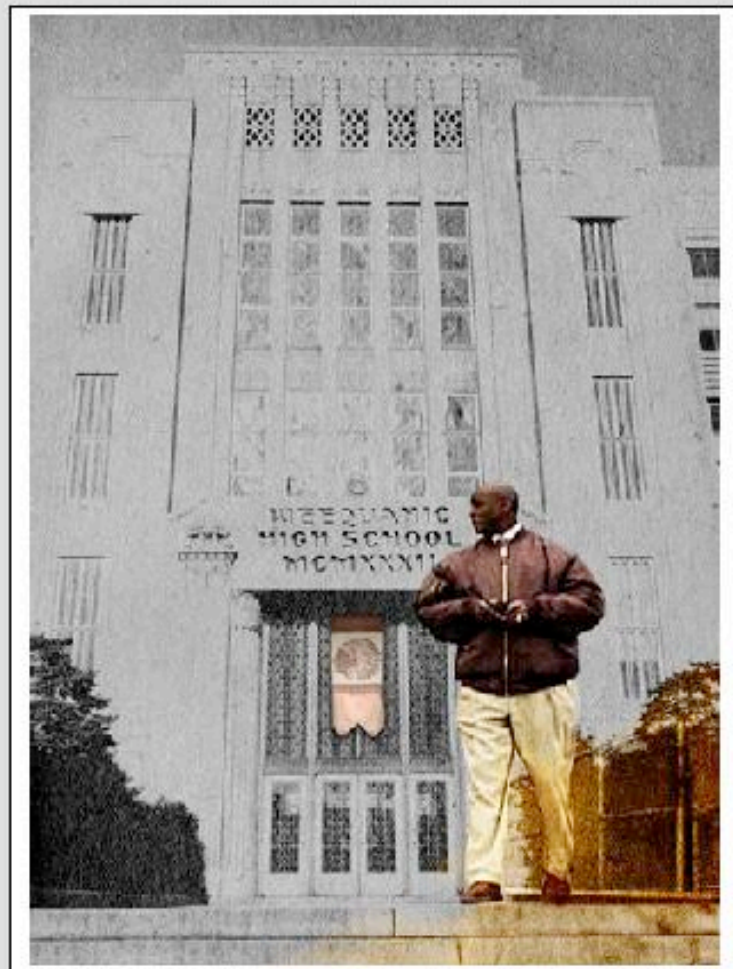


HEART OF STONE



Study Guide Prepared for FilmMatters by: Susan Starkman B.A., M. ED.

Heart of Stone

Teacher Resource Package

Prepared by: Susan Starkman, B.A., M.Ed

Synopsis

Country of Origin: United States

Release Year: 2009

Director: Beth Toni Kruvant

Runtime: 60 minutes (Educational Version)

Themes: Gangs, Conflict Resolution, Black-Jewish Relations

Before the 1960s, Newark's Weequahic High School was an academically distinguished, mostly Jewish enclave immortalised in the novels of Philip Roth, its most famous alumnus. When Ron Stone became principal in 2001, WHS was one of the most violent in the country. Determined to restore the school to its former glory, Principal Stone resolved to work with gang members, creating a non-violence zone where grievances were solved through conflict-resolution sessions. Stone also enlisted the help of former WHS alumni, mostly older, white males and young African-Americans to raise scholarship funds and encourage students to pursue their education. *Heart of Stone* is an inspirational film that demonstrates how disparate groups can join forces to give their old communities something that they have not had for generations: a future.

Curriculum Links

Heart of Stone can be used to meet the curriculum requirement of the Media Studies component of ENG3C/U and ENG4C/U. It can also be used to meet the requirements of the Family Studies course HHG4M (Issues in Human Growth and Development) and the Social Science Courses Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology (HSP3M) and Challenge and Change in Society (HSB4M). *Heart of Stone* is also relevant to American History (CHA3U), Canadian History and Politics Since 1945 (CHH3C) and Canada: History, Identity and Culture (CHI4U).

Related Websites:

<http://www.heartofstonethemovie.com/>

<http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/weequahic/index.htm>

Context: Gangs

One of the central issues raised in *Heart of Stone* is the role that gangs play in the lives of young people. While the media often portray gang members as being menacing characters inherently prone to violence, Kruvant's film casts a compassionate eye on the young men who decide to join gangs like the Bloods and the Crips. Rayvon, Sharif and Ricky, the three students featured in *Heart of Stone*, shatter the common stereotypes relating to gang members; although each of them exhibits some outward bravado, what strikes the viewer most is their vulnerability and desire to feel a sense of belonging. Growing up without fathers, gangs provide these boys with a surrogate family. For example, Ricky confesses that "after my father died, I felt like I had lost my best friend...I felt like I couldn't talk to anybody, so that's when I really started...I turned Blood."

