

RIGHTS *from the* HEART



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

A collection of animation films
inspired by the United Nations Convention
on the Rights of the Child

Part

2

Recommended for ages 9 to 12



FILMS

Jonas and Lisa

Directors: Zabelle Côté, Daniel Schorr
9 min 11 s

Baroque'n Roll

Director: Pierre M. Trudeau
4 min 29 s

The Tournament

Director: Francine Desbiens
6 min 31 s

Ex-Child

Director: Jacques Drouin
4 min 57 s

Overdose

Director: Claude Cloutier
5 min 25 s

Why?

Director: Bretislav Pojar
8 min 53 s

An Artist

Director: Michèle Cournoyer
5 min 15 s

Producer: Thérèse Descary

The *Rights from the Heart* collection is produced by the Animation Studio of the National Film Board of Canada French Program in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Société Radio-Canada, and Premiere Medien GmbH & Co. KG.

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Developed and written by: Aline Côté, Les Éditions Berger

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

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THE RIGHTS FROM THE HEART COLLECTION

In 1990, a historic international event took place when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child came into effect. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) wanted to emphasize the importance of the Convention, and to make it better known to those most affected by it—namely, children and teenagers. The NFB's French Program Animation Studio therefore developed *Rights from the Heart*, a three-part collection of animated films, with one part intended for children aged 5 to 8, one for preteens aged 9 to 12, and one for teenagers aged 13 to 18. The project was carried out with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

A plea on behalf of the world's children, *Rights from the Heart* was developed by educators and animation filmmakers working together in a unique creative setting, who together identified several themes from the preamble and the various articles of the Convention.

Because the films contain no dialogue, they can be used in classrooms and in homes all over the world. The text that appears at the end of each film states the specific right it addresses. These messages are written in the six official languages of the United Nations: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic.

Part 2 of the collection, consisting of seven films, is intended for children aged 9 to 12. Five of them are approximately 5 minutes long; one is about 10 minutes long, and the film that gives an overview of the collection is 9 minutes long, for a total running time of 44 minutes.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This Educator's Guide suggests how the films can be presented in an educational context appropriate to preschool and early elementary students. The purpose of the films and the corresponding activities is not to teach the Convention articles themselves but to make children aware that they have rights, that these rights are recognized by international law, and that the adults caring for them must ensure that this law is respected.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989. Drawn up by a special committee formed of representatives of some 30 non-governmental organizations involved in safeguarding human rights, the Convention consists of 54 articles detailing the individual rights of all persons under the age of 18. Basically, it states that children have the right to develop their abilities to the fullest without suffering from hunger, poverty, negligence, exploitation, or any other forms of injustice.

The Convention came into effect on September 2, 1990, after 10 years of study and negotiations. When a country signs the Convention, it becomes law within its territory. A 10-member committee of United Nations experts subsequently verifies that the law is being enforced. Canada ratified this Convention in December 1991; it was the 103rd nation to do so.

The Convention aims to create a balance between the rights of children and those of the parents or adults responsible for their survival, development, and safety. This is achieved by granting children the right to participate in decisions concerning them and their future.

The Convention also attempts to solve several pressing problems—some of which were being addressed for the first time by an international convention, including the problems of refugee children (Article 22), protection against sexual and other forms of exploitation (Articles 34 and 36), drugs (Article 33), children in conflict with the law (Article 40), international adoption (Article 21), children caught in armed conflicts (Articles 38 and 39), children with disabilities (Article 23), and Indigenous children or those belonging to visible minorities (Article 30).

Education is addressed in two important articles (27 and 28), which received the support of the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand in March 1990. According to the Convention, elementary education must be compulsory and free for all. Education must encourage the development of children's personalities, talents and abilities, while at the same time respecting their identity, language, and cultural values. The Convention emphasizes that girls and boys must be provided with the same opportunities.

The strength of the Convention lies in its flexibility: It can be adapted to the reality of each signatory nation. Its authors and legislators did not try to steer away from difficult issues. They found a way both to harmonize different cultural, religious and other values, and to meet the needs of children everywhere in the world.

The relevant articles of the Convention have been summarized in this guide. A copy of the entire document can be obtained by writing to:

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In most Canadian schools, learning resources about the rights of the child are included in the curriculum for Grades 4 to 7 (elementary cycle 2 in the majority of provinces). At all levels, many school programs strive to teach children and teens to respect themselves and others and accept cultural differences.

