

# WHITEWASH

## WHITEWASH

A Michael Sporn Production

Themes: Families, Feelings, Multiculturalism, Racism

Grade Level: K - Adult

Running Time: 20 minutes

## SUMMARY

One day, when Helene Angel walked home from school with her older brother, she was attacked by a racist gang and spray painted white. The effect on her and the rest of her family was devastating. The normally boisterous and happy young girl suddenly locked herself in her room and refused to return to school. Her brother blamed himself for not having successfully defended his sister. Media coverage was overwhelming, completely disrupting the small family. Finally their grandmother was able to put the terrible crime in perspective, and when Helene's entire class showed up at her door one morning so they could all walk to school together, she finally gathered the courage to resume her life. A magnificently animated story, based on a true 1992 incident, with the voices of Ruby Dee and Linda Lavin.

## OBJECTIVES

After viewing the audience will be able to:

- ¥ Describe the crime perpetrated against Helene and the effect it had on her and her family.
- ¥ Relate the events in the story to the real life incident, and to other hate crimes.

¥ Describe how crimes like this devastate the victim, the victim's family, and society at large.

¥ Talk about serious issues such as racism and relate personal feelings and experiences to them.

¥ Take a personal stance against racism and other hateful attitudes.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask if anyone in the audience has been the victim of a crime. How did it make them feel? What effect did it have on them?

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use these discussion topics, activities, and questions to review the program material.

¥ What is racism? What are hate crimes?

¥ Why was Helene attacked? Why do you think hate crimes like this exist?

¥ What are the perpetrators of hate crimes saying