In order to put the film into a broader context, teachers should devote one or two lessons to exploring the issue of gangs with their students, separating the myths perpetuated in the media with the facts borne out in numerous studies. There are many websites devoted to gangs and teachers must ensure that any sites that students use are appropriate and reputable sources of information. For the purposes of this guide, most of the facts and statistics are taken from the National Gang Centre (<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/>), a government agency with numerous resources relating to gang research, including fifteen years of data collected by the annual National Youth Gang Survey of 2500 U.S. law enforcement agencies.

Teachers should begin the lesson by asking students to define the term gang. The definition varies according to the context in which the term is being examined. For legal purposes, many states use the definition (frequently with minor variations) devised by the California legislature:

"A Criminal Street Gang is any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts" (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, 1988, California Penal Code sec. 186.22[f]).

Among academic researchers, the definition of the term gang is broader. The following criteria are widely accepted by experts for categorising groups as gangs (Decker and Curry, 2003; Ebensen et al, 2001; Klein, 1995; Miller, 1992; Spergel, 1995):

- The group has 3 or more members, generally between the ages of 12-24.
- Members share an identity, typically linked to a name, and often other symbols.
- Members view themselves as a gang, and they are recognised by others as a gang.
- The group has some permanence and a degree of organization.
- The group is involved in an elevated level of criminal activity.

Highlights of the 2007 National Youth Gang Survey (with results of additional analyses of gang-related data from the School Crime Supplements to the National Crime Victim Survey)

Source: (<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/publications/pubabstract.asp?pubi=247164>)

- One third of the jurisdictions in the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) study population experienced gang activity in 2007, the highest annual estimate since before 2000.
- There are an estimated 788,000 gang members and 27,000 gangs active in the United States in 2007.
- Gang violence is more prevalent in large cities and suburban counties than in smaller cities and rural counties.
- Percentage of students reporting gang presence in their schools increased considerably with age (26% of students aged 12 reporting gang presence in their schools compared to 43% of 15 year-olds).
- According to the gang presence scale, 61% of Hispanic students reported gangs compared with 44% of black students and 33% of white students.
- 2/3 of students surveyed reported that gangs were involved in none or only one of three types of criminal acts: violence, gun possession and drug sales. 8% of students surveyed reported that the gangs in their schools were involved in all three criminal activities.

Conclusions of 2007 National Youth Gang Survey

- It is unclear whether or not gangs are a direct cause of criminal victimisation at school.
- Gang membership may be a type of self-protection employed by students in response to threatening school and community environments.
- School security measures to combat gang activity do not appear to be viable solutions in and of themselves; other interventions need to be implemented along with school security measures to combat gangs in schools.

Youth Gangs in Canada: Facts and Statistics

According to the data published in the Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs in 2002, gangs are a growing problem in Canada, though not to the same extent as the United States where almost twice the percentage of jurisdictions reported active youth gangs. Students and teachers can research this issue of Canadian gangs by consulting The Public Safety Portal (www.safecanada.ca) or the National Crime Prevention Centre, part of Public Safety Canada (www.publicsafety.gc.ca/ncpc).

Listed below is a brief overview of current knowledge about youth gangs in Canada, including highlights from the 2002 Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs:

- Youth gangs cut across many different ethnic, geographic, demographic and socio-economic contexts, but youth at risk of joining gangs tend to be from groups that suffer from the greatest levels of inequality and social disadvantage.
- Aboriginal youth are more vulnerable to gang recruitment than non-Aboriginal youth and their numbers are growing in Western Canada.
- Canada has 434 youth gangs with approximately 7,000 members.
- Ontario has the highest number of youth gangs with 216 gangs and 3,320 gang members.
- 48% of youth gang members are under eighteen. 39% are between sixteen and eighteen.
- The largest proportion of youth gang members are African Canadian (25%), followed by First Nations (21%) and Caucasian (18%).

- 18.7% of boys aged 14-17 in Montreal and 15.1% in Toronto have brought a gun to school.

(Source: http://www.safecanada.ca/gangs_e.asp#general)

Related Classroom Activity

After examining the statistics relating to youth gangs, students should compare the facts with the way the issue of gangs is presented in the media. Students should read the following two articles and answer the questions listed below.