Teaching material is produced in many places across Canada to deepen learning on human rights and freedoms. We could use this material as inspiration to extend the activities surrounding screenings of films in the series. Many other teaching documents have been developed for international educational projects by various provincial English- and French-language teachers' associations in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency. In most provinces, information on such projects is available directly from the teachers' associations.

Across the country, each province also offers educational material that aims to develop intellectual rigour and honesty in children. Often associated with science and technology programs or social or natural science research methods, this objective is generally met by the end of Grade 6. Children in that age group can therefore be expected to be able to examine a range of options, contribute solutions and assess their validity.

School services could also use and benefit from screenings of these films.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

This guide proposes a three-step approach to working with students: preparing them for the screening; verifying and enhancing their understanding of the films; and expanding on the notion of children's rights.

The preliminary step (5.2), Preparing Students for the Screening, has two objectives: to help them develop a point of view on the topic and thus to better grasp the film's messages; and, if necessary, to help them to overcome any obstacles to comprehension specific to each group, depending on their age, knowledge level, background, life-style, and ethnic origin.

The second step (5.3), Enhancing Understanding of the Films, should give students a basis within their own experience and context from which to make the connection between the situations in the films and those of their families, classmates, neighbours, and so on. It is important at this stage to ensure that the students have grasped all the elements of the message and to help the class to understand the problem set out in each film.

The activities in the third step (5.4), Expanding on the Notion of Children's Rights, are designed to help students move beyond the situations presented in the films to an awareness of the broader context, such as the problems encountered by children elsewhere in the world and how they might be affected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The films end with questions so that the notion of children's rights can then be discussed in conjunction with that of responsibility, and the children can be encouraged to take part in seeking solutions. However, it is important that this activity not make them feel guilty or powerless. They should be helped to think of actions already taken by adults, and asked to comment on their effectiveness. They can be encouraged to invent new and original solutions and to make a collective choice of an action that is simple and easy for the group to do—this action being linked as directly as possible to the problem under discussion.

Several activities are suggested for each step. Teachers should choose the ones which contribute most to the program of study for which they are responsible and which are most appropriate for their students. Three types of activities are suggested so that 9- to 12-year-olds can move from a general understanding of the content of a film to an awareness of their legal rights. Teachers who present the entire series over a short period of time, for instance during a children's rights week, can choose from among the suggested activities and thus vary the presentations.

LESSON PLANNING

For each of the six films, this Educator's Guide provides teachers with the following seven elements of information to facilitate their planning:

- a) the theme on which the film is based;
- b) the article(s) of the Convention illustrated by the film;
- c) the synopsis and its meaning—a basis for discussing children's rights;
- d) the opening sentence, which hints at what is to come;
- e) the story's key moments, broken down into the traditional plot elements: setup, conflict, and resolution;
- f) elements to facilitate understanding of the message, including abstract notions to develop, filmmaking techniques to interpret, or prejudices to avoid during class discussion;
- g) a few suggestions for complementary activities specific to each film.

Prior to introducing the films to the children, teachers should:

- screen the films;
- read the synopses, which help focus on the meaning of the films so that the screening meets its objectives;
- select the film or films to be presented, taking into consideration the students' interests and the educational program or activity;
- identify any elements that might escape the students in their group(s);
- choose three activities, one from each step: preparing students for the screening, enhancing understanding of the films, and expanding on the notion of children's rights;
- gather the appropriate material, relying, if necessary, on the complementary activities suggested for their level and program of study (section 4), and write down the right illustrated by the film on the blackboard.

PREPARING THE STUDENTS FOR THE SCREENING

This step helps prepare the way for the films to be shown in the best possible conditions.

Helping Students Grasp the Message

Here are some suggestions to help prepare students for the screening:

- Ask them to read the introductory sentence that has been written on the blackboard and to invent stories appropriate to it.
- Tell them the beginning and the middle of the story (the setup and conflict) using the description of the action (synopsis) as a guide, and suggest that they describe how they imagine the film will end.
- Ask them to read the short summary of the story from the blackboard and to describe how they imagine the central characters' appearance, clothing, personality, race, and so on.
- Tell them how the film begins and ends and ask for suggestions as to what might happen in the middle.
- Have them read the article(s) of the Convention illustrated by the film from the blackboard and ask them to invent a story that would help children or preteens of their age to understand the message.

Avoiding Problems of Comprehension

The following are some ideas to help children understand the film:

- Before the screening, review the basic concepts in the films by asking questions such as: What is a disability? Can you name some developing countries? Do you know some of the different races that make up the world's population? What is racism? Can you give some examples of a lack of respect towards others? What is prejudice? Why are there poor people? Have you noticed the talents of some of your classmates? What are they? What is an immigrant?

