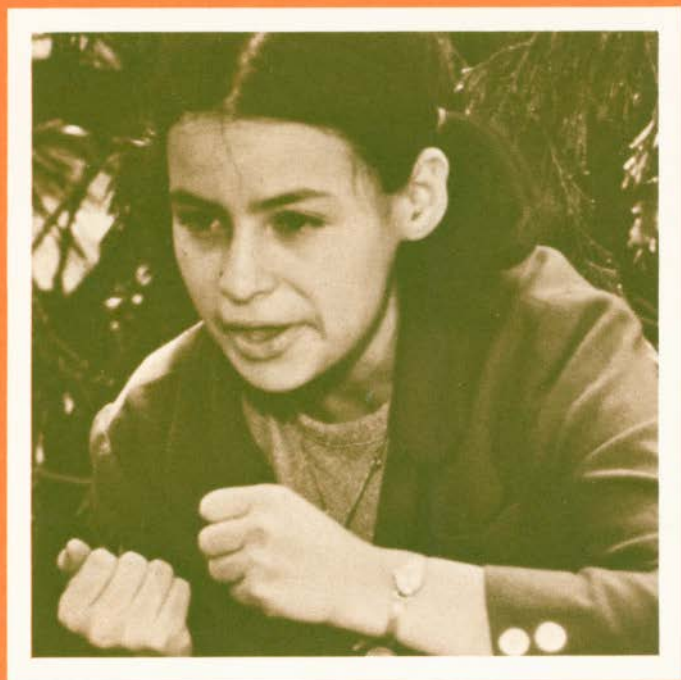


DIFFERENCES...a series of open-end films



THE SEARCHING YEARS / Teachers' guide

Everything in these films is real.
It occurred spontaneously, as you
see it.

Although the film concept is
unusual, it came about quite
simply. For several months, I had
been meeting with young people,
collecting material for educa-
tional films on adolescence.
Finally we all realized that the
meetings themselves offered a
valuable film format.

So I chose 20 of the young people
from varying backgrounds, added a
role-play adviser, and we filmed
for six days.

Kent MacKenzie

Producer-Director

produced by DIMENSION FILMS

distributed by CHURCHILL FILMS

662 North Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90069

DIFFERENCES...a series of open-end films

DIFFERENCES--race, class, and others--keep people apart. Sometimes differences lead to conflict and violence. Can we find ways to live peacefully together? These films document young people struggling with such conflicts in their own lives.

OLIVIA--BETWEEN TWO CULTURES --13 minutes. page 4
Olivia protests the traditions of her Mexican heritage, which she feels are unjust and restrictive. Yet she wants her parents' love. How can she find out where she belongs?

BARRIERS--17 minutes.page 10
Ernest and Ruben, who come from poor families, reject the friendship of middle-class kids. In a humorous and touching exchange, Mike and Ruben compare "what we have in common", but discover the difficulty of breaking down barriers.

RUBEN AND GANGS--13½ minutes.page 16
Ruben, in a moving personal statement, reveals the grief and excitement of Chicano gang life. His experiences are echoed by an Anglo boy and girl. But Ruben's attitude towards violence and crime are very different.

PRODUCER-DIRECTOR

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OTHER FILMS IN THIS SERIES

Theme: FAMILY

I OWE YOU NOTHING! (obligations in the family)

MOM, WHY WON'T YOU LISTEN? (communicating with Mother)

WAIT UNTIL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME! (male vs. female roles)

CAN A PARENT BE HUMAN? (the "ideal" parent)

IVAN AND HIS FATHER (the difficulty of change)

Theme: DATING AND MARRIAGE

ONE OR MANY? (different goals in dating)

WHAT GIRLS WANT FROM BOYS (girls--and boys-emotional needs)

HOW CLOSE CAN YOU GET? (different expectations in marriage)

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE FILMS:

THE MOST IMPORTANT advice we can give you is to SEE A FILM BEFORE USING IT. These films are provocative and moving for adults as well as students--it is important to have some time to reflect on your own reactions before meeting your class.