Article One: Panic in the Blackboard Jungle: Margaret Wentz, *Globe and Mail*, January April 11, 2008. (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/article659654.ece>)

Questions:

1. What is the overall tone of this article? Provide examples from the text.
2. What reaction does Wentz hope to elicit by putting terms like priority neighbourhood, complex-needs youth, marginalized and racialized in quotation marks?
3. What are the implications of the term "race-and-social-justice-set"? What is Wentz suggesting about Julian Falconer?
4. How does Wentz respond to the suggestion that "hard-core delinquents" should not be disciplined? What response does she hope to elicit from her readers when she mentions their victims?
5. What evidence does Wentz use to support her assertion that schools aren't racist?
6. What response does Wentz hope to elicit in her readers when she states that the teachers' union in Toronto doesn't allow teachers to monitor the halls for strangers?
7. On whom does Wentz place the blame for increased youth violence in school? What evidence does she provide to support her assertions?

Article 2: The Silent Treatment: Joe Friesen, *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday, August 14, 2009 (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-silent-treatment/article1252787/>)

Questions:

1. What is the overall tone of this article? Provide examples from the text.
2. What reasons does the author give for the boys from the Palisades and other housing projects joining gangs?
3. What evidence does the writer provide to suggest that black youth are discriminated against by the law enforcement and justice system?
4. What were the obstacles facing the homicide detectives in the criminal investigation of Allen Benn's murder?
5. What is the "stop snitching" campaign and how did it affect the case against Mackel Peterkin?
6. What does Shaun Blake mean when he accuses the writer of being "too much public" and "too much a Canadian citizen"?
7. What was the judge's attitude towards the case against Blake and Peterkin? Provide evidence from the text.

8. What are the obstacles facing the community workers who try to help these young men?

Extension Activity

Based on these two articles as well as their own research and personal experiences, teachers should have the class brainstorm the factors that they think are the biggest contributors to young people joining gangs. Divide the class into small groups, assigning each group one of these factors. Using the questions listed below as a guide, students should devise a list of practical recommendations to a task force on youth violence (e.g. conflict resolution programs in school).

Questions:

1. How has this problem been dealt with in the past? Have these tactics been effective?
2. What new approaches could be taken to reduce gang membership?
3. What resources are needed to reduce the problem of youth gangs (e.g., increased police presence, increase in government programs benefiting youth, etc.)?
4. What strategies are most effective in dealing with youth gangs: prevention, intervention or suppression? How can one devise a plan that integrates all three of these approaches?

Case Studies: Rayvon, Sharif and Ricky

Heart of Stone focuses on the lives of three young gang members. Rayvon, Sharif and Ricky. Students should write a brief character description of each one of these boys, using the following questions and direct quotes from them as their guide:

1. What drew him to joining a gang?
2. What is his attitude about being part of a gang?
3. How has he benefited from the conflict resolution program at WHS?
4. What is his attitude toward Principal Stone? Why do you think he is willing to listen to an authority figure that insists that conflicts should be resolved through discussion rather than violence?
5. How does he defy the media stereotype of a gang member?
6. Do you think that their experience at WHS will influence his behaviour and decisions after high school? Why/why not?

Selected Quotes: Rayvon

"I am a Crip but that doesn't determine what kind of man I am."

"I'm trying to see 45 or 50."

"If you don't got your family, then what you got? Well, I took it in my head that I don't got no family but I got a brain and I can use this brain to do something."

"When I made that decision I was about fifteen. In elementary school, I was claiming to, but once I got to high school, that's when I made the transition...my best friend, he was in it, and I thought, I might as well do it, too."

"I'm not trying to be a statistic and I don't want nobody I associate with to be a statistic either."

"A lot of kids in school know me, but they don't care about me."

"My grandmother used to tell me I was a diamond in the rough. I always kept that in my mind because I see the big picture. I know I need my education in order to go far. School is a way out. I can make a life for myself."

Ricky

"After my father passed, I felt like I had lost my best friend...I felt like I couldn't talk to anybody so that's when I really started...I turned Blood."

"I'm respected because if I say something, it's going to go my way."

"I'm an independent person. I'd rather get stuff myself. As me being the man of the house, I still take my share and make sure my family is safe."

"He [Ron Stone] lifted me out of darkness."

Sharif

"My mother's not cool with it but she understands it. And that's a big thing for me."

"My mother can't teach me how to be a man. We didn't really have a man to kick it with or talk to."

"I'm real peaceful. I'm not about no gangster. I'm not really with the whole guns and all that but I'm not just going to be shot at and not shoot back."

"I'm not ashamed to say that we were afraid. That's what it really was. We were scared."

"I'm not really about violence, but if it's needed, then it's needed. When you become Blood or Crip, your life is in danger."