If you notice there is a problem, limit discussion to the most relevant content, using elements from the children's own experience and clear illustrations. Because children aged 9 and 10 may have difficulty understanding abstract concepts such as those of international co-operation, culture, social classes, multiculturalism, etc., these should be explained using world maps or globes.

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING OF THE FILMS

To help children understand a film, the teacher should generally plan to screen it twice.

First Screening

During the first screening, the teacher should watch how the students react and note the parts they find most interesting or confusing. After the screening, he/she can ask them to say what they have understood, making any necessary corrections by comparing their different perceptions, and then explain the story in detail, referring to the interpretation given in the summary.

At this age, most children are already skilled at interpreting the language of film, given that they already have hundreds of hours of television, video and film viewing behind them. They have thus had access to a great deal of general knowledge. This knowledge and these skills can be counted on to help them decipher the meaning of the story; all that is required is to point out a few details and make the important connections.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Ask the children which parts of the film (sound and/or picture) they recall and what they understood by the use of sound effects and the transformation of objects, animals, people, etc.
- Explain difficult passages that the students have not identified, which seem to have prevented them from clearly understanding the film.
- If necessary, explain the meaning conveyed by some techniques in relation to the story itself.

Second Screening

Since the films are very short, it's a good idea to show them a second time, inviting the children to pay closer attention to the points you have reviewed. After the second screening, they can be asked to:

- summarize the story with a sentence describing each part: the setup, conflict and resolution, referring to the given key moments; even if this guide sometimes suggests more than one sentence, it is important to ensure that the students agree on one so that they can discuss the film's basic message in depth;
- imagine a different ending and explain how the film's message would be changed by it;

- complete the following sentence: "The film's message is..."
- tell what they would have done, and why, if they had been in the protagonist's situation;
- distinguish which elements of the film are essential to understanding the message, and which are secondary;
- imagine another story that would help them to understand the same article(s) of the Convention.

EXPANDING ON THE NOTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Rights from the Heart aims to help children become aware of their rights. The collection encourages children to put the values expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice. Children aged 9 to 12 generally do not become conscious of their rights by themselves; the adults around them must provide support and enlightenment, and help them acquire this knowledge by tying it in to the children's own experiences. The teacher can ask the students to:

- comment on the illustration used on the poster for the collection and the opening credits for each film;
- express the difference as they see it between their rights and their personal desires or preferences. Examples might include the desire to do as adults do, as opposed to the right to have a childhood enabling them to prepare themselves for their adult roles; the desire to express themselves anywhere and anyhow and the right to develop the expression of their abilities; the desire to practise all kinds of leisure activities versus the right to have leisure time to relax; the desire to enjoy the most modern conveniences and the right to a roof over their head and food on the table;
- specify where their rights end and where those of others begin, for instance, the right to the teacher's attention versus the desire to monopolize it to the detriment of the other children in the class. Other examples include the right to do things your way and that of others to be respected in their way of doing things; the right to play with one's friends, and the right of immigrants to be accepted in their new setting; the right to develop their abilities and the right to leisure time; adults' right to count on help from children at home and these children's right not to be responsible for their own survival, etc.;

- evaluate if the problems posed by the film have solutions that are applicable to their situation. Students can be divided into smaller groups and asked to reply to one of the following questions, depending on the film dealt with in class: Should adults force children to enlist? Should parents always encourage their children's talents? Should parents make continuous demands on their children? Should children have to take care of themselves from early childhood? Should children learn to recognize their prejudices and rid themselves of them? Should children demand that immigrant children prove themselves before accepting them? Should children exercise their right of speech with governments to see that their rights are respected?
- imagine some solutions to the problems discussed in small groups and explain them to the class;
- evaluate if children's rights are respected in their environment, with emphasis on identifying causes, so that they find information on what people from their community do to solve the stated problems and they notice role models around them who are likely to inspire them in their choice of actions;
- together, think of collective actions on which the entire community could work together in the hope of changing things.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Regardless of the order in which the films have been shown, *Why?* can be used as an overview film to tie all of the others together.

