



FilmEd Classroom
**Films to Engage Students in
Meaningful Conversation**

FILM GUIDE

GRAB MY HAND: A LETTER TO MY DAD

GRADES 6-8

Camrus Johnson & Pedro Piccinini | United States

ANIMATED SHORT FILM | CREATIVE NONFICTION | 5:08 MINUTES | 2019

Subtheme: Empathy, Connecting, Grief and Loss

PART III

THE BIGGER CONVERSATION

EXPAND CONVERSATIONS AND CONNECT TO SUBTHEMES

SUPERHEROES AND REPRESENTATION

Continue your conversation about superheroes with students and consider the role race, gender, and (dis)abilities play in the film and in other media.

- How do the characters in the film challenge the way masculinity is represented in society? In the media?
- How does the story portray Black masculinity differently from most mainstream media? How does the father in the film express his emotions with others? How does he deal with his sadness?

- Why is it important for characters, including superheroes, to be diverse? What stereotypes does the film challenge or break with?
- Write about yourself as a superhero. Be as detailed as possible. Represent your superhero self through costume, gear, and symbol. What would your power(s) be? How would you help your community? Draw a scene to represent this. Add a description of your sidekick. What would their power(s) be? How would they support you? Share and compare superheroes or sidekicks with someone else. How can your superhero selves or sidekicks be on the same side? How would you work together for the greater good?

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

- Camrus Johnson wrote and directed this film as a gift to his grieving father. Discuss the word *grief* in connection to feelings of sadness.
- What are reasons that people may feel or experience grief?
- What are some emotions a person may experience with grief and loss? What feelings and changes in behavior might arise for those grieving? Explain the importance of people of all ages being able to openly discuss their feelings around loss.
- Share ways people can cope with grief. Ask students: How might you express yourself when you feel sad? What are some things you do to feel better when you are sad or miss someone? What advice would you give Camrus's dad?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

- Encourage students to think about small moments or rituals they share with family or friends. In pairs, have them discuss the ways they check in with loved ones.
- How would you stay connected if the way you connect now was no longer an option?
- Did you learn anything about connecting with others from the film **GRAB MY HAND: A LETTER TO MY DAD?**
- If you could write a letter to a loved one or memorialize someone, who would it be and what would you say?
- Allow space in your conversation for whatever emotions and thoughts come up. Consider responding with something similar to: *"It's okay that you're feeling this way. I'm*

so glad you shared them with me. What do you think would be most helpful at this moment?"

ART & LETTER WRITING

- Explore the themes in the film further with works of art such as Lee Mengwei's [The Letter Writing Project](#), which invites viewers to write letters they had always meant to write, but never did.

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