"If it wasn't for the structure at Weequahic, I could say, I would probably be gone."

"If you can give a Brother, a Blood, a Crip, anybody, if you give them options, they can go from there. I didn't think I had any options because I lived this way and that's it."

"He [Ron Stone] was more concerned with keeping me in school than I was in keeping me in school."

Context: Conflict Resolution Programs

“Teenagers are going to be teenagers, but you minimise that when you give them opportunities to communicate with one another and learn conflict resolution. And it does work. It really does.” (Marion Bolden, Former Superintendent, Newark Public School)

In recent years, the prevailing discipline policies in schools have tended toward the “zero tolerance” model articulated in the film by Gary McCarthy, the Newark Police Director. Suspensions have become routine not just for weapons and drugs, but also for lesser violations such as profanity or defiant behaviour. Indeed, it is these minor infractions that account for most of the 3.3 million annual suspensions of public school students. According to data published from the federal government in the United States, 15% of the country’s black students from K-12 are suspended each year, compared with 4.8% of white students. One in two hundred black students are expelled from school each year compared with one in one thousand expulsions for white students. Poor black students are suspended at three times the rate of whites. The education secretary, Arne Duncan, acknowledged that “schools seem to suspend and discipline only young African-American boys.” (source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/19/education/19suspend.html?scp=4&sq=erik%20eckholm&st=cse>) .

While most schools still adhere to this punitive model of discipline, a growing body of research indicates that this approach is ineffective and serves only to push already troubled students toward academic failure and into the “school-to-prison-pipeline.” Some schools, like WHS, have recognised the need for an alternative course of action and have begun to implement new strategies such as conflict resolution, anti-bullying programs and positive behaviour feedback to create a safer environment for students. In Baltimore, schools amended their discipline code and adopted a program of in-school mentoring for disruptive students. Suspensions dropped 39% in 2008/09 from the previous two years. Similarly, violent incidents in Cleveland fell by 20% in each of the last two years after their schools adopted similar strategies such as peer mediation. (source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/19/education/19suspend.html?scp=4&sq=erik%20eckholm&st=cse>)

Practitioners of conflict resolution programs point to four basic principles that educators need to understand when dealing with students who have been identified as gang members:

- 1.** Young people want to be treated with respect by police. They would like a safe place to hang out without being hassled and they would like to be able to find jobs that would provide them with a steady source of support.
- 2.** Educators need to refrain from demanding that students drop out of gangs if they want to keep lines of communication open.
- 3.** Educators must engage in problem solving conversations, exploring viable strategies to meet their concerns.
- 4.** Educators must serve as an access point to resources such as job possibilities.

(Source: <http://cahro.org/html/gangs.html>)

The conflict resolution program at WHS provides educators with a positive case study of the effectiveness of such programs. The fact that these programs are voluntary is

testament to the fact that the students themselves want to stay in school. As Les Baraka, former Vice Principal of WHS notes, "children that are still in school, that go to school...still have an opportunity and something in their minds and hearts that's telling them that they want to do something else or else they would not be there. They don't have to be there." By treating the students as mature adults and respecting their reasons for joining gangs, schools like WHS with conflict resolution programs are able to provide students with the skills necessary for solving their differences with others in a non-violent manner. As a participant in the WHS program, Sharif reinforces the importance of feeling validated as an adult when he says that "they (the staff) sit us right next to each other, right in front of each other like men and they let us say this is my side, this is your side and then we come to what's the real side. And that's it. It's like court. We don't leave until it's resolved."

There are a number of online sites that teachers can access to find out more about conflict resolution programs, including practical strategies on how to tailor such programs to the specific needs of your classroom or school. Listed below is a brief selection of some of these sites.

California Association of Human Rights Organizations
<http://www.cahro.org/html/gangs.html>

Washoe County School District Gang Intervention Program
<http://www.washoe.k12.nv.us/schools/safe-and-drug-free-schools/gang-resistance-intervention-program>

The Conflict Resolution Information Source
http://www.crinfor.org/action/recommended.jsp?list_id=31&nid=2420

Peace Education Foundation
<http://store.peaceeducation.org/>

Educators for Social Responsibility
<http://esrnational.org/>

Education World
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr171.shtml

Selected Quotes: Kycied Zahir (Math teacher and Conflict Resolution Leader)

"And that's the thing we have to understand about this whole gang phenomenon. It's not just about how many people you kill, how much drugs you sell, how much money you make. These are kids asking for help. I don't have a family. I need to be in a gang. I don't have any money. I want to join a gang."

