

THEMES AND ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE PLAY

DANNY KING OF THE BASEMENT, by David S. Craig

The play "Danny King of the Basement" has much to offer as a support for CHARACTER EDUCATION programming in Ontario schools and it opens the door to discussion around important social justice issues like homelessness and child and family poverty. There is much for young people to learn through a glimpse into the realities other children are facing right in their own communities. Danny's indomitable spirit and uplifting story will be an inspiration for *all* children facing the many challenges that life presents them on a day to day basis.

Here are some of the themes and issues that can be explored with students through discussion of this play:

POVERTY AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES:

Life without a home: 25% of the homeless people in Toronto are children under the age of 12

Falling between the cracks: What can happen when our basic needs are not being met

Literacy problems & Self-esteem: The stigma of being poor / Issues connected to family poverty

CHALLENGING CONCEPTS AND STEREOTYPES RELATED TO POVERTY / BEING "POOR"

Being "RICH" or "POOR" can be connected to much more than just how much money we have.

Material wealth & family income vs. quality of life that comes with family communication, love & support

THE POWER OF THE IMAGINATION

- in helping us overcome obstacles and deal with tough challenges life throws our way
- in enriching the time we spend with our friends as an alternative to TV and computers
- in breaking down barriers between people.

CHARACTER EDUCATION:

Mustering the courage and determination to steer our lives in a positive direction despite the odds

Danny as a role model: How a boy's indomitable spirit & ability to make friends inspires and helps others & builds a supportive community.

CHILD POWER: Kids helping & supporting one another

FRIENDSHIPS & MAKING FRIENDS

How friends can support & help us by being there when we really need them

THE IMPACT OF ADULT ISSUES, STRUGGLES AND PRESSURES ON CHILDREN

A glimpse into different contemporary family situations & the realities children are dealing with growing up in today's fast-paced world. e.g. problems related to parental unemployment, divorce, single parenting, hardship around money issues, and instability at home

THE UPHEAVAL OF MOVING HOUSE & THE DISRUPTION CAUSED BY FREQUENT MOVING

Changing schools & losing friends / The challenges of establishing roots in a new community
The danger of slipping through the cracks in the education system when constantly changing schools