Without aiming for the children to memorize each of the rights dealt with by the other films, the teacher can, in conjunction with the screening of *Why?*, remind them of the principal rights and the simple actions that the group has decided it will undertake to contribute towards respecting them. These rights are: the right of young people under 15 years of age not to be recruited into the armed forces; the right to develop their talents and abilities; the right to rest and leisure; the right to an adequate standard of living so they can develop to their fullest potential; the right of children or teenagers with disabilities to enjoy full and decent lives; the right of children belonging to minority groups to enjoy their own culture, religion and language. Since the students for whom Part 2 of the collection is intended are all able to read, the teacher could copy the article(s) concerned onto the blackboard or onto a sheet of paper to be handed out to each child.

If this material is being presented during a week of activities on children's rights, it might be a good idea to organize a special assembly in a large room of the school for all the groups involved in the program. Each group could present the activities it had chosen to undertake, and the whole school might decide to sponsor a project incorporating all of them. This assembly could be held during a parent-teacher day, so parents would have an opportunity to see the results of their children's reflections on this subject and to participate themselves.

THE FILMS

JONAS AND LISA



Theme

Children have the right to an adequate standard of living.

Convention

Article 27

Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure the living conditions necessary for the child's development. The State shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide them with material assistance.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time, in a slum, a boy was given so much responsibility that he finally decided to run away...

Synopsis

In a slum in Rio de Janeiro, a woman works as a laundress to meet her family's needs. Her son and daughter are asleep in the same bed while the baby is kicking in its crib. Since she has to go to work, the mother slides money into the boy's hand and then awakens the man of the house. He tries to take a swig from a bottle of alcohol, but realizes it's empty. He opens the icebox, which is also empty. He digs into his pockets. They, too, are empty. He takes the money from Jonas's hand and sends him downtown to shine shoes. Then he orders the young girl, Lisa, to sweep the floor and goes into the city to drink. While Jonas is shining shoes for passersby, Lisa looks after the baby, to whom she tells the story of her family: life with her father, his death, and the arrival of the current stepfather. She daydreams that Jonas has managed to make lots of money, but hunger brings her back to reality. Jonas, who actually has made a little bit of money, hastens to buy bread and returns home to share it with his sister. They are overjoyed! But their stepfather arrives and flies into a rage. The children are terrified. The boy releases his pent-up feelings in his imagination, but he takes advantage of the first opportunity to run away to the beaches of Rio, carrying his small bundle of belongings with him. The little girl stays behind to take care of the baby. What can Jonas and Lisa do?

Key Moments

Setup

A mother who lives in a slum with her three children must go to work and leave them to the care of their alcoholic stepfather.

Conflict

Since the stepfather can't find anything to drink, he forces Jonas to go out and shine shoes for passersby and Lisa to clean the house while he goes into the city to drink. At home, Lisa takes care of the hungry baby, showing him pictures that remind her of life before her father's death. Jonas earns a little money, buys some bread, and returns to share it with Lisa and the baby. The man of the house arrives home drunk; he flies into a rage and then falls asleep.

Resolution

Jonas leaves home to go and sleep on the beach with other destitute people. Lisa stays behind to look after the baby.

Understanding the Message

- The little dog is used to show Jonas's generosity and desire to play.
- Some children will think that the alcoholic man of the house is responsible for the family's misery, especially if they compare the situation to how things were before the father's death. Others will feel that the mother is responsible. It is important not to convey the stereotype that it is parents' nastiness that pushes children to go and live on the streets. They are all victims of a social context where collective wealth is unequally distributed, with the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. The same thing happens in industrialized countries.
- Some children will say that a mother of three children is wrong to tolerate under her roof a man who does not help support the family. It could be explained to them that in a number of countries, including some in Latin America, women get together and turn men who behave this way over to the police.

Complementary Activities

- Ask the children to identify some countries where children live on the street (ensure that some industrialized countries are mentioned) and show that the problem is a global one.
- Together with the children, look for examples of actions undertaken in different countries of the world to help these children and their parents (e.g., a children's co-operative in Colombia).
- Compare the situation of street children who have no access to schooling to that of dropouts in industrialized countries who leave school for the street.

THE TOURNAMENT



Theme

Mentally or physically disabled children have the right to enjoy a full and decent life.

Convention

Article 23

Disabled children have the right to special care in conditions that ensure dignity and promote self-reliance, as well as appropriate education and training to enable them to achieve the fullest possible social integration and individual development.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time there was a deaf girl who proved that she wasn't slow at all...