"These conflict resolutions really give the kids the opportunity to vent. They give them the opportunity to stand up and speak their mind and make total fools of themselves and realise it's OK. It's cool to be wrong. It's not about he hit me so now we have to resolve the conflict. It's more like a proactive approach to eliminating any conflict that may come in the future."

"We can get these kids so far and they have to decide whether they go further."

"The first year it was a madhouse. The second year, I thought it would be worse but it wasn't. By year three, no problems...The only work we do now are the Freshmen. The new incoming kids, we have to get them into line with what we're doing."

Ron Stone

"The school has to be the parent, it has to be the psychologist, it has to be the police. It has to be all these things that at one time were the responsibility of the family."

"If I can get a kid to say you guys cannot fight around WHS, that's our community, I've won. But it's the result of inviting them into the conversation."

"I compete with the gangs, but I don't attempt to shut them down. I don't attempt to disrespect them. I don't even try to say to the kid it has no value for you because I do see some value. My job is to provide you with some options so you don't have to live that lifestyle 24/7."

"What we were able to do was create a zone in the school, make the school an area where it was OK to be friends. A lot of teachers resisted it at first because we were pulling kids out of class."

Marion Bolden (Former Superintendent, Newark Public School)

"Young adolescents should be running their school and that is what we wanted to see evolve...give them a voice. And the more you empower kids, the less they are an issue in terms of discipline."

"Ron was very successful at keeping the gang element out of the school itself. That doesn't mean that we didn't have gang members. There's no school in the district that doesn't have gang members, but they do not deal with gang activities while they are in the building."

"As Superintendent, I met with gang members. If you were to go in my conference room, you would see a resolution is a truce that I had seven different gangs sign. So engaging them and having a conversation with them does make a difference."

Heart of Stone: Historical Context

"The thing is, when you have a different kind of motion in the community itself, where you don't depend on each other as much to get ahead, where you can get ahead without me, then that's where the relationship gets pulled apart." (Resident of Newark discussing reasons for increasing racial tension in the 1960s)

In order to fully understand the issues raised in the film, students need to become familiar with the history of Newark, particularly the urban rebellion of 1967 that was a defining moment for the city. The opening shot of the film and the accompanying voiceover neatly encapsulates how the city of Newark underwent a radical transformation from the middle of last century to the beginning of this one. As the camera follows a group of students passing through metal detectors as they enter Weequahic High School, the voiceover recalls how WHS was a "school for strivers" which attracted the "cream of the world." Immediately, the viewer realises the disconnect between the past and present and this provides teachers with an entry point into the film.

There are numerous resources that students can utilise, some of which are listed at the end of the section. Outlined below is a brief overview of the history of Newark and the conditions leading up to the riots of 1967.

Newark Before the Riots

From the early 1800s through to the 1950s, Newark was a successful urban economic centre. One of the alumni interviewed for the film describes the city as being "Camelot", a place where "everyone was accepted. You didn't see colour, you saw who the person was." Indeed, Dr. Clement A. Price, a History Professor at Rutgers University interviewed for the film, asserts "during the 1950s, [blacks and Jews] more than any other groups in the city of Newark were very much interested in improved race relations." Similarly, various alumni of WHS featured in the film speak of the affinity between Jewish and black students, with the former coach of the school football team laughingly reminiscing about the black football players calling the signals in Hebrew and Yiddish. However, while this period did mark an era of relative good will between various ethnic groups, the city was not completely free of racial and ethnic tension. Richie Roberts, a criminal defence attorney (WHS Class of '56) recalls a group called the Barbarians who would attack Jews and a Jewish gang called the Redskins who would retaliate. Principal Stone also experienced racism growing up in the North Ward of the city where Anthony Imperiale, an Italian vigilante and his followers would attack blacks in the neighbourhood.

Related Classroom Activity

Heart of Stone refers to the names of many well-known people from Newark who would likely be unfamiliar to students. As part of their study of the history of Newark, students could research some of the characters mentioned in the film (e.g., Philip Roth, Richie Roberts, Anthony Imperiale, Alvin Attles, Michael Lerner, Lester Fein) and report their findings back to the class. A more extensive list of people who attended WHS appears on the school's Alumni Page at <http://www.weequahicalumni.org/main.cfm>.

Mounting Tensions: Circumstances Leading to 1967

(Source: http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/n_index.htm)

Between July 12th and July 18th, 1967, much of the midsection of Newark was destroyed by acts of violence and looting that resulted in the deaths of 23 people, with a further 725 injured, and nearly 1500 people arrested. For many of the white residents who later fled to the suburbs, this incident is referred to as the Newark riots; for the black activists who were finally able to gain political standing in the years following, it was a rebellion. The term disturbance is a more objective way to refer to the events that occurred in this time. The incident that sparked the unrest was the arrest of a black cab driver by white police officers and the subsequent (false) rumours that he had died in police custody. However, it was a series of complex demographic, political, economic and social factors that paved the way for tensions between blacks and whites to reach this boiling point. A brief outline of some of the issues leading to increased racial tension is listed below.