THE TEACHING GOALS:

1. To help students identify, understand and respect differences between themselves and members of other groups.
2. To help students identify experiences and feelings they share with members of other groups.
3. To help students see a variety of ways of resolving conflict.
4. To give students better understanding of situations which lead to violence.

5. To give students more awareness of the real complexity of social issues.

THE TEACHING METHOD is to help students explore and discover for themselves. The teacher invites open expression of ideas and feelings, helps clarify meanings, and encourages inter-action.

Although we urge the teacher to be non-judgmental, this does NOT mean neutrality. There is a world of difference between a teacher saying "I think you are wrong," and saying, "I feel differently about that than you do." The former passes judgment and ends communication; the latter invites comparison and continues communication.

These films may trigger many stereotypical and openly prejudiced reactions from students. Disapproval by the teacher will not lead to better understanding by the students; but open and rigorous exploration might.

film title: OLIVIA

--BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

length: 13 minutes

SYNOPSIS

This film is a role-play of Olivia confronting her Mother, followed by a brief discussion.

At first, Olivia plays her own Mother. Then roles are switched, and Olivia plays herself. (Several people, including a man, play the Mother role. In this type of role-playing, group members are free to jump in to help the main players.)

The role-play opens with Olivia demanding more independence. Her Mother says Olivia is too young (15). Moreover, "This is a Mexican home--we behave in a certain way." Olivia accuses her Mother of prejudice. The Mother turns the accusation around--"You're ashamed to be a Mexican." Olivia, enraged,



OLIVIA



IVAN



AILEEN

wants to hit back. The role-play leader holds out his palm. In tears, Olivia forces herself to slap his hand as she protests against being "treated like a baby" even though she's "raising the kids" and, finally, against her Father's manipulating ways.

In the discussion, Olivia recounts her family chores. And she admits that her desire to date non-Chicano boys may be a way of getting back at her parents.

CONFLICTS

Although the film concludes with the conflict about prejudice, there are several basic issues to explore:

1. Obedience vs. Independence

Olivia is responsible enough to share many of the duties of a Mother in the home. She feels this entitles her to the freedom of an adult outside the home.

Her parents feel the home chores are her duty as a daughter, and training for her future. But the outside freedom is too dangerous for a 15-year-old girl.

2. Prejudice vs. Openness

Olivia wants to be free to date boys from any background. In fact, she finds Chicano boys "narrow-minded." Her parents fear she will be hurt; and

dating may lead to marriage outside the group.

To her, they are prejudiced against "Paddys" and Blacks. To them, she is prejudiced against Mexicans.

3. A "Traditional" vs. a "Liberated" Life

Will Olivia become a woman like her Mother and older sister, or will she choose a different kind of life?

To her Mother, a different kind of life would be a disgrace and failure.

To Olivia, her Mother's life appears dull, docile drudgery in the kitchen.

4. Love vs. Control

Olivia wants direct, close feelings from her Father. But instead, she says in tears, "He never tells me anything; he tells you, so you'll get at me."

INTRODUCING THE FILM:

1. Have students list the items they most like and dislike in regards to their own culture. Include some of the most outstanding (strict) traditions of their culture. Compare lists.
2. Conduct a general discussion on the word "Conflict".
 - A. What is a common conflict between siblings?
 - B. Describe some frequent and general conflicts between parents and children.
 - C. Explore some often occurring teacher-student conflicts.
 - D. What are some ways such conflicts are handled?

ACTIVITIES FOR AFTER THE FILM

- A. General discussion-
 1. Is Olivia's problem a real problem? Explain.
 2. Give a solution to Olivia's problem. Is there an easy solution?
 3. Does Olivia have to reject one culture for another?
 4. Do you think Olivia is prejudiced against Mexicans? Is this possible?
 5. If you were Olivia's parents (mother-father) how would you handle this situation?
 6. Why do you feel Olivia dislikes being compared to her sister?
 7. Do you feel Olivia's mother was being a hypocrite? Explain.