Synopsis

At the entrance to a park where a chess tournament is about to take place, a boy is playing the harmonica, dreaming of the girl he loves. A friend interrupts him, bragging that he is one of the finalists. Seeing the girl coming to read on a bench nearby, the boy lovingly replays his tune for her. His friend interrupts him again, boasting that he can impress her more with his boyish tricks. He performs on his skateboard, whistles, and even explodes a paper bag to attract the girl's attention, but she doesn't seem to notice. He concludes that she is slow, which the other boy immediately denies. The girl continues to read until a friend, using sign language, asks her to come with her because the tournament is about to start. The judge presents the finalists: It is the little deaf girl who will play against the rowdy boy. She bows modestly to the spectators, while her opponent acts as though he has already won. The chess game begins. While she considers her moves carefully, he gets impatient, thinking that people who are hard of hearing are dim-witted—which causes him to make costly errors, leading to his defeat. Checkmate! Humiliated, he jumps up from the table in a huff. The audience applauds the champion but, as she is about to leave, she stops for a moment in front of the boy who is in love with her. He expresses his love by throwing her a flower.

Key Moments

Setup

The final game of a chess tournament is about to take place. The friend of a finalist is in love with the girl who is to be his friend's opponent.

Conflict

The boy finalist tries to distract the girl in all sorts of ways. When his efforts are in vain, he concludes that she is simple-minded, not understanding that she doesn't react because she is deaf. During the final scene, the girl calmly plays while the boy gets impatient, loses and throws a tantrum. The audience gives the girl an ovation.

Resolution

On her way out, the winner stops for a moment near the boy who is in love with her. To express his love, he throws her a flower.