Demographic Changes

After World War Two, the Federal Housing Authority guaranteed low-cost mortgages to returning soldiers and many of Newark's Jewish, Italian and Polish residents moved to the neighbouring suburbs of South Orange, West Orange and Livingston. Between 1950 and 1967, the white population of Newark fell from 363,000 to 158,000. As the white population moved away, the black population surged, shifting the city's racial make-up to one where the blacks were the majority. However, while the residents of Newark were mostly black, Jews still predominantly ran the local businesses, a cause of ethnic tension.

Police-Community Relations

While the population of Newark was predominantly black by the 1960s, most of those serving on the police force were of Irish or Italian descent. Numerous cases of police brutality were reported against young black men in the decade preceding the riot, including three incidents that resulted in the deaths of African-American males. Requests for a civilian review board were ignored and, by and large, police-related beatings and shootings were not prosecuted.

Political Exclusion

Just as the black population was underrepresented in the police force so, too, did they lack a presence in local government. This disparity was highlighted when the mayor of Newark appointed an Irish high school graduate to sit on the school board instead of the more qualified African-American candidate.

Political tensions were further exacerbated when federal anti-poverty funds designed to help to community groups in poor neighbourhoods were cut back. As a result, militant black leaders like Amir Baraka (then known as Leroi Jones) began their calls for a revolution.

Urban Planning

Depending on one's perspective, the proposed demolition of "slum" land (i.e., dilapidated homes owned by blacks) to build a medical school/ hospital complex could be considered

either as “urban renewal” or “Negro Removal”. Other plans to build superhighways threatened to bisect the black community. This mobilised the local residents to hold protest rallies that were precursors to the larger riots.

Unemployment and Poverty

Once a hub for manufacturing jobs, Newark was thrown into economic decline as the breweries and tanneries shut down. The closing of the big conglomerates, Westinghouse and General Electric, resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs, affecting a large part of the Black population in Newark. According to the Hughes Commission of 1968 (a public opinion survey by the Governor’s Select Commission on Civil Disorder in New Jersey), 37.8% of black men between the ages of 16-19 were unemployed.

Housing

By the mid-1960s, much of Newark’s black population was confined to substandard public housing. “Slumlords” would insist on rent, but they would fail to perform regular maintenance, leaving their buildings uninhabitable by modern health and safety standards. According to the Hughes Commission of 1968, 54% of black respondents indicated that the housing problem was a major factor in causing the riots.

Related Classroom Activities and Discussion Topics

1. Students write an essay comparing the causes and outcomes of the urban riots in Newark, Detroit and Watts.
2. Students research the 1992 uprising in L.A. sparked by the Rodney King case. What are the similarities and differences between this instance of urban rebellion and the Newark riots?
3. Students compare methods of non-violent resistance popular with civil rights activists in the Southern States with the race riots in the North. Which method of resistance was more effective? Why?
4. Do you think that the violence of the 1967 riots was justified? When can violence be justified?
5. Do you think that race riots could occur in contemporary Canadian society? Why/why not? What city would be most vulnerable to rioting and why?
6. Research student movements in the 1960s and compare them with student movements of today.
7. Divide students into groups and assign each one a significant figure of the Civil Rights Movement to research (e.g., Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Amira Baraka, Huey Newton).
8. Write a description of the riots from the perspective of a black resident, a Jewish storeowner, a local government official and a British journalist sent to Newark to cover the riots for a European audience. How would the accounts differ?
9. Research the relationship between Jews and blacks in the civil rights movement. How has the relationship between these two groups changed over the years and why? What measures can be taken to repair the friction that has existed between Jews and blacks since the time of the riots?
10. Research the coverage of the riots from numerous media outlets, comparing the language and perspectives demonstrated in each of the various articles/TV segments. How did the coverage reflect beliefs common at that time?

11. Research some of the youtube clips devoted to the riots of 1967. How do they utilise archival news broadcasts to provide a contemporary perspective on the riots? Produce your own short film that reflects your feelings about the riots and post it on youtube.
12. How can the lessons of Newark be applied to improving our own community?

