

Radio

Reviewer: Paul Born

If you want to watch a movie that looks at the benefits of community and inclusion Radio fits the bill. I loved this movie as did my boys aged 7 and 12.

The movie, based on a true story, takes place in 1976 South Carolina, in a community where high school football is very serious business. This is an unusually close-knit community that seems to use a barbershop in place of a local city hall to make community decisions.

Cuba Gooding, Jr. plays Radio, described by his mother as "just like everyone else, but a little slower." He pushes a shopping cart around and is clearly portrayed as an outcast early in the movie – misunderstood and, out of ignorance, feared. When students of the local high school football team hurt him, the coach (Ed Harris) invites Radio to come watch the practice. After several months of "friendship building", the coach convinces Radio to help the team out and soon he is speaking and interacting with people. The coach invites him to attend school and he is accepted by the students transforming lives wherever he goes. The story continues and unfolds into a wonderful transformation of a community that both accepts and rejects Radio until in one final great scene everything changes. For those watching this on DVD there are some great clips of the real life Radio and his personal story – almost as good as the movie!



This is a great story of community and inclusion. A small town where conformity is standard is transformed when its inhabitants open their hearts and discover that rather than they teaching and accepting Radio, he, with his ever open spirit, is actually teaching and loving them. There is a reciprocal energy that emerges. The story can be used to share lessons on inclusion in community and shows the power of how just one person's acceptance can make a huge difference.

Families who see this movie can talk about people with disabilities or others that are different and how they are treated in community. They can also talk about why Radio was so important to Coach Jones, and how sometimes, if we cannot correct a mistake we make at the time, we could find a way to use what we have learned to prevent a future mistake.

Community groups can use the movie as a conversation catalyst. Watch the movie together and then host a community café to talk about inclusion and community.

Ratings:

- A great show: 8
- Family Friendly: 9
- About Community: 8

Related links:

- Review for families: <http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&cf=parentsguide&id=1808439408>
- Movie webpage: <http://www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/radio/index.html>