

TEAMWORK, CHARACTER AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Dear Health Educator,

This summer Miramax Films will release *The Heart of the Game*, an extraordinary documentary that shows that there is much more to being part of a team than just winning games. **The enclosed curriculum-based activities—perfect for the end of the year—are built around the themes of teamwork, character education, and conflict resolution.**

This profoundly moving story follows six years in the life of Seattle's Roosevelt High School girls' basketball team, their inspirational coach, and one player's journey from outsider to teammate. Miramax joined with award-winning curriculum specialists Young Minds Inspired (YMI) to bring you these materials—sure to evoke important discussions in your health classes.

This guide includes a synopsis and character descriptions to familiarize your students with the film's characters and themes. You do not have to see the film to use these activities.

I encourage you to photocopy these copyrighted materials and share them with colleagues. As a former teacher, I am sure these activities will inspire your students to think about how they can improve their performance in any group or personal endeavor.

Sincerely,



Joel Ehrlich
President and former teacher

P.S. You may want to share these materials with physical education teachers.

THE HEART OF THE GAME

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PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This teacher's guide
- Two student reproducibles
- A colorful wall poster on the other side of these pages
- A reply card for your important feedback

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To explore themes of teamwork, peer problem-solving, and character.
- To encourage students to think about role models in their lives and the characteristics they exhibit.
- To motivate students to think about their roles as members of a team.

HOW TO USE THE TEACHER'S GUIDE AND POSTER

Review and schedule the two activities into your lesson plans. Then photocopy and distribute the reproducible masters to your students. Display the poster in a prominent location to engage student interest.

FILM SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

PLEASE READ THIS SYNOPSIS AND THE CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS TO YOUR CLASS:

The Heart of the Game, narrated by Ludacris, chronicles real-life events. As coach of the Roosevelt High School Roughriders, Coach Bill Resler believes that disciplined training and healthy aggression will turn an average team into champions. He invents an "Inner Circle"—a concept for teamwork that is free of parents and authority figures. When teammates have a problem—whether it's emotional or social—they work it out among themselves. Resolution may take five minutes during a walk down the hall or five hours barricaded in a locker room, but teammates work out problems together. When Darnellia (dar-NEE-lee-uh) Russell, an African-American from a neighborhood across town, joins the team, both Coach Resler and the Roughriders get caught up in Darnellia's off-court struggles after she's ruled ineligible to play by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association. The conflict threatens to tear the team apart, but ultimately makes them champions.

BIOS

Coach Bill Resler: A tax professor who becomes the girls' basketball coach, he teaches his players to think and act like a "pride of lions," a "tropical storm" and a "pack of wolves"—all to instill in them the mindset of a champion. He believes that having fun and being part of a team is more important than winning.

Darnellia Russell: A phenomenal talent with WNBA potential, she changes from a self-directed athlete to the ultimate team player. When off-court challenges put her team and her entire future in jeopardy, she shows what true spirit really is.

The Roosevelt Roughriders: These girls deal with the problems of growing up—difficult home situations, emotional crises, career questions—as well as the physical and emotional issues of being a member of a team.



THE INNER CIRCLE

Review the description of Coach Bill Resler's Inner Circle concept with students in **Part A**. Discuss strategies for conflict resolution—taking time to calm down, taking turns to explain each person's side, asking for clarification, brainstorming solutions, agreeing on a solution that benefits both sides, following-up to see whether the solution worked for each person. Have students break into groups to complete the worksheet, allowing them to work by themselves.

Extension Activity: Ask students to consider how the Inner Circle concept might be put to work outside of school—in the community, at youth centers, and in community service organizations.



A TEST OF CHARACTER

Part A. Have students read the examples of character exhibited by Coach Resler, Darnellia, and her teammates. Have them use the worksheet to think about a situation in which someone they know displayed character.

Part B. Working in groups, have students choose a person from the world of sports or entertainment considered to be a role model. Give students the definition of role model as someone whose success or behavior serves as an example for others. Have them explore how society's view of the role model may be different from their own.

Extension Activity: At 96 years old, Maude Lepley is the Roughriders' most inspiring fan. She was a girls' coach in the 1920s when women were allowed only a minimum of physical activity while playing the game. Ask students to compare women's role models in the 1920s with those today.

RESOURCES

Books

- First Class Character Education Programs: Ready-to-Use Lessons and Activities for Grades 7-12*, by Michael D. Koehler and Karen E. Royer, Jossey-Bass, 2001
- Teamwork and Team Play*, by Sivasailam Thiagarajan and Glenn Parker, Pfeiffer, 1999
- The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution*, by Dudley Weeks, Tarcher, 1994

Web Sites

- www.crinfo.org
Links to resources and information about publications and organizations specializing in conflict resolution
- www.goodcharacter.com
Free resources, materials, and lesson plans about character education, grades K-12
- www.heartofthegame-film.com
The official Web site of *The Heart of the Game*
<http://tlt.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/about/complaints.html>
- Penn State site about getting the most out of students, using teams and teamwork
www.yमितeacher.com

NATIONAL STANDARDS—HEALTH EDUCATION

ACTIVITY 1—The Inner Circle

- Demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants and feelings.
- Demonstrate strategies used to prevent conflict.

ACTIVITY 2—A Test of Character

- Demonstrate ways to communicate care, consideration, and respect of self and others.
- Evaluate the effect of media and other factors on personal, family and community health.

THE INNER CIRCLE



“When Darnellia was a freshman, she wasn't really into being a team player. She was a marvelous, gifted athlete, but not about the team. That's what she learned at Roosevelt. She became the consummate team player.”

— Coach Bill Resler

PART A. In the exhilarating and emotional documentary *The Heart of the Game* from Miramax Films, Bill Resler, coach of the girls' basketball team at Roosevelt High School in Seattle, decided that the best way for the girls on his team to both solve their problems and gel as a team was for them to be part of their own "Inner Circle"—with no parents, coaches or any authority figures to help resolve conflicts. The girls worked out their issues and problems together. The results molded this group of very different girls into a powerhouse, built around teamwork.

CREATE YOUR OWN INNER CIRCLE

Keep in mind that conflict often occurs over power, property, loyalty, territory or jealousy and envy. Working in a group, choose and describe a problem in your class, school, or community.

If you were to set up an Inner Circle to solve this problem, who would you invite to be in that circle?

What specific issues would you discuss?

What conflict resolution techniques would you institute to help your discussion?

What results would you expect to achieve?

Consider the Inner Circle concept as compared to traditional methods of solving problems (such as going to parents, teachers, or other authority figures).

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

PART B. Coach Resler used some unusual methods to help his players work together as a team. He told them to think of themselves as a "pack of wolves" swarming around its prey, ready to devour it. Later he used the image of a "pride of lions" out for the hunt. He also told them that they were a "tropical storm" blowing in off the coast to devastate everything in its path.

AS A CLASS, DISCUSS:

- How could his methods promote teamwork in the classroom, or in extra-curricular activities like school plays, school orchestra and band, or academic clubs?
- Do you think your peers would be reluctant or embarrassed to accept Coach Resler's approach? What would make you accept this inspirational concept?
- Who or what gives you the desire to achieve?

Look for **THE HEART OF THE GAME** coming to a theater near you this summer.

Go to www.heartofthegame-film.com to find out when the film is coming to your area or for group sales information.



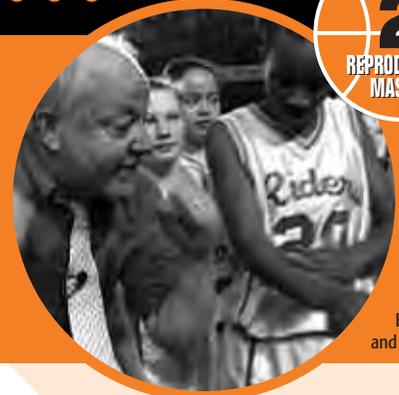
A TEST OF CHARACTER

“It’s not about winning and losing, but about how hard you tried, how you overcome obstacles emotionally, how you rely on other girls and how they rely on you.”

– Coach Bill Resler



Cheering the team to victory



Bill Resler and the team

PART A. The real-life teens in Miramax Films’ *The Heart of the Game* exhibit strong character under difficult circumstances.

The **Roosevelt Roughriders** girls’ basketball team agrees to allow Darnellia (dar-NEE-lee-uh) Russell to play on the team in the state championship even though it means that they may have to later forfeit these games.

Coach Bill Resler puts every player on his team into the state championship game instead of only using his best players—espousing his philosophy that teamwork is more important than winning.

Darnellia Russell has the courage to go to a school out of her neighborhood. She comes back to school after missing a year, deals with legal issues surrounding her ability to play, leads her team to a basketball championship, and graduates with honors.

Think about a difficult situation in the life of someone close to you, where strength of character was key.

What was the situation? _____

What choice did that person make that displayed character? _____

What was the outcome? _____

What different outcome might have occurred if he or she had made another choice? _____

Given the perspective of time, would the choice have been the same today? Explain. _____

PART B. Many sports heroes and popular entertainers are considered role models in our society. As a group, choose a famous person who is *widely considered* a role model.

Consider the traits of good character—*trustworthiness, fairness, respect, caring, responsibility and citizenship*—when discussing the following questions:

- What character traits went into your decision? What actions?
- Who is presenting this person to the public as a role model?
- Is it fair to expect a person with unusual athletic or performing abilities to serve as a role model? Why or why not?
- What are the risks when an athlete or performer demonstrates inappropriate character traits?
- Does it matter to you if a role model is male or female? Why or why not?
- Choose another famous person that your group considers a role model and answer the questions above. How do your answers differ?



Future members of the Inner Circle

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IT'S YOUR LIFE. MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT.



OFFICIAL SELECTION • TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

THE HEART OF THE GAME

MIRAMAX FILMS PRESENTS A WOODY CREEK PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH FLYING SPOT PICTURES A FILM BY WARD SERRILL "THE HEART OF THE GAME" NARRATED BY CHRIS "LUDACRIS" BRIDGES
MUSIC SUPERVISOR SUSAN JACOBS MUSIC BY THE ANGEL EDITED BY ERIC FRITH EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LARRY ESTES PRODUCED BY WARD SERRILL LIZ MANNE WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY WARD SERRILL

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
BRIEF STRONG LANGUAGE



"The Heart of the Game" Proudly Salutes the WNBA on their 10th Anniversary.
www.theheartofthegame-movie.com

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"MAKES YOU WANT TO STAND UP AND CHEER!"
-TEERY HANSON, DETROIT FREE PRESS