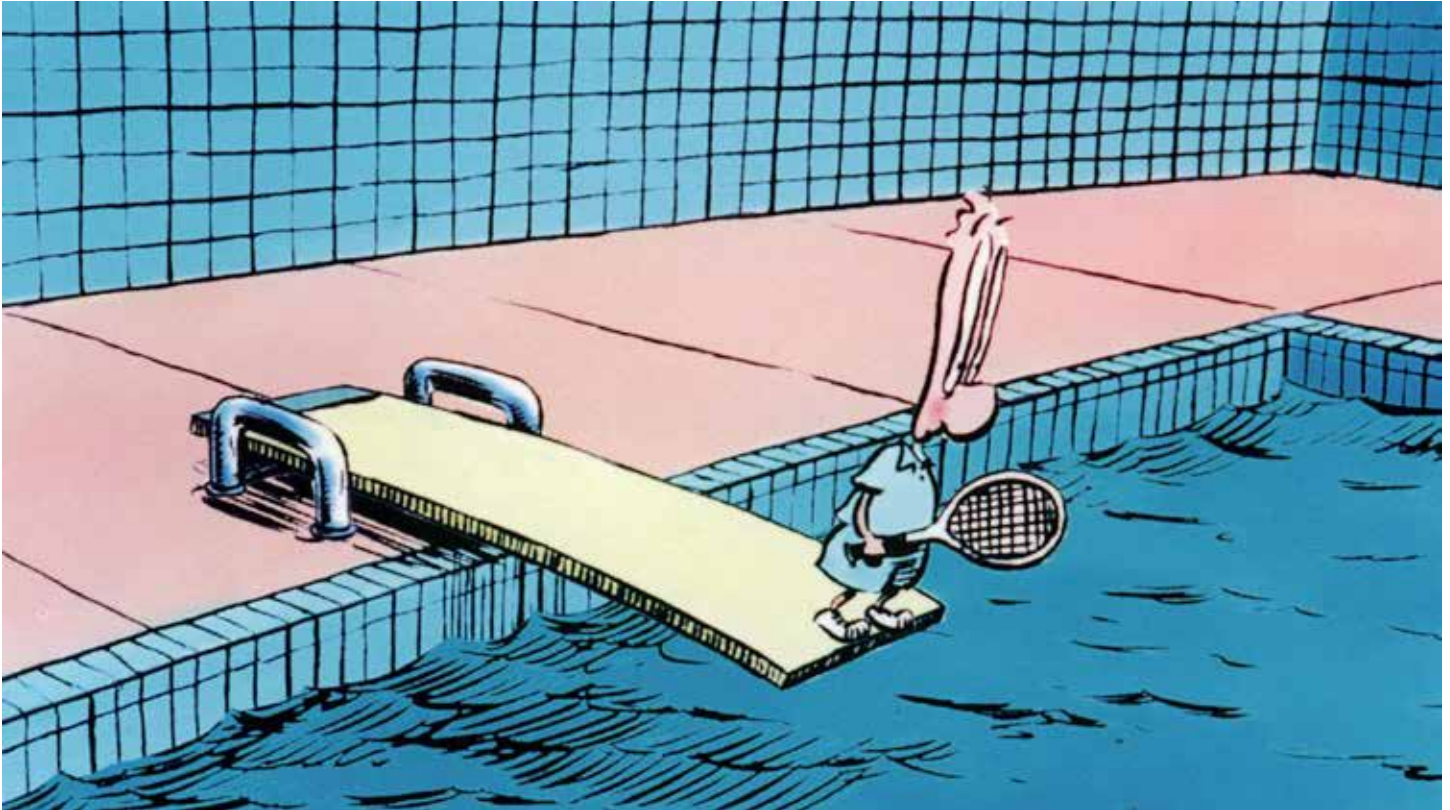
Understanding the Message

- Many children do not know the rules of chess. Teachers can give them a chance to learn by having them play or allowing them to watch a few games played by students who are familiar with the rules.
- The bananas in her ears symbolize that the child is deaf.

Complementary Activities

- Some children might think that the moral of the story is not to get excited if you want to win, or that you lose when you are too sure of winning. Explain to them that the story is intended rather to teach that it is possible to overcome prejudices.

OVERDOSE



Theme

Children have the right to rest and leisure.

Convention

Article 31

Children have the right to leisure activities and play, as well as the right to participate in cultural and artistic activities.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time there was a 10-year-old boy whose parents were so determined to make him into a winner at everything that he never got a chance to play...

Synopsis

A mother enters her son's room. Before waking him up, she looks at a photograph showing him on a bicycle. She imagines him graduating from university. He's the apple of her eye. The alarm clock blasts the boy out of bed. He has breakfast with his parents. At eight o'clock on the dot, he barely has enough time to brush his teeth before catching the school bus. At school, one teacher after another comes into the classroom; the students frantically take notes. The bell rings. As soon as the boy gets home, he goes out again to attend his tennis lesson. His mother watches him go, imagining him winning a grand slam. On the way home, the boy longingly watches some children his age who are having fun together. No sooner does he get home than he does his homework. He eats with his parents, and then goes on to practise the piano, until it is time for bed. Day after day, this rhythm continues. When it's not a tennis class, it's a swimming or oil-painting lesson, or the ever-present piano practice, where sometimes he sneaks in a bit of relaxation. The days are so full and the pace becomes so demanding that the child starts to show signs of exhaustion to the point where, one morning, his mother can't wake him up. Overloaded at age 10. *Why?*

Key Moments

Setup

An only child is awakened early in the morning by his mother, a very ambitious woman.

Conflict

The boy gets up, has breakfast, catches the school bus, takes notes at school, returns home, and takes tennis, piano, swimming and painting lessons as well as doing his homework. He becomes so worn down that his health is affected by it.

Resolution

As soon as he is up and about again, his mother has him back on the same schedule, without understanding how hard it is on her son.

Understanding the Message

- Some children may understand that the boy is lucky to have parents who give him access to so many sports and cultural activities; it should be emphasized that being overloaded can have negative consequences.
- Point out the scenes showing that the child is starting to lose his bearings, e.g., taking a tennis racket to a swimming lesson.
- The child's body language expresses the way he is really feeling: playing popular tunes in secret, falling ill, etc.
- At the end, the child is acting like a robot; one imagines that his mother has got him going again without considering what had made him unwell.

Complementary Activities

- Ask students for examples of the most usual ways that parents in their community have of demanding too much of their children (e.g., wanting at all costs to make their child into a hockey star or a champion figure skater).
- Ask the children to form two or more smaller groups to argue in favour of one moral of the story or the other: children should always be able to choose their activities; parents are wrong to impose extracurricular activities on their children. Next, help the children understand that the important thing is to have healthy leisure activities that they can take part in at their own pace.
- To avoid children feeling powerless in such situations, ask them to think of ways other than non-verbal expression that the boy could have used to let his parents know his point of view, and to imagine solutions that would enable him to get out of situations like this, or to change them.
- Lead a discussion on parents' possible motivation to act in this way, such as their fear of not encouraging their children enough, desire to give them more than they themselves received, having children live out their own dreams, keeping up with the Joneses, doing better than their own parents, etc.

AN ARTIST



Theme

Children have the right to develop their personalities, talents and abilities to their fullest potential.

Convention

Article 29

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their full potential.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who developed her musical talents while doing housework...