8. What did you feel when Olivia used the term "Paddy"? Is that an acceptable term? Do you feel the use of the term showed some insight into Olivia's true feelings?
9. Imagine Olivia and her family 15 years from now, when Olivia is 30. How do you think she will feel about her background then?
10. If Olivia has a daughter, what standards do you think she will apply as a mother?
11. Do you think Olivia is a rebel? Is she similar in any way to minority-group militants who advocate ethnic pride?

B. Report

Find stories, plays, or news reports about other ethnic groups in this country--

Italian, Black, Jewish
Mennonite, Polish--

Look for conflict between the traditional older generation and the rebelling younger generation. What parallels do you find to Olivia and her family?

C. Cultural Expectations

This film opens rich possibilities for comparing meanings and expectations in different cultures.

Two examples:

1. Olivia lowers her head under her Mother's attack. The Anglo man playing a parent says, "You can't even look me in the eye when you talk . . . you're ashamed." To him, averted eyes mean shame. But, in many Chicano families, a

lowered head is the normal posture of a child being chastized--raised eyes would mean defiance.

2. Olivia lists her chores. She does not complain about her duties--only about her parents' attitude toward her. The daughter in an Anglo family might feel quite differently about the chores themselves.

Here are some other areas in which your students might compare family life in different ethnic groups:

1. Roles

- a. Father The boss? Does he discipline the children? Is he the "pal" and "good guy"?
- b. Mother Is she assertive or passive?

Does she work outside the home? Does she need to use indirect tactics?

- c. Daughters Share the Mother's duties? Work outside the home? Expected to be obedient and "good"?
- d. Sons Share the Father's duties? Work? Obedient? Expected to "sow wild oats"?

2. Conflict

How are conflicts handled? Is the family autocratic or democratic? Do kids have any influence?



3. Carrying on the Past

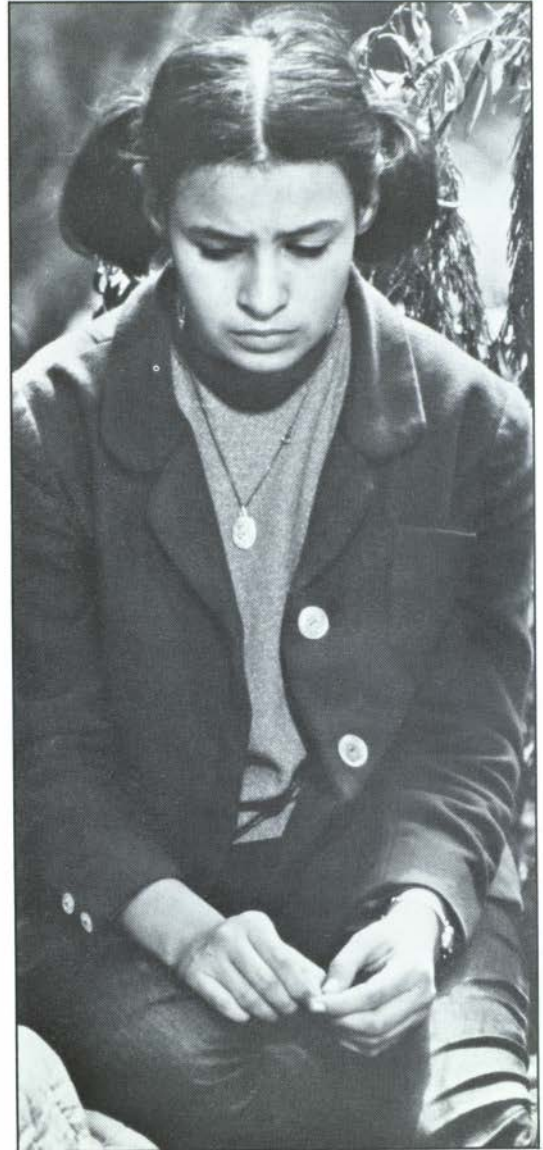
Are kids expected to: know a language other than Standard English; know traditional songs, dances and stories; know the history and heroes of the group; observe ceremonies and holidays; practice the religion; date, marry and raise their children within the group, etc.

