

Viewing the Film *Beat the Drum*

Enduring Understandings:

- AIDS has devastated both rural and urban South Africa.
- AIDS affects black and white South Africans.
- AIDS has left many children orphaned in South Africa.
- Traditional taboos and emotions such as shame and fear can limit discussion and understanding. Change is often initiated by people other than the leaders or elders in society.

Essential Questions:

- How can tragedy bring people together? Pull them apart?
- How early do some children have to become a “man” or “woman”?
- In what ways did Musa change after losing his father and leaving his village?
- When people are aware of something that their leaders are not aware of, what can they do?
- Why do young people often need to show adults the way to change?

Notes to the Teacher:

Students process more when they speak their thoughts out loud, which is the basis of the Socratic method. However, they also benefit from some time to prepare their thoughts or to interact with the issues involved before discussion begins. (The Touchstones Discussion Project, which was developed out of the St. John’s College “Great Books” program, uses this method successfully with students when they tackle selections from great writings.) Therefore, this lesson starts with individual reflection, then moves to small group work, and finally to a fishbowl activity for the whole class.

Students begin by putting themselves in the shoes of different characters in the movie, imagining their feelings, and comparing them with their own situation. Then, in a small group they have a particular character to study in depth. Their job is to create talking points that would express the feelings and opinions of their character. In the fishbowl activity, one person from each group will join a role-playing activity in the middle of a circle (or in front of the room). They will discuss various issues from their different perspectives. After six to eight minutes, they will return to a circle and four new people (one from each group) will replace them for additional role-playing discussion.

DURATION OF LESSON:

Approximately three hours, of which 114 minutes is spent viewing the film.

ASSESSMENT:

HANDOUTS 1 and 2

Class discussion during fishbowl activity

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

Indicators addressed by this lesson:

STANDARD 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

LEVEL IV (9–12)

11. Writes reflective compositions (e.g., uses personal experience as a basis for reflection on some aspect of life, draws abstract comparisons between specific incidents and abstract concepts, maintains a balance between describing incidents and relating them to more general abstract ideas that illustrate personal beliefs, moves from specific examples to generalizations about life)
12. Writes in response to literature (e.g., suggests an interpretation; recognizes possible ambiguities, nuances, and complexities in a text; interprets passages of a novel in terms of their significance to the novel as a whole; focuses on the theme of a literary work; explains concepts found in literary works; examines literature from several critical perspectives; understands author's stylistic devices and effects created; analyzes use of imagery and language)

STANDARD 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

LEVEL IV (9–12)

2. Asks questions as a way to broaden and enrich classroom discussions.

3. Uses a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focuses attention on message, monitors message for clarity and understanding, asks relevant questions, provides verbal and nonverbal feedback, notes cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made; uses abbreviation system to record information quickly; selects and organizes essential information).
4. Adjusts message wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes (e.g., to defend a position, to entertain, to inform, to persuade).
8. Responds to questions and feedback about own presentations (e.g., clarifies and defends ideas, expands on a topic, uses logical arguments, modifies organization, evaluates effectiveness, sets goals for future presentations).

STANDARD 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

LEVEL IV (9–12):

1. Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media (e.g., draws conclusions, makes generalizations, synthesizes materials viewed, refers to images or information in visual media to support point of view, deconstructs media to determine the main idea).

Materials:

DVD (preferred) or videotape of *Beat the Drum*
VCR, DVD player, or computer with LCD hookup

HANDOUT 1: BEAT THE DRUM: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

HANDOUT 2: GIVING A VOICE TO CHARACTERS

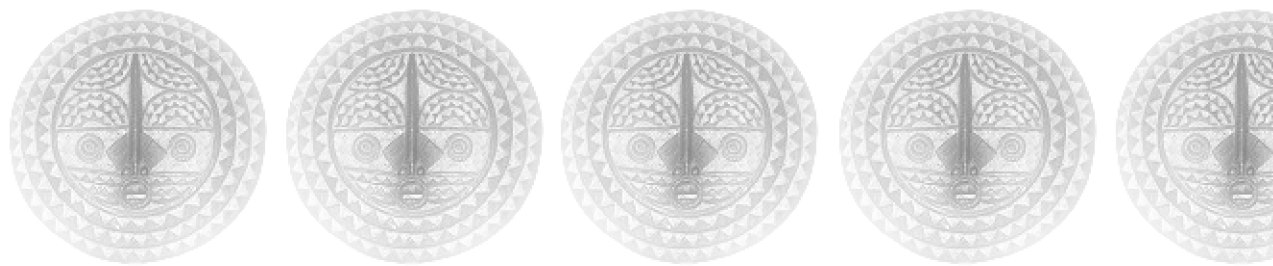
Index cards

Procedure:

1. Before viewing the film, briefly review with students the main ideas they have learned in the previous lessons. If possible, bring in a story about a recent crisis in the news that features individuals affected by the crisis. Explain that it is important to understand the impact of a crisis by looking at how it affects individuals as well as by looking at the overall statistics. Introduce students to *Beat the Drum* by explaining that this film looks at the impact of the AIDS crisis in South Africa by introducing the audience to individuals who are affected by it.
2. Give every student **HANDOUT 1: BEAT THE DRUM: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION**. Preview the questions with the class. Tell the class that after the film, they will have a few minutes to answer the questions.
3. Show the film.
4. Give students time to share their immediate reactions to the film and to ask questions.
5. Individual work: Give students six to eight minutes to write their own answers on **HANDOUT 1**.
6. Small group work: Read the directions first from **HANDOUT 2: GIVING A VOICE TO CHARACTERS**. Then divide the students into four small groups. Assign one of the characters from the film (the young boy Musa, the truck driver Nobe, the businessman Pieter, and the young girl Letti) to each group. Have them relocate to different parts of the room so each group has its own space and doesn't disturb the others. Give one handout to each group. Assign one student in each group to be the recorder, who will write down the talking points for their character. Move around among the groups, making sure they are all contributing and someone is writing down their character's ideas. Make suggestions when necessary. Again, give them about six to eight minutes, until you sense they are all ready.
7. Fishbowl Discussion. Have students move all the chairs into a circle, and put four chairs in the middle, facing each other. Have one student from each group go into the middle. They will represent the character for which they made talking points. They should role-play as if they are that character: speak in their voice, express their feelings, and try to think as that character would think. They may certainly disagree with one another, but remind them to continue to treat each other with respect. After about six to eight minutes, stop the discussion and have new students (one from each group) to go into the center of the

fishbowl. Continue the discussion. Allow the discussion to go off the specific questions on the handout, but if it wanders off topic or if they get stuck, bring them back by asking a new question.

8. 3-2-1 Cards. When the fishbowl activity is finished, provide closure by giving each student an index card to complete before leaving class. Ask them to write down 3 feelings they had or things they learned, 2 questions they would like to ask, and 1 major understanding (and what they might do with that understanding).





HANDOUT 1

Beat the Drum: Individual Reflection

1. List four characters in the movie who had HIV/AIDS.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. Circle the race, gender, relative wealth, and location (rural/urban) of each.

- a. black—white male—female rich—poor rural—urban
- b. black—white male—female rich—poor rural—urban
- c. black—white male—female rich—poor rural—urban
- d. black—white male—female rich—poor rural—urban

3. Consider the two adults in the movie who changed after someone in their family died from the AIDS virus. What did they do differently after their loss?

- a. Nobe (the black truck driver)

- b. Pieter (the white businessman)

4. Think about the two children in the movie who lost parents to the epidemic. How were they affected? What did they do to survive?

- a. Musa

- b. Letti (girl on the street)

HANDOUT 2 ▶ P. 1 **Giving a Voice to Characters**

The character your group is studying is _____.

- How have you changed (from the beginning to the end of the film)?

- What does the saying “A brand new day” mean to you?

- For whom in your society are you responsible? Why?

- Whom have you helped? How?

- Is there anything people should not talk about?

- What should people be talking about?

Lesson 4 MEDIA LITERACY (PRE-VIEWING)



HANDOUT 2 ► P. 2

- What or whom do you blame for your sadness?
- What or who could help you?
- Does anything from the old tribal beliefs help you?
- What can be done about the street gangs?
- What keeps you strong? (a person, memory, symbol, promise)
- What is your greatest hope for your people? Your greatest fear?