Synopsis

Entranced by the music she hears, a young girl imagines she is directing an orchestra. While her father helps her little brother with his homework at the kitchen table, she stands on a stool conducting her imaginary orchestra with a wooden spoon, forgetting all about the meal she is supposed to be preparing. A pot boils over. Her father gets up with a reproachful look and turns off the stove and the radio. Later, while her father reads in the living room, the young girl is back at her chores in the kitchen, washing the dishes, with tears rolling down her cheeks. But the music within her is too strong; she makes the glasses sing and starts beating out a rhythm on the pots and pans, breaking a plate in her enthusiasm. Exasperated, her father grabs the wooden spoon and throws it in the sink. She pulls the plug and watches the water swirl down the drain, taking her father with it, but leaving the spoon behind. She then sneaks the pots and pans outdoors and hangs them on a tree. Suddenly everything lights up, and the girl is back in her musical world, giving free rein to her talent. Her brother spies on her and tells her father, who comes to see the strange sight. Will he finally recognize her musical ability?

Key Moments

Setup

A young girl uses everything she comes across at home to express herself musically.

Conflict

Exasperated by her slip-ups and tendency to get distracted, her father keeps directing her attention back to her household tasks. The girl takes some pots and utensils outside and turns them into an orchestra.

Resolution

Informed by his son of what his daughter is doing, the father comes to see the musical tree.

Understanding the Message

- The frowns and behaviour of the father may not appear to be very severe, but the indifference he shows to his daughter's talent is enough to prevent its development.
- The father being carried down the drain by the water symbolizes the girl's frustration at not being able to express her talent.

Complementary Activities

- Separate the children into smaller groups. Ask them to name a few talents and to say if they are more easily accepted in girls or boys now, and if this was the case 50 years ago. Finish up with the whole class together, writing all the children's ideas on the board. Show that mentalities, cultures and periods influence the recognition of abilities.
- Facilitate a debate between two small groups of opposing students with different points of view: those who believe in the importance of developing their talents and those who find it more important to make money; those who think it is their responsibility to develop their abilities and those who believe that it's up to their parents, etc.

BAROQUE'N ROLL



Theme

Children belonging to minority groups have the right to enjoy their own culture, religion and language.

Convention

Article 30

Children belonging to an Indigenous population or an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority have the right to enjoy their own culture, practise their own religion and use their own language.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time there was a young immigrant who had to prove himself before finally being accepted by his new friends...

Synopsis

In a small town, two boys and two girls are playing on a frozen river. A train comes into the station, and a boy dressed in a Middle Eastern costume steps down from it. The newcomer tries to join the group. His shoes not being designed for the climate, he falls on the ice, knocking the others down at the same time. A snowball fight breaks out between the group's leader and the boy from overseas. The newcomer wants to run away but the other boy grabs his turban, unravels it and then uses it as a skipping rope. While jumping on the ice, he breaks through and falls into the water. Everyone else panics, but the stranger catches hold of the band of material that was his turban, makes a lasso out of it, and manages to pull the other boy out of the water and to break up the block of ice in which he is stuck. But the rescuer's shoe gets caught under the train track and he can't get free. A train is coming. Too late! The young people think he is dead, but then he pops up out of the snow near the railway line, his turban in shreds. A girl hastens to lend him her scarf, with which he makes another turban. Everyone is delighted. The newcomer has become part of the group. However, the train has left in its wake a young girl who has also come from a different country. She, too, is greeted by a snowball in the face.

Key Moments

Setup

Three boys and a girl are playing on a frozen river when a train stops at the station and a young boy from another country gets off.

Conflict

After having been rejected by the local children because of his appearance, the newcomer wins their friendship by saving one of them from drowning.

Resolution

A little Tyrolean girl also wants to get to know the children, but she, too, is greeted with a snowball in the face.

Understanding the Message

- The appearance of houses in the styles of other countries shows that the new immigrants are here to stay.

Complementary Activities

- Compare the newcomer's shoes, which put him in danger in the climate of his new country, and his turban, which saves the other boy from drowning. Ask the children to think of examples from their own experiences with newcomers and point out that cultural differences sometimes require adjustments on both sides, but that they are also a source of enrichment.
- Since the little Tyrolean girl is greeted as unkindly as the other newcomer, it is obvious that bravery and generosity are not sufficient to dislodge prejudices. Two reasons are put forward to justify racism: a fear of the unknown and a feeling of superiority over those who are different from oneself. Form small groups made up of supporters of one or the other argument and ask the students to imagine profound and lasting solutions to the problem.

EX-CHILD



Theme

Children who have not attained the age of 15 have the right to not be recruited into the armed forces.

Convention

Article 38

States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities. No child under 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. The States also ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time there was a 13-year-old boy who was recruited into the army...