4. Hopes for the Future

Are kids expected to: stay close to home, or become independent; repeat the pattern of their parents' lives, or "rise higher", etc.

5. Generations

How do all the above patterns change from generation to generation? Compare the foreign-born generation to the first, second and third native-born generations.



film title: BARRIERS

length: 17 minutes

warning: This film opens up some sensitive subjects which students may be eager to discuss, but which teachers should preview.

SYNOPSIS

A real confrontation about the possibilities of friendship and communication across barriers of class and ethnic differences.

Ruben and Ernest, poor kids from Chicano and Black families, cannot get close to the other kids in the group. But they can relate to each other. The other kids are disturbed--one after another, they try to make contact. Ruben and Ernest point out that the others are "middle-class"--they have little in common. Mike, a Black boy, claims Ruben and he could be friends. In a humorous and



RUBEN



ERNEST



PAUL



MIKE H.



IVAN



ANN



MIKE S.

touching exchange, they compare backgrounds. Ruben smiles; a moment of contact. And yet-- the barriers seem to remain.

CONFLICTS

This film opens up many of the conflicts people experience because of belonging to different groups.

1. Exclusion vs. Belonging
What experiences make people feel they belong to a group?
What are the standards for acceptance by the group?
When people know they are excluded, how do they react?
2. Real vs. Phony Relationships
What experiences make people feel they belong to a group?
What are the standards for acceptance by the group?
3. Honesty vs. Acceptance
Should a person try to change himself to establish

contact with another? What kinds of changes are possible? Must a person hide his uniqueness and individuality to be accepted?

4. Social Tensions

Are "people separating more and more"? Why? Do Americans belong to "middle", "upper", and "lower" classes? How do you tell which class you belong to?

5. Bridging the Gap

How can members of different groups communicate, become friends and cooperate? Must they ignore their differences?

INTRODUCING THE FILM

In general, use of this film should leave students with better understanding of the difficulty of communicating with people who are different from themselves.

This orientation can be set up before showing the film.

the responses, and discuss their meaning.

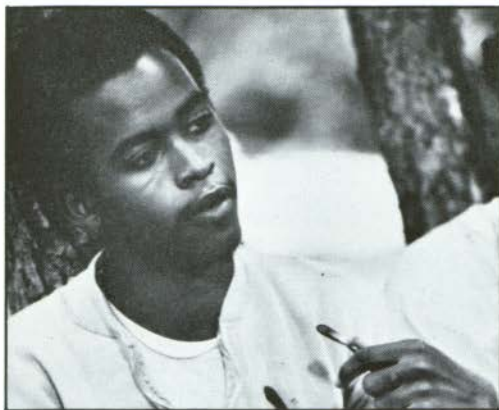
Discussion--

1. What kinds of things keep you apart from people?
Hair style, clothes, interests, the way they talk, etc.
2. Are there any people, or groups, that you'd like to get close to, but can't? How do you feel when you talk to such people?
3. People often play conversation "games". Why? Can you always be open and honest?

Written--Present the class with the following list of situations. Have each student rate each situation on a scale of 1 to 5, from the easiest situation to handle to the most difficult. Tabulate

1. A friend says, "How you doing today?"
2. Someone you'd like to date says, "What's going on?"
3. Your parent says, "What do you think of the new teacher?"
4. A counselor says, "Tell me about your family."
5. You are asked to describe yourself to a group you want to get into.
6. You are describing how you feel about talking to a group of different racial and economic backgrounds-- while talking to just such a group of people.
7. You are in a conversation with a group of people older than you on the subject of world politics.

