



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2006 Volume I: Stories around the World in Film

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## **Uniting Children of the World through Film: Planning an International Film Festival for Middle School Students**

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This unit provides suggestions for presenting five films about children from around the world to students: *Children of Heaven* from Iran, *Not One Less* from Mainland China, *Into the West* from Ireland, *Rabbit Proof Fence* from Australia, and *The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* from Senegal, Africa. A desire to make U.S. children members of a world community is the strongest goal for this unit, but other objectives are met along the way. Each film provides a sense of common humanity and at the same time supplies clarifying and important images of local landscape, cityscape, family interactions, religion, and a whole host of cultural information. The films offer profiles of children with fortitude, courage, and strength of spirit. These visual glimpses into the lives of children in Ireland, Iran, China, Africa, and Australia furnish instantaneous opportunities for increasing empathy and understanding.

Several categories of information are provided for each film. These are: a brief background of film in the country or region represented; a synopsis of the film and background information about cultural issues, the director, and relevant historical information; ideas for teaching an element of filmmaking or cinematography with each film; and a brief discussion of a national or regional literary style that is evident in the film. Although the unit is planned for students in a middle school for the creative and performing arts, parts of it are suitable for a film studies class, world cultures class, or any curriculum studying one of the five countries covered in this unit. The curriculum might also be valuable to Language Arts teachers interested in reinforcing literary concepts and terminology.

(Developed for Creative Writing, Media, and Drama, grades 6-8; recommended for World Cultures, Communications and English, grades 6-12)

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