Synopsis

A young boy of 13 and his parents are working the land near their village. Suddenly, they hear shots and see a military helicopter heading towards them. They run and hide in a grove of trees. The boy points a stick at the plane, pretending to fire at it. That evening, he is about to eat with his family when bombs are dropped on the village, setting fire to and destroying some houses. The country is at war. A soldier enters their home and demands to enlist the child. In the centre of the village where he is taken with his father, soldiers distribute weapons to the new recruits. The boy holds his gun proudly, feeling important. He is then moved to the front in a truck. Once in the trench, he is frightened by the bullets that whistle past, just missing his head, and he withdraws to the sidelines. Seeing his dismay, his father replaces him at his post and is immediately shot down. The child is overcome with horror. Images of his life run through his mind: He sees the ruined church, the wrecked houses, his mother and father working in the fields. But he quickly comes back to the reality of the battlefield and his father's death. He finally understands that war is not a game.

Key Moments

Setup

A young boy is working the land with his parents when war suddenly breaks out in his village. He pretends that he is taking part in the battle.

Conflict

The boy is enlisted at the same time as his father and is immediately sent to the front.

Resolution

His father is killed before his very eyes. Horrified, the boy understands that war is not a game.

Understanding the Message

- The black birds are omens of tragic events.
- If the soldier seems to be demanding that the boy alone be enlisted, it is because it goes without saying that the adult must go to fight; father and son are seen together on the battlefield.
- The white birds flying backwards represent the boy's memories of his innocent life with his family in their village.
- The images of the house and village in ruins show that the boy has lost everything, including his childhood.

Complementary Activities

- Compare the heroic vision of war in history books and films with that shown in this film. Think about heroism and governments' interest in publicizing examples of it during wartime.
- Debate the effects of war with the children and ask them who they think has an interest in wars taking place.
- Have the children try to name pacifist groups all over the world that are demanding that war cease to be a way of settling conflicts between peoples. Lead this discussion in such a way that the following rights are touched on: the right for children not to be enlisted, the right of adults not to go to war, and that of all societies to demand an end to war.
- Imagine anti-war actions that could be undertaken by children. Give examples of initiatives of children all over the world, such as the peace monuments made out of war toys in some schools in Quebec.

WHY?



Theme

All children have the right to a future.

Convention

All articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which are dealt with in the preceding films, and more specifically:

Article 2

All rights must be granted to all children, without exception. States shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the Convention and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination, irrespective of their race, religion or status.

Opening Sentence

Once upon a time there were some children who became aware of problems experienced by other children and, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, tried to make the world a happier place...

Synopsis

The four children symbolizing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child tune in to television sets showing the situation of children all over the world. For the moment, everything seems to be fine. A crying baby is soon comforted by his mother, while all the children seen on television peacefully dream of their happy future. A small Chinese boy, enthusiastically taking his first steps, already imagines himself as a sprinter. A little girl who works hard in school dreams of earning a university degree. A young African girl, tilling the land, already sees the productive tree that will grow from the seed she has just sown. A boy, launching a miniature airplane he has made, imagines himself flying a hang glider, piloting an airplane, and even heading for the moon in a spaceship. The children of the Convention are very happy that everything is going well on the planet, but suddenly the television screens start showing alarming images, totally changing the situation. The studious little girl has to leave school to help her mother clean other peoples' houses to support the family, and drought destroys the crops that protect the little African girl from famine, while the young aviator's country is devastated by war. All their happy dreams fall apart.

Key Moments

Setup

Four children of different races and cultures watch what is happening to children around the world on television screens.

Conflict

The screens show children of different races and ethnic origins with dreams for the future, which fills the four children watching them with joy. Other televisions ring warning bells by showing that the social, economic and political environment of the children shown could prevent them from realizing their dreams.

Resolution

The four children first try to console those who are deprived of their future, and then they go to convince more affluent people and governments to take action to guarantee that all children will be able to develop their potential.

Understanding the Message

- The children sharing the *Rights from the Heart* crown are also of different races and ethnic origins. They are not better off than the others, but their greater awareness makes them choose to act.
- After having stopped the four children from entering a government building, the guard ends up saluting them: This symbolizes the official recognition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Complementary Activities

- With the students, look for examples from everyday life, including in class, where they learn something and then use it to help other children. Think of situations where they could show more support for one another to the benefit of the whole class.
- With the students, look for names of organizations or associations that help children, either at home or anywhere else in the world. Invite representatives of these organizations to come and speak to the children about what they do and the active roles that children can play.