8. You are talking to a group on a subject you know all about.



FOLLOWING THE FILM

Discussion

1. How do you think the relation between Ruben and the group changed during the film? What do you think will happen next? In what ways is this a hopeful film?
2. Did you feel the group really wanted to understand and relate to Ruben and Ernest?
3. Ruben and Ernest kept insisting they were different. Is it possible they want to be different? Why?
4. One member of the group told Ruben they were "just trying to get to know him." What does that mean to you?
5. Why do you suppose Ruben asked if Mike was "for real?"
6. How did you react to Mike's statement to Ruben: "I'm not going to think you're an idiot." How do you think Ruben reacted?
7. What does the film show about how some Black and Chicano people feel about communicating in the Anglo Society?
8. What does the film show about how members of different minority groups relate to each other? Note Ruben's remark regarding Ernest,

"Don't get it that I go around with Negroes; he's the first one."

9. Ruben and Ernest both remark about class differences. Do you agree with them?

Written--

Write a short essay on Ruben. Your reaction to Ruben in the film. Was he sincere, was he honest, did you feel any pain for him, would you like to have him for a friend?

SIMULATION--This activity can be



used before or after the film, even on a separate day.

Purpose: To have students gain more understanding of the difficulty of communicating with a group of people who are different. The students assume roles which are new to them and play them out in a problem-solving situation.

Setting: Role-playing discussion on plans to establish a multi-ethnic community center.

Preparation:

Make four to six "Who You Are" cards. Each card should describe: (1) economic background, (2) ethnic group, (3) type of home and neighborhood, (4) political and social attitudes, (5) special interest in the community center--what you want out of it most, what you'd be willing to give up.

Divide the class into four to six equal-size groups. Each group gets one of the "Who You Are" cards. All members of the group represent the people described on the card. Together they plan how to get what they want in the community center.

Play:

Each group sends two or three representatives to a general meeting to make final plans for the center. The representatives could form an inner-circle in the room. They can change at any time by exchanging seats with another member of their group.

Final plans should include:

- (1) Purpose of the center.
- (2) Activities of the center.
- (3) Governing Board.
- (4) Finances.

Debriefing:

Using the following questions as a guide have entire class

evaluate the simulation.

1. What they felt about their roles in the simulation.
2. What was the most difficult part of playing their prescribed roles.
3. The best and most difficult parts of the inner group discussion.
4. Attitudes of others that disturbed them most.
5. Difficulty of reaching agreements among people of varying background.



film title: RUBEN AND GANGS

length: 13½ minutes

SYNOPSIS

This film opens with a short role-play. Ruben plays a father dealing with a son much like himself. A discussion follows in which Ruben tells about his early life.

In the role-play, Ruben reveals that he really wanted a strong father. In the discussion, he details both the grief and excitement of gang life. His experiences are echoed by an Anglo boy and girl. But Ruben's feelings and values are very different from theirs.

CONFLICTS

This film opens up basic questions about the causes of and remedies for violence in our society.



RUBEN



RIC



ANN



MIKE S.



IVAN

1. Authority vs. Independence

Ruben was always "getting in trouble". Yet, he missed having a strong father. Can a young person desire to be controlled and independent at the same time? What would you do if you had a son like Ruben?

2. Attitudes towards Violence

Ric and Ann were frightened by violence in gangs; they quit. Ruben also wants to get away; yet, he still wants to hurt people. How do you explain these differences?

3. Escape from Gangs

Many young people growing up in Ruben's neighborhood have very little to do with gangs. Research indicates that violent gang members are a small percentage. Why do some kids become part of the violence which others escape?

4. Conflicting Values

Ruben expresses very different attitudes towards "right and wrong" and "responsibility" from the others in the group. How do you account for these differences? A good comparison is Manchild in the Promised Land by Claude Brown.

5. Responsibility

Ruben says, "It's not a life to live." Who is responsible for his situation? He says it's himself, because of hanging around certain people. Some might say it's his parents. Others might blame the school. Others say society is responsible, because of discrimination and prejudice.

6. Changes

What can be done to change the situation? Ruben plans to leave. What of those who stay behind? Must they also grow up with violence and death?

