



Bella

Lions Gate, 2006, Rated A-II and PG-13

SUGGESTED USE: Activity

MATERIALS: This film clip requires just your basic setup, plus an index card and a pen or pencil for each young person.

THEMES: Moral Decision Making, Friendship, Pregnancy, Sanctity of Life

LENGTH OF CLIP: 05:16



Begin: Chapter 6, 0:25:18 Begin as Nina and José enter the restaurant.



End: 0:30:34 End as Nina is held by José and begins to cry.

Setting the Scene

Tied for second place with *Juno* on the USCCB's top-ten list of movies of 2007, *Bella* is the story of José, a former soccer player, whose life takes an unexpected turn when he is kind to his coworker Nina. Nina is pregnant, and because she has been sick a few times (and late on the morning the scene takes place), she is fired from her waitressing job by Manny, José's brother. José spends the day talking to Nina, welcomes her into his home, and makes a decision that changes the lives of many. *Bella* is one of those movies you can watch with a youth group or class and unpack the lessons of the film for days.

Suggested Process



Show Clip



Discussion Questions

- How many reasons does Nina give for not wanting to keep the baby? Discuss the validity of her reasons.
- What does José mean when he challenges Nina, telling her that she is not alone?
- Nina said the father of the child uses the phrase "getting it taken care of" to describe an abortion. Do you think Nina is right in describing the attitude of men toward unplanned pregnancies? Why?
- Discuss the way José talks to Nina. Does he ask a lot of questions? Does he judge her decision to end the pregnancy? What is it about his reaction and the way he treats Nina that earns him the right to be heard in the end?



Activity

Distribute an index card and a pen or pencil to each young person and then present the following directions:

- Imagine you are José. What do you whisper in Nina's ear? What do you think José says to her? Do you think it makes her change her mind? Use your index cards to write down your end of the conversation in the clinic. When everyone has finished, we will share our ideas with one another.

It is important that you not tell the young people what happens in the rest of the story if the activity is to have significant meaning. Allow the participants to share their answers, and then offer a prayer of thanksgiving for God's great gift of life.



Variation

Avoid conversations about premarital sex or debates about abortion. Instead use this scene as an opportunity to discuss the ways we react when someone does or says something we disagree with. Are we judgmental, or do we listen compassionately like José in this scene? How does the way we react to others affect our own credibility?



Final Thought

In the end, Nina keeps the baby and names her Bella. Bella is adopted by José and meets her mother in the final scene of the film, when the young girl is five or six. In his quiet way, José has changed the lives of many people. Because he did not judge Nina, she trusted him. Because he listened to Nina, she listened to him. How many times do we hear someone profess a belief or make a statement we find objectionable? Do we listen and respect the other person, or do we talk over her or him, struggling to make our own position heard? José shows us that in some cases, such behaviors can be a matter of life and death.