Selected Websites:

Revolution 67: POV documentary on PBS. Website for documentary can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/pov/revolution67/background.php>

New Jersey Historical Society Panel Discussion on POV Documentary *Revolution 67*
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/podcasts07.php>

A Walk Through Newark
<http://www.thirteen.org/newark/history3.html>

Rutgers University: The Newark and Detroit Riots
<http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/introduction.html>

Photos of the riot from the New York Times
http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2007/07/08/nyregion/20070708RIOT_SLIDESHOW_1.html

Youtube compilation of newscasts about the riot edited to musical soundtrack
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ag1yxBLvq4&feature=related>

Pictorial Montage of Newark Riots set to music
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGPqi8gRxOY>

Heart of Stone: Genre Study

On the most obvious level, *Heart of Stone* is a film that follows the conventions of documentary filmmaking. However, the film can also be seen in the context of films about inspirational educators that have been popular in Hollywood since Glenn Ford played an inner city teacher in *The Blackboard Jungle* in 1955. Teachers using *Heart of Stone* in their classrooms could study the film exclusively as a documentary or they can extend their exploration of the film by comparing it to some of the feature films that focus on maverick teachers, many of which are based on real life characters.

Questions about Documentary Techniques

1. Why does the director begin the film with images of students going through metal detectors and being frisked by security guards? How else does the director convey an atmosphere of danger around the school?
2. How do the boys interviewed challenge the stereotype of gang members? What techniques does the director use to convey them in a sympathetic light?
3. What effect is the use of archival footage of Newark in the 1950s designed to have on the viewer?
4. Newark Police Director Gary McCarthy appears twice in the film. Where does he appear in the film and why did the director place his comments at those particular points in the documentary? What techniques are employed to cast him in an unsympathetic light?
5. Other than the students at WHS and the alumni involved in raising scholarship money, who does the director interview for the film (activists, academics, local residents, etc)? Create a list of all the people interviewed and comment on their function in the film. Why did the director choose them to speak? Who else might she have chosen?
6. Why does the director include a clip of Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a Holocaust survivor, addressing the March on Washington?
7. Why does the director wait until the end of the film to tell us that Principal Stone had died? How do you think the viewers' responses to the film would differ if they knew from the outset that he were no longer alive?
8. Many of the scenes captured in the film take place in peoples' homes (e.g., a meeting of the alumni association, Principal Stone visiting Rayvon at home). Why do you think the director chose to film people in their private spaces? What effect does this have on the viewer?
9. Do you think that the director's depiction of Principal Stone is a balanced one or is too good to be true? Provide examples from the film to support your response.
10. Principal Stone and his conflict resolution program could have been the sole subject for this documentary. Why did the director choose to include the alumni element in the film? Why do you think the director emphasises the fact that many of the alumni are Jewish?

Comparing Documentary to Fictional Films about Inspiring Teachers

There are numerous films that students can use to compare the true story of Ron Stone with a fictional version of a teacher/principal who made a difference in the lives of inner city students. Below is a brief list, but there are many more that would be equally relevant.

Stand and Deliver (1988)

Dangerous Minds (1995)

Lean on Me (1989)

To Sir with Love (1967)

Music of the Heart (1999)

Freedom Writers (2007)

Blackboard Jungle (1955)

Lean on Me provides teachers with a particularly interesting point of comparison. Like *Heart of Stone*, *Lean on Me* tells the story of a real-life principal (Joe Clark) hired to bring order to a trouble New Jersey High School. The tag lines for the two films both point to the fact that these principals were responsible for giving students something that they never had before: a future. However, while both Ron Stone and Joe Clark had a positive impact on the lives of their students, their methods could not be further apart. Where Stone nurtured his students and agreed to help students still affiliated with gangs, Clark was a proponent of "tough love" and chained the school doors shut to keep the troublemakers out and the achievers in. Unlike Stone, Clark did not believe that personal failure could be attributed to external factors like poverty or family dysfunction. Instead, he would tell his students that "if you don't succeed in life, don't blame your backgrounds. Don't blame the Establishment. Blame YOURSELVES".

Questions Comparing *Heart of Stone* and *Stand and Deliver*

1. Research the real-life Joe Clark. How accurate do you think that the film's depiction of him is based on the facts? What liberties did the director take and why might he have done so?
2. How might a director approach making a feature film about Ron Stone? Who would you cast in the role? What changes would you make to the fictional version of the character and why?
3. Compare the fictional students that appear in *Lean on Me* with the real students who are interviewed in *Heart of Stone*. How realistic are the fictional students? Do they confirm or defy stereotypes?
4. Compare Clark's tough love, autocratic approach to students with Stone's more democratic method of leadership. Whose philosophy do you think will prove to be more effective in the long run? Why? Provide evidence to support your answers.
5. Do you think a fictional version of *Heart of Stone* would have the same impact as a documentary? Why/why not?