INTRODUCING THE FILM:

The general goal of this film is to give students greater insight into the complex feelings and factors in gang violence. To accomplish this,

stereotypes must be avoided. It is important for students to see that many of the forces which contribute to gang life also enter into everyone's life.

Discussion

1. Make a list of the groups which members of the class belong to, both formal and informal. What do these groups offer their members? What needs do they meet?
2. What type of group do you usually think of as a "gang"?
3. In what ways could you compare a gang to any social group, such as a club?
4. Do gangs fulfill some social needs of their members?
5. Do you belong to any group which you feel might be described as a gang?
6. Why do many people have a

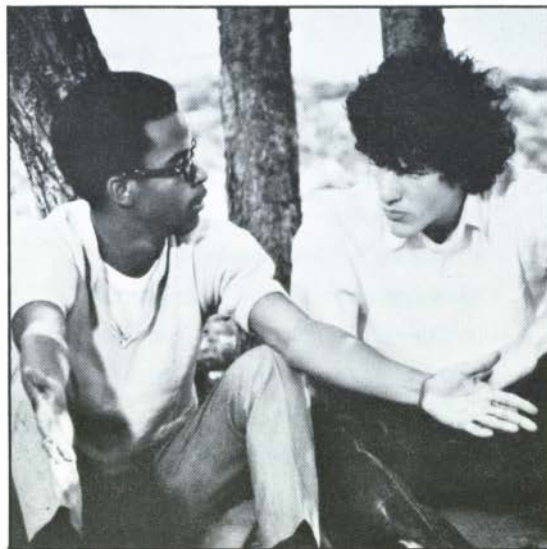
negative reaction to the word "gang"?

Activities

1. List the following words. Have students discuss how these words relate to feelings one gets from membership in an organized

social group:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. Security | e. Partners |
| b. Belonging | f. Pals |
| c. Trust | g. Fellowship |
| d. Identity | h. Prestige |



2. Write a profile of a typical member of a gang. Include such aspects as age, economic class, family situation, intelligence, neighborhood, ethnic group, etc. Also--attitudes toward friendship, fighting, law, plans for the future, etc.
3. Can you imagine any situation in which you would use violence, and attempt to hurt someone? Rate each of these situations on a scale of 1 to 5, from Not Likely to Definitely. Tabulate the results and discuss.
 - A. Someone tries to rob you on the street in broad daylight.
 - B. You have a bitter argument with your parents.
 - C. In the heat of a sports event, someone fouls you vigorously.
 - D. You have a bitter argument with a friend.

- E. Someone breaks into your home and threatens your family.

FOLLOWING THE FILM:

Activities

It is important to get accurate information as the basis for discussion. For example, although many young people may nominally "belong" to gangs, only a small number take part in fights.

1. Invite a social worker, a policeman or a gang leader to class as an expert.
2. Assign a team of students a research project. There is considerable evidence in books and journals.

Discussion

1. Ruben says he doesn't resent the system; his situation with gangs is "just life." Do you agree with this answer?

2. Why do you think Ruben, when playing the role of a father, rejects the idea of his "son" becoming independent?
3. Ruben admits he wanted a real father. Do you think this might have anything to do with his loyalty to the gang?
4. What was your reaction to Ruben's explanation that he joined the gang to "keep from getting done in"?
5. Ric and Ann reacted very differently to violence than Ruben. How do you explain the difference?
6. Ruben's reaction to his best friend's bloody death is to "try to hurt people". How do you think you would feel?
7. Ruben points out that gangs are also fun. Compare what he said with the description of social groups you made before the film. What similarities and differences do you see between gangs and other groups?
8. Ruben says that robbing a store is not, for him, a question of "right and wrong" but of "satisfaction". Why do you think he feels that way?
9. Ruben says he wants to change his life. But he is indefinite. Do you think he will get out? How?
10. Ruben seems slightly shocked that gang activity exists among small children. How do you feel about it? Should something be done to try to change the situation?
11. Do you feel the school and home should help establish a set of values for young people? How?

