas and emotions. Why not get your students to create short films on either a topic of their choice along the theme of peace and understanding or on one assigned by the teacher. Learning how to make films with your students is a great way to further enhance the student-teacher relationship but also it provides an opportunity and arena for students to share their thoughts and perspectives about important issues such as peace and democracy.

2. Using ideas from Students for Teaching Peace, start your own peace campaign on either a local or a global level. You can go one step further by videotaping the campaign (from brainstorming the idea to frequent updates and then the final culminating event.) Have the students edit the film and have their own screening for the rest of the school and their parents.

3. Children of War Lesson:

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/activities/childrenofwar/>

In particular, see Zlata's Diary.

Additional Online References

Students for Teaching Peace official website
www.sftp.ca

Peaceful Schools International official website
www.peacefulschoolsinternational.org

Free online encyclopedia
www.wikipedia.org
more specific link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_wars
<http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/history/index.html>

United Nations official website
www.un.org

Media Awareness Network
Media Awareness Network provides learning resources for students, teachers and parents
www.media-awareness.ca

Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace
Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace is a non-profit corporation whose main purpose is to bring together all peoples of the world in the promotion of lasting peace acting on a local level with a global perspective in mind. The headquarters is located in Okotoks, Alberta.
www.peace.ca

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