

Sprockets

Toronto International FILM
Festival for children
April 14-18, 2008

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to our teacher committees who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets lesson plans.

TITLE: Bitter Sweetheart

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: *Sweden*

RELEASE YEAR: *2006*

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: *Swedish (with English subtitles)*

DIRECTOR: *Hella Joof*

RUNTIME: *90 Minutes*

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Grade 9 and 10 Health and Physical Education
– Focus on healthy sexuality

Grade 11 and 12 Health and Physical Education
– Focus on healthy relationships

FOCUSING QUESTION:

As you watch the film, ask yourself what are the moments when Lina does not listen to her own heart? Why is she overriding her own feelings?

SYNOPSIS:

Recommended for Grades 9 to 12

Praised by media educators in Germany for its credibility and its power to encourage youth to follow their own path, *Bitter Sweetheart* is an entertaining and realistic film about a fifteen-year-old girl navigating the

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perils of peer pressure to a place of empowerment. Lina thinks she's nothing special – she's not pretty and popular like her friend Thea, nor is she carefree and fun like her friend Carro. Fearing she will never be kissed, Lina is pressured by her friends into dating Danne, a high-school boy. But Lina isn't attracted to Danne; rather she has a crush on Ivar. The problem is that Ivar is two years younger than her, so there is no way they could ever date – after all, what would her friends think? But as she starts experimenting with drinking and sex, Lina realizes she needs to stop making choices based on the opinions of others and begin doing what is right for her.

The film includes scenes of teens drinking and simulated sex, which serve to portray Lina's merry-go-round of emotions as her self-confidence grows. Featuring wonderful performances and a story with which students will easily identify, *Bitter Sweetheart* is wholly engaging from beginning to end.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

BITTER SWEETHEART (2006)

FIDIBUS (2006)

OH HAPPY DAY (2004)

SHAKE IT (2001)

TEACHER ENDORSEMENT:

"Although there is certainly sexual content in this film, the central theme is about young people (in this case a fifteen-year-old girl) listening (or not listening) to their own hearts about what is right for them."

PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION:

Prior to viewing the film open a class discussion about healthy sexuality, and the importance of communication in developing good relationships. Ask your students to journal privately and think through times in the last

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two years when they have listened to their own hearts, and times when they have allowed themselves to be persuaded to do things because of peer pressure, or because they "*thought*" others wanted them to. (Issues might include: sexual activity, peer pressure, drinking, bullying...)

Ask students to pay attention to how this story is told using the visuals – What is the purpose of all the knick-knacks in Danne's apartment? Why do the seasons change when they do in the story?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY:

Lead students in a thorough deconstruction of the themes of the film.

Questions:

1. What were the key points where Lina did not listen to her own intuition? Why didn't she listen?
2. What were the external signs that something was wrong? What could she have done differently the moment she started to feel sad or unhappy about the situation she was in?

Discussion Part 1:

Discuss the sexual content of the film – How did the audience react? As the filmmaker would you have included this in your making of the film? Why or why not?

Discussion Part 2:

In parts of Europe the rating system for films is the opposite of North America. Films with sexual content such as this are rated the equivalent of PG13 and violent films are rated R – Discuss why you think this societal difference exists.

Discussion Part 3:

This story focuses on the central character who is a girl. What do you think the learning might have been for Danne? If we could have heard his narration what might he be saying?

Activity #1

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Have students meet in pairs and plan a discussion group for younger students exploring an issue which came up in the film. How can they take the themes of the film and adapt them to a younger audience? What would they like to teach as peer-mentors?

CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP:

Ask students to write a review of the film, outlining the key themes, and giving an explanation for their recommendation of it. Teachers can fine tune the expectations of the writing depending on the background knowledge of the students, and the course content. Teachers may wish students to make recommendation to Lina (the central character) as she goes along. (E.g. What options did she have when she thought she was pregnant that she did not utilize? Who could she have gone to in her community for assistance or advice if she did not feel comfortable talking to her mother?)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

www.sexpressions.ca

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/rtr-fsp/index.html

www.wnpei.org/healthysexuality/links.html

<http://www.yorku.ca/mediar/archive/Release.asp?Release=1361>

http://www.ppt.on.ca/research_teensurvey.asp

<http://www.utoronto.ca/cuhi/awards/Larkin%20CCPH%20Poster.pdf>