Teachers’ Guide to
KHALIL GIBRAN’S THE PROPHET

Screening 9:45am Wednesday, Feb. 17 at Evergreen Theatre

About the Film

BACKGROUND:
Spearheaded by Salma Hayek and written and directed by Roger Allers (The Lion King), Kahlil Gibran’s The Prophet is a story based on the worldwide bestselling book.

The Prophet, by celebrated Lebanese-American author Kahlil Gibran, is among the most popular volumes of poetry ever written, selling over 100 million copies in forty languages since its publication in 1923. Gibran’s timeless verses have been given enchanting new form in this painterly cinematic adventure about freedom and the power of human expression. The film intersperses Gibran’s elegant poetry within sequences by a host of award-winning animators from around the world. Featuring music from Damien Rice, Glen Hansard, Gabriel Yared, and Yo-Yo Ma.

SYNOPSIS:
Set in a Mediterranean seaside village, Kamila (Salma Hayek) cleans house for exiled artist and poet Mustafa (Liam Neeson), but the more difficult job is keeping her free-spirited young daughter, Almitra (Quvenzhané Wallis), out of trouble. The three embark on a journey meant to end with Mustafa’s return home – but first they must evade the authorities who fear that the truth in his words will incite rebellion.

THEMES: Finding your voice, poetry, love, community, speaking out against injustice, freedom
Lesson Ideas After Seeing the Film

The following ideas were adapted for younger grades from *Journeys in Film*; detailed lesson plans for higher grades are available by contacting Michelle@prfilmfestival.ca.

After students have watched the film, give them some time to express their reactions to the animation and the story line.

Harness Inspiration By Making Art
In this simple exercise, encourage students to make their own work of 2-dimensional art inspired by seeing the film. Using whatever medium made available, students make a picture to express feelings or ideas they feel when thinking about the movie, or a favourite scene they remember. You may wish to provide background music, or allow the students to work in pairs.

Illustrate a Poem
Explain that the film is based on the work of a poet, Kahlil Gibran, who wrote a book called *The Prophet*. Tell students that Gibran began his career as a visual artist and that the purpose of today’s class is to explore the connection between words and pictures. Both can be used to express feelings, ideas, and messages to share.

Teachers choose a poem from the book *The Prophet* to illustrate. (Alternatively, they could choose a poem from another author that sparks an emotional response from them, or even have students write one themselves.)

*Colou:* Consider the use of colours as a *statement*: using mostly one colour with one spot of a second colour for focus; warm (yellow, red, and orange) vs. cool (blue, green, and purple) to show seasons, *emotions*, high and low contrast. Use the colours that you think will work best with your idea.

Use sketch paper and pencil to create a rough draft of your idea. Once you are satisfied with your sketch, start to create the final piece. When your work is finished, sign and date it on the front bottom right. This shows pride in your work and will give you a benchmark for the future; you can look back to see where you were as an artist at this time.


*Note on Copyright:* The book is in the public domain in Canada.
Explore the Idea of Freedom with Words and Pictures

Have students create an original work of art using birds to represent their new understandings of freedom. The artwork can contain both images and words that indicate each student’s new understanding of freedom, based on the movie with its words of poetry.

Have students write a sentence or more explaining the choices that they made in creating their art project.

Have students present and display their artwork in class.

Create a Metaphor

Direct students to write down 10 things that make them happy, to complete the starter sentence “Happiness is....”

Examples should be personalized, concrete, and specific, using as much detail as possible. Avoid using the words “like” or “as.”

Example: Happiness is freshly baked chocolate chip cookies.

Once they have their list, have a few students share their ideas.

Tell students that the sentences they wrote contain metaphors, which compare one object, action, or emotion with another. (If students write “Happiness is like,” they will need to remove the “like” as they have now turned their phrase into a simile. You could tell students that a comparison between two things using like or as is called a simile.)

Point out to students that a metaphor is meant to help explain things that might be otherwise difficult to describe. By specifying and illustrating an emotion (like happiness), this allows for people to personally connect and better understand the idea being presented.

Additional Resources

http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/kahlil-gibran Biography of Kahlil Gibran and a list of his writings
http://leb.net/gibran/ A website on Gibran’s writings, life, and art
http://www.gibrankhalilgibran.org/PhotoGallery/ A set of slides of Gibran’s art works in the Gibran Museum in Lebanon
http://gibrankgibran.org/eng/catalogo/archivo-plastico/ A catalogue of Gibrán holdings in the Soumaya Museum, Mexico City, Mexico