

## “Father, Son: America’s Desperate Voyage”

### Teacher Kit Materials

- Suggested pre-activities before students view the film
- “Talking Points” to promote interactive learning during the movie
- Post-film materials and activities, including debates, essay questions, group activities and individual assignments
- Internet resources to provide related assistance for lesson implementation and student research

**for comments,  
questions or curriculum  
support, contact us :**

**1.800.253.0413**

**info@toughtopics.com**

### Why use the movie in your classroom?

Lee Stanley, co-producer of the 2006 movie “Gridiron Gang”, brings this timeless documentary about fathers and their sons. Lost in a wave of heartache and blame three boys and three fathers who were separated by the courts, and unable to hear each other’s lonely cries for help, are reunited on board Lee’s sailboat. Despite the close quarters they have the room to change their minds and their lives. Because of the length of the film, the Talking Points are broken up into three parts. Teachers can use the movie to discuss parent/teen relationships, forgiveness and even group problem solving and teamwork. Use this kit to suit learning goals.

### Before you show the movie...

- Conduct a Lifeboat team-building exercise, as explained at the “Lifeboat Activity” web page in the Teacher and Student Resources section of this kit. The goal of the activity is to get all of your team players onto the lifeboat by helping balance and support each other. Impress upon the participants how important cooperating and concentrating together will be in this game. They will be working closely together. Pushing or playing will keep them from success. For discussion and reflection about the activity, adapt the activity around the parent/child relationship and/or the family unit.
- Discuss the definition of a juvenile delinquent. Present statistics about juvenile delinquents in the community, state and/or nationally.
- Discuss students’ concerns about communicating with their parents. Then, introduce “Father, Son”.

### During the movie...

- Select “Play With Talking Points” on the DVD to effectively use the “Talking Points” discussion guide and handout.
- Use the “Talking Points” handout as a guide for an instructor-facilitated class discussion during the film.
- Print the “Talking Points” handout if you wish students to take notes during the discussion and film viewing.

### tough topics is easy to use...

#### Step 1

Complete online registration at ToughTopics.com

#### Step 2

Use the web site or FAX to schedule film showings in your classroom

#### Step 3

Receive film prior to scheduled date, and show as many times as you need

#### Step 4

Return film and showings report in the postage-paid mailer

#### Step 5

Repeat steps 2 through 4 often... it’s free!

## talking points

## “father, son”

### part 1

**1** What do these boys have in common? Why do they need their fathers?

**2** We're about to meet the boys' fathers. What do you expect the fathers to be like? How do you think the boys might be feeling?

**3** What do the fathers have in common? What do you think is going through their minds?

### part 2

**4** What do you think it's going to take for reconciliation between Casey and his father Terry?

**5** Is there a problem between you and your parents because of a generation gap? Why? How does this generation gap make you feel about your parents?

**6** It seems the fathers and sons are appreciating the time they have with each other. Why is the father/son or parent/child relationship so important?

**7** Do you think most parents want to be good parents? What might prevent some parents from succeeding at good parenting? Is it too late for these fathers and sons?

**8** Gonzolo is the first to talk to his son. What things did he say and how did he act towards his son that seemed healing for the relationship? Do you think it was difficult for Gonzolo to talk to his son?

### part 3

**9** “We have to have forgiveness and communicate...it's important for a child to have a father and mother and family unit.” Do you agree with this statement? What if it's not possible for a child to have both a father and mother in their lives?

**10** How do you think respect and trust developed between Casey and Terry?

## Ending Qs

- **Floyd ends up getting murdered after the making of this film. Gonzolo survived an accident with severe injuries. How does knowing this make you feel about the film and the story it presents?**
- **Stuart said the biggest problem in the relationship between him and his father was his step mother and her racism. What do you think about this?**

## Debate Topics

- True or False? Parents and Teens are equally responsible for the health of their relationship.
- Casey's dad makes the point that there is no "Parent University". Should all parents be required to receive parental training?

## Essay Questions

- Write a long letter to one of your parents in regards to the health of your relationship. Use this letter to communicate all your feelings about your relationship. What do you and your parent or guardian have in common? What do you appreciate and not appreciate about the relationship you have? In your letter, present a strong introduction, a thesis (the reason for your letter) and support paragraphs about the problems and successes in your relationship. Offer solutions to problems you present.
- Many adults argue that technology, such as cell phones and the Internet, creates a barrier or disconnect between parents and teens. Write a persuasive essay either refuting or supporting this argument. But first, check out the blog post "Texting Improves the Parent-Teen Relationship".
- Write a personal essay about the impact an adult has had on your life.

## Group Projects & Individual Assignments

- **Radio Interview:** Listen to some of the stories at StoryCorps.net. Then, with the help of your dad, your mom or another care-giver, create a podcast or radio recording in which you take turns interviewing each other about your struggles communicating and/or your successes in the parent/child communication process. Or, maybe you prefer interviewing each other about something else - about something that happened in the past or anything that you might be curious about. Then, write a short reflection (in written form or recorded with the interview) about how the experience of interviewing your parent might help your communication.
- **Teen/Parent Retreat:** As a class, collaborate together with school counselors to create and implement a Teen and Parent Day or weekend retreat in which students and their parents work together on their communication. In retreat or workshop style, be sure to include activities such as team work, role-playing, journal writing and discussion. Invite school counselors and/or community experts to facilitate at the event.
- **How-to Manual:** In a small group, write a manual for teens and parents about communicating and problem solving; publish the work via web site or printed brochure. Promote the manual to be available to students and parents at your school.
- **Speaker:** Invite a juvenile detention officer or social worker and/or former juvenile delinquent to come and speak to your class about parent/teen relationships. Have questions ready. Invite your school newspaper editors, student council members, school counselors and administrators to join the presentation. Write a newspaper article or reflection essay about the event.
- **Analysis Paper:** Watch other films about fathers and sons, i.e. "Big Fish", "Kite Runner", and/or read books about fathers and sons, i.e. "Gilead", "The Chosen". Write an analysis of fathers and sons using examples from the world around you, your experiences, the film "Father, Son" as well as at least one other movie and/or book.

## Teacher & Student Resources

### Lifeboat Group Activity

[http://slincs.coe.utk.edu/gtelab/learning\\_activities/20evej.html](http://slincs.coe.utk.edu/gtelab/learning_activities/20evej.html)

### About Juvenile Delinquents

<http://www.aboutjuviledelinquents.com/>

### Office of Juvenile Justice

<http://www.ojdp.ncjrs.org/>

### Texting Improves the Parent-Teen Relationship (article/blog)

<http://www.geeksugar.com/1556485>

### Talking to Your Parents - or other adults

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/families/talk\\_to\\_parents.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/talk_to_parents.html)

### Story Corps

<http://www.storycorps.net/>

### Communication Tips for Parents & Teens

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=52200>

**For updated links,  
revised lesson plans  
and to  
schedule more  
showings, visit  
[toughtopics.com](http://toughtopics.com)**

"Father, Son" Teacher Kit  
© 2008 Tough Topics  
Last Revised: April 2008