Heart of Stone and the Concept of Tikkun Olam

“The most important thing about being a Jew was being able to give and being able to help other people and, to me, that’s what a mitzvah was all about. And it didn’t just mean Jewish people, it meant people in general.”

Phil Yourish (C’ 64), Executive Director, WHS Alumni Association

Repeatedly throughout the film, members of the alumni association discuss their involvement with the scholarship program in the context of their religious beliefs. Hebrew terms like “mitzvah” are used by those interviewed and students should find definitions for terms such as mitzvah and tzedakah. Teachers can also introduce the concept of “tikkun olam” to their classrooms and, as part of a class exercise, organise their own tikkun olam project.

Translated literally, tikkun olam means repairing the world and the term has been applied broadly to encompass a wide range of activities from teaching the Torah (Scriptures), to raising money for charities. The term has now come to be equated with both social justice movements as well as specific philanthropic and volunteer programs. The origins of the term date back to the 2nd-century where the phrase appeared in the *Aleynu* prayer. Originally this prayer was read only once a year on Jewish New Year, but it became part of the daily prayer services some time around the 13th-century.

The most popular use of the term tikkun olam derives not from its origins in Jewish liturgy, but rather from the Lurianic Kabbalah, a 16th-century mystical school revolving around Rabbi Isaac Luria. According to the Kabbalah, God created the world by contracting his divine self into ten *sefirot*, each one representing a specific aspect of His divine nature. These *sefirot* were put into vessels, but some of the vessels were not strong enough to hold the more powerful *sefirot* and they shattered into millions of pieces. The mixture of divine light with the *kelipot* (physical shells of the vessels) introduced evil in the world. As a result, humans are required to redeem the holy sparks through a combination of prayer and deeds. In so doing, we act as partners with God in repairing the world.

The concept of tikkun olam has been integral to the practice of Judaism for centuries. Recent examples include the overwhelming response of Jewish organizations to Hurricane Katrina and to the earthquake in Haiti. Students could research various Jewish organizations like Mazon (www.mazon.org) dedicated to fulfilling the obligation of tikkun olam. They could also research how the concept of repairing the world is manifested in other religions.

Websites about Tikkun Olam

Inner Frontier

<http://www.innerfrontier.org/Practices/TikkunOlam.htm>

Zeek Magazine

<http://www.zeek.net/706tohu/>

Learning to Give

http://learningtogive.com/faithgroups/voices/mitzvah_tikkun_olam.asp

Websites with Tikkun Olam Lesson Ideas for Teachers

Jewish Women's Archive: Go and Learn

<http://jwa.org/teach/golearn/jan07/>

Teva Learning Centre (Jewish Environmental Education Website)

<http://tevalearningcenter.org/resources.php>

The Free Child Project (Youth Activist Website)

<http://www.freechild.org/index.htm>

Art and Social Issues in American Culture

<http://artandsocialissues.cmaohio.org/pages/resources.html>

Free the Children (children helping children through education)

<http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/educator/programs.php?type=curriculum>

Heart of Stone and Operation Kinship

In order to capitalise on the positive example set by Ron Stone and the WHS alumni, Beth Kruvant, the director of *Heart of Stone*, has initiated Operation Kinship. The goal of the program is twofold: firstly, to encourage alumni of urban schools across the United States to raise funds for scholarships and extra-curricular programs for inner-city students and secondly, to inspire inner-city schools to establish conflict resolution programs and non-violence zones. The Righteous Persons Foundation has given Kruvant a grant to promote the film widely to public and private schools and several cable TV stations in the U.S. will offer the film as part of their video-on-demand menu. Teachers and students could consider what measures they could take to promote more community involvement in local schools and to encourage school boards to adopt conflict resolution programs in Canadian schools.

***Heart of Stone*: General Discussion Questions**

1. What was your reaction to the film (e.g., sad, angry, enlightened) and why?
2. Do you think it is important for others to see this film?
3. How can we adapt the model presented in the film to our own communities?
4. How would you solve the issue of gangs in schools? Do you think that it is just an inner city problem?
5. What does the film say about social responsibility?
6. What does the film tell us about American Jewish history in the last 60 years? Discuss the demographic shift from cities to suburbs. Why and how did this happen?
7. What will the next principal of WHS have to do to keep up the legacy left behind by Ron Stone?

8. The outreach project developed to screen *Heart of Stone* across the country is named *Campaign Kinship*. What is the significance of this name?
9. What actions should we take, and how should we engage others to make positive change in our community and beyond?

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