



OwlTeacher
Teaching with Movies & Literature

CITY OF JOY

Good for the following school subjects:

- ✓ World History
- ✓ History of India
- ✓ World Studies
- ✓ Sociology

Directed by Jeremy Kagan
1985; Rated PG; Family/Adventure; 101 minutes; Color;
Available from www.OwlTeacher.com bookstore

Synopsis: Trying to find meaning in his life, an American doctor travels to Calcutta, India. When his path crosses with an extremely poor man and his family as well as an Irish clinic volunteer, his attitude is altered forever. The American doctor and the volunteer work together to bring humanitarian aid and health care to the people of Calcutta. It is not easy, however, because of appalling living conditions and corrupt crime bosses throughout the city.

Educational Benefits of this movie: This film enables students to see what life is like in poverty-stricken parts of the world such as Calcutta, India. It works well as part of a Sociology class as well as a history class on India where students can determine how parts of India still fail to become industrialized and prosperous. You might want to look at British colonialism and determine whether that might have played a part. Regardless of what class the film is used in, it is an asset to any unit. Students can see how compassion, team work, and determination can bring positive change in the world.

Study Questions:

1. Describe Dr. Max Lowe. What are his strengths and weaknesses? Why does he move to Calcutta, India?
2. At first, why doesn't he want to practice medicine in Calcutta?
3. Describe daily living conditions in Calcutta:
4. List and describe problems that the residents of Calcutta must deal with on a daily basis:
5. Describe Hasari Pal (the Indian father). What are his characteristics, his fears, and his hopes?
6. Describe Joan Bethel (the British nurse). What are her goals and ambitions for Calcutta?
7. How does this film illustrate the issue of compassion? Use specific examples from the film.

8. How does this film show us that service brings us face-to-face with our own limitations and our need for others?
9. Describe the things you have learned about Indian culture by watching this film:
10. How difficult is it to do the right thing in the face of danger and internal fear?
11. How does this film show us that doing the right thing for the right reasons can be life transforming?

Project:

Choose one city in India and create a Cultural Display of that city. On your display, include such things as religion, food, music, recreational activities, customs and rituals, and the way people dress. Use colorful visuals to represent the different elements of the culture. For your display, choose a title that completes the following: City of _____, depending on what would describe your city the best. You can create a visual any way you want: poster board, PowerPoint, diorama, etc. Use your imagination and creativity!