



A TEACHER'S
GUIDE
FOR THE
DVD-ROM
DANCE
in the
SHADOW

PDF 1

THE *DANCE IN THE SHADOW* KIT

(DVD-ROM AND ACCOMPANYING TEACHER'S GUIDE)

A JOINT PROJECT OF PARTNERS FOR PLANNING
AND L'ARCHE CANADA



Photo: Vincenzo Pietropaolo

THE *DANCE IN THE SHADOW* VIDEO CLIPS INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO THE MUTUALLY EMPOWERING EXPERIENCE OF DANCE WITH SOMEONE WHO USES A WHEELCHAIR.

This kit supports curriculum topics related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Tolerance, Respect, and Social Responsibility.

The kit is useful in implementing curriculum in several disciplines:

- Grade 6 Language and Social Studies
- Grades 10 and 11 Arts (Dance)
- Grades 11 Leadership and Peer Support/ Guidance
- Grade 10 Religion (Ontario Catholic schools)
- For Retreats and Conferences for senior students and educators

This kit is inspired by the vision of L'ARCHE and Jean Vanier, that every person has gifts and a contribution to make to the lives of others and to the quality of our society.

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We have worked with the Ontario Ministry of Education programs of study, but the material is readily transferrable to other provincial jurisdictions. We occasionally indicate the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations met by the kit, although the content is non-sectarian with exception of the Grade 10 Religion PDF.

This kit is a free downloadable resource. It consists of the video clips on the DVD-ROM *Dance in the Shadow: The Unfolding Story of Rebecca Beayni*, and 6 PDFs. All may be accessed on larche.ca (click on Education) or on partnersforplanning.ca. You may also purchase a hard copy of the DVD-ROM from Inclusion Press (inclusion.com). Begin with PDF 1 (introduction), and move on to the course-specific PDFs. PDFs 1-5 have appendices with the Questions for Students in Word format so they can be modified.

HOW TO USE THIS KIT:

Use the questions and two videos that are introduced in this PDF first. Then choose the PDF for the course that you are teaching. We have included in the PDFs the specific learning expectations supported by the kit. You may wish to use this kit over two or more classes or assign group study based on it.



Who is Rebecca Beayni?

She is a young woman who uses a wheelchair and who is a dancer. While Rebecca does not speak with words and while she depends upon others to assist her in daily life, everyone who has spent time with her says that she definitely communicates. Rebecca is breaking down the barriers that society sometimes imposes on those who communicate or move differently. She shows us how to see disability differently and to go beyond our preconceptions. (See also Rebecca's Website: www.rebeccabeayni.com.)

Using this Guide and the DVD-ROM:

Part A. We suggest that all teachers, regardless of grade level, first show their students the 12-minute video, *Revel in the Light*, because it gives the context, presenting Rebecca's childhood and school days. **Go to the EXTRAS section in the DVD to view this video.** Choose from the questions below to help your students think about the various themes in *Revel in the Light*. **Prompt:** What are some ways that you communicate that do not require words?

Questions for *Revel in the Light* (12 min.)**Theme 1: Communication** ("Being an effective communicator")

1. How does Rebecca communicate? *Through her eyes, smile, facial expression, movement (including dance), excitement.* Note: How does dance communicate? Prompt with: *What does swing dance say? What does hip-hop dance say? What does the dance of the Spirit Movers say? (Inclusion, community, relationships).*
2. How are Rebecca's ways of communicating similar to the ways others communicate?
3. During the day Rebecca needs a break from sitting in her wheelchair and Anna lies with her as she rests. Anna says, "I can be totally silent with her and it feels like we are having a conversation." What does she mean by that? Have you ever had a similar experience where you communicated with someone in silence? What was this experience like? How did you know you were still communicating if there was silence?
4. Do you know someone with special needs? How do you communicate with this person?

Theme 2: Differing Abilities / "Diss-Abilities"

1. In the teenage culture, what does it mean if you "diss" someone's abilities?
2. Anna says, "Once I learned about her care it was easy to let go of her...disabilities?" What do you think Anna means? Why is this a revelation for Anna?
3. In our society we often value independence, in the L'Arche communities and other communities which value differing abilities; interdependence is often a major focus. How was the blowing out of the candles by her family and friends at her birthday celebration an example of how interdependence is important? Where is there interdependence in your life?
4. The narrator in the film says Rebecca is a teacher. How does the film show her to be a teacher? *She is allowing the children to touch her, she is teaching non-verbal interaction and communication. She is normalizing being with people of differing abilities.*

"Where are those places where we can meet each other in our difference? Or do we remain just in our group, my group..?"
—Jean Vanier

FOR PONDERING

- By assuming the specialness of every person, we build a culture of respect that generates energy, creativity, and magnetism—something that people can sense and feel, and to which they are drawn.
- In our daily lives we can create a culture of respect with every personal interaction we have, whether it is with a store clerk, another student or colleague, or an elder or dignitary.

Theme 3: Reveling in the Light (“being a discerning believer”)

1. At first, Rebecca’s parents tried to get specialized education for Rebecca. Rebecca ended up going to regular classrooms and community centres. Her mom comments that this was the best thing for Rebecca.
 - (a) How was this beneficial to Rebecca?
 - (b) How is this integration beneficial to other students? (*example: classmates wheeling Rebecca, sharing in communion, graduation ceremony and celebrating birthday parties where students are interacting with Rebecca*)
 - (c) How is this integration beneficial to teachers?
 - (d) Does the video bring to your mind any personal stories of a family member or friend who has a disability?
2. Why is the film entitled “*Revel in the Light*”? How does the metaphor of the subway (underground train) emerging from the tunnel speak to this theme of reveling in the light?
3. Most of the people in the train don’t seem to notice either Rebecca or the light, but Anna does. What does it take for us to see a situation differently, or to notice the gift in a situation?
4. The narrator says, “Rebecca is the teacher and the course is Life.” How is this revealed in Anna’s account of the subway trip?

SUGGESTION**Suggested “Minds-on” activity:**

Ask one student to drum out a simple beat and ask members of the class to follow the same beat. Have the beat become more complicated with each transition.

Note: Discuss how, without verbally communicating, the community is able to follow one another in sync. Not everything needs to be explained orally. How can this non-verbal communication be nurtured in everyday life?



Theme 4: Dance / Artistic Expression (“Being a Creative Thinker”)

- Throughout the film, Rebecca is seen in her role as a dancer with the Spirit Movers. Why do you think this troop is called the “Spirit Movers”?
- Rebecca performed with the Spirit Movers for the Pope at World Youth Day 2002. What is the significance of Rebecca participating in this performance that was televised widely around the world?
- Anna and Rebecca rehearse their dance every Friday; Rebecca expresses her joy when she twirls in her wheelchair.
 - How does Rebecca’s role shape the way you would define dancing?
 - Using Rebecca as an example, how is the power of dance used to communicate spirituality?
 - To communicate unity?
 - How does it overcome verbal barriers?
- What would others say are your gifts?
 - Identify a friend or family member who is having a positive impact on you or on the community. What are their special gifts?
- How do your feelings change throughout the video?

Part B: Introduce and play the video clip of Michael Barrett and John Delazzari.

Introduction: John and Michael are dance partners. You may have glimpsed them dancing with Rebecca and the other Spirit Movers (the L’Arche dance troupe) in *Revel in the Light*. This short clip shows them enjoying an outing and then John talking with Michael. (Michael, like Rebecca, has a kind of cerebral palsy that affects his face and voice muscles, so that he cannot speak but he can express himself in other ways.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wICA8AabGEI>

- What strikes you about the relationship between John and Michael?
- How does Michael communicate his enjoyment of being with John? (Mention at least 3 ways.)
- When they are sitting together, John briefly begins talking about Michael and then quickly changes to talking to Michael. What does this show about their relationship? What does John model for us?

(Note: This clip is from a short film about Michael Barrett created by Deiren Masterson, titled *In God’s Hands*.)

OBSERVATION + DISCUSSION**Some general observations and discussion starters for *Dance in the Shadow*:**

- The short videos in *Dance in the Shadow* make it clear that the obstacle is not Rebecca; it’s how other people see her and how they react to her.
- Like any relationship, a relationship with Rebecca requires work.
- There is a difference between being friendly and being friends. What is this difference?
- Are others doing Rebecca a favour by being her friend? Is she doing them a favour? How?

DEFINITION**What is dance?**

Dance is expression, movement, and communication through rhythm.



Added value: Play the song, "I Hope You Dance..."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmBSGIxqC4Q>

Part C

1. **For Grade 6 (elementary) Language and Social Studies**, go to PDF 2 and work with the *I Can Dance!!!* video.
2. **For secondary students**, return to the Main Menu, click on SCENE SELECT, and play the 5-min. *Anna Bruno* clip. You may also want to use the video *I Can Dance!!!* and questions provided in PDF 2.

Then, go to the PDF 3, 4 or 5, according to the course you are teaching and work with one or more of the dance videos as suggested. The dance videos range in length from 2.38 to 7 minutes.

If your emphasis is on social justice or family studies, you may wish to play the entire *Dance in the Shadow* video (23 min.), which incorporates the *Anna Bruno* and *Heryka Miranda* clips and other content from Rebecca's parents and friends. They discuss her gifts and some of the ways they have dealt with the social barriers to inclusion. You might then choose from the dance clips to see Rebecca dancing with her dance partners.

See Appendix 1 for the Questions for Students in Word format.

RETREATS AND CONFERENCES:

The *Dance in the Shadow* kit may also be used for Retreats for Senior Students and for Professional Development days and Conferences. See PDF 6 for suggestions.



Photo: Nicolas Béland

“Can we reasonably have a dream of a world where every person, regardless of their ability or disability, can contribute their gifts and belong?” — Jean Vanier