

Generation Next Teacher Package

SPACEBOY

Arriving in a new town with his aerospace engineer dad, Jim, a gifted 11-year-old boy, has to participate in a young scientist competition with his new classmate, Emma. Pursuing his father's dream of going to space, Jim convinces Emma to secretly build a real hot air balloon, dragging her into an adventure. Quick moving and stylish, SPACEBOY is a coming-of-age adventure film that's fun for all ages.



Discussion Topics:

1. How are Jim and Emma both the 'other' or outcasts? What do they have in common despite their differences?
2. Is there ever a time where lying or not disclosing information is a good thing? Discuss.
3. Should parents lie to protect their children? Discuss.
4. What are the elements of a 'coming of age' story? How is this film a coming of age story?
5. Discuss the ending. What happened? The ending is somewhat interpretive- how so?
6. Discuss the tone or mood of the ending of the film.
7. Compare and contrast the personalities of Emma and Jim.
8. How does Jim inadvertently make Emma feel 'normal'?
9. There are a variety of themes woven through this film. Discuss the following:
 - Family
 - Loneliness
 - Coming of Age
 - Unlikely friendships
 - Innocence
 - Grief
10. Discuss and plot how this film connects to the classical story ark or plot diagram.

Example Lesson Plans:

In groups, using the following template, students create posters reflecting how Spaceboy can be defined as a coming of age story. Posters must include examples from the film that illustrate epiphanies, catharsis and metamorphosis.

Coming of Age

Coming of Age is a young person's transition from adolescence to adulthood. The age at which this transition takes place varies as does the nature of the transition. It can be simple or complex. The term coming of age is exemplified when a young character or characters, who by the end of the story, develop(s) in some way, through the undertaking of responsibility, or by learning a lesson.

∅ Transition from adolescence to adulthood.

∅ Age and Transition is different for everyone—

○ Simple or Complex

∅ Maturity/Maturation—

○ Character Develops Emotionally, Mentally,
Psychologically

∅ Learns a Lesson and Takes on Responsibility

Epiphany

An epiphany is a sudden realization of the essence or meaning of something.

It is the awakening of a dormant feeling as a character suddenly sees in a different light, a knowledge they should have been aware of before. It is an experience which allows a deeper understanding of a situation.

Catharsis

The word Catharsis literally means purification, to purify or cleansing, to clean. It is a sudden breakdown, release of overwhelming feelings of great pity, sorrow, laughter, or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal, restoration, or revitalization for the character.

Metamorphosis

A metamorphosis is a change or transformation in appearance, character or condition. Change can be spiritual or physical. This change can alter other's views of a character and one's view of oneself. A transformation can be for better or worse, but it is, nonetheless, a dynamic change.

Lesson Goals: Teach students about the coming-of-age genre. Give examples of works they may have heard about in the past and talk about similar themes they share.

Questions: What makes a coming-of-age story? What themes do these stories share with one another? Why are these stories so popular?

Objectives: Students will analyze and discuss why coming-of-age novels are so important in literature and why authors choose to write them. Students will examine different themes and characterizations present in these novels.

In Class Activities: In class discussions at the beginning of class addressing what makes a coming-of-age story.

Watch final speech from "Coach Carter." Reflect on the last line in the video. How does this encapsulate the coming-of-age genre?

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