

Synopsis of Artcirq · (Circus School) DVD

by Jayson Kunnuk

- Working together to make a difference in life
- Create youth activities, prevent despair and suicide
- **Artcirq** being an eye-opening example for other people
- Enjoying life while camping
- Performing choreography with a twist
- Storytelling with theatre and songs

Notes:



Artcirq · (Circus School)

Documentary · 51 minutes

Content Areas

Social Studies, Language Arts

Objective

Prior to watching **Artcirq (Circus School)**, students will discuss some of the social problems plaguing the youth of Igloolik and other communities in Nunavut, as well as steps being taken to combat these issues. Following the film, students will write about something at which they are skilled, that makes them feel good about themselves, and share it with the rest of the class.

Materials

- **Artcirq (Circus School)** DVD
- Follow-up Assignment – 1 per student
- Map of Nunavut – 1 per student

Activity

- 1 Ask students to think about any teenagers they know (siblings, friends, cousins, etc). What kinds of problems do teenagers today face? List ideas on board.
- 2 Explain that young people in Nunavut face some of the same difficulties as the teenagers with which students are familiar. However, some of their problems are more serious. Communities face poverty, inadequate housing, high substance abuse, and unemployment. Most of the parents of today's teenagers were sent away from the community as children and attended residential schools. The schools, run by various churches, were established to assure assimilation of the Inuit into white culture. As a result of being sent away, many of today's parents didn't learn the necessary skills for raising a family, which would have been learned had they grown up within the community.

Artcirq · (Circus School)

- 3 Because of these factors, the situation can seem desperate for young people growing up in Nunavut. Inuit youth have a higher suicide rate than other young people in Canada.
- 4 Remind students that the territory of Nunavut, “Our Land” in Inuktitut, was established in April of 1999. This example of self-government by native people is a cause for celebration among the Inuit. They now have a government that reflects their lives and culture. The establishment of Nunavut is one step toward combating the social problems facing the Inuit today.
- 5 Explain that several Inuit organizations, including the National Inuit Youth Council, feel that one solution is helping young people find ways of enjoying life. They are encouraging communities to offer youth opportunities to express themselves through music, art and video making.



- 6 Refer students to the map of Nunavut or give each student their own copy. Have students locate Igloolik. Remind them that Igloolik is the home of Igloolik Isuma Productions, makers of *Atanarjuat – The Fast Runner*, the first major motion picture filmed completely in Inuktitut.
- 7 Explain that in 2000 and 2001, a group of students from Montréal’s National Circus School visited Igloolik to offer circus training to the youth in town. Their goal was to work with local youth and produce a circus performance combining Inuit traditions with classic elements of the Big Top. This performance would offer the young people an opportunity to learn something new and challenging, as well as give them and the rest of the community something of which to be proud.

Artcirq · (Circus School)

- 8 Explain that ***Artcirq (Circus School)***, the film students are about to see, is a documentary about this process, culminating in the actual performance by the circus students and young people of Igloolik.
- 9 As with the other films, ***Artcirq (Circus School)*** has English subtitles, and Inuktitut is spoken. Decide if students will read subtitles aloud, to themselves, or if the teacher will be responsible. Instruct students to pay close attention to the elements of the Inuit culture featured in the performance and encourage them to take notes.

Evaluation

- 1 Following the film, ask students for their reaction to the film. Did it look like fun? Was the goal of the circus students from Montréal accomplished? What other kinds of programs could communities have that would make young people feel good about themselves?



Artcirq · (Circus School)

- 2 Place students in small groups and have them share their lists regarding elements of the Inuit culture featured in the performance. After a few minutes, ask groups to share their lists and write on the board. Lists should include hunting, clothing, music, language, animals, the land, etc. Discuss how by being included in the design of the show, and making the Inuit culture a central theme throughout, the young people of Igloolik could feel a sense of ownership in the final product.
- 3 Ask students to think about something at which they are talented, that makes them feel good about themselves. Have volunteers share ideas and list them on the board. Pass out assignment and explain that students are going to choose something in which they feel they are skilled (sports, math, knitting, hopscotch, climbing, swimming, taking care of siblings, etc.). They are to describe the activity, as well as a second activity they'd like to learn. (Optional homework assignment)
- 4 Once students have completed the assignment, have them share their essays either as a full class or in small groups.



Follow-up Assignment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Everybody is good at something. Some people excel in public, like in school or at sports, and some people are skilled at private activities, such as reading, drawing, taking care of siblings, helping around the house, collecting things, etc. Think about a unique talent you possess. Describe the talent including what it is, when you learned it and how it makes you feel. Then, think of something you'd like to learn and describe how you can accomplish this goal.

What is your talent?

When did you learn it?

Artcirq · (Circus School)

Follow-up Assignment

How does this talent make you feel?

What new talent would you like to learn?

How will you accomplish this goal?

Artcirq · (Circus School)

Follow-up Assignment

Below, draw a picture of yourself participating in either the activity in which you are skilled or the one you'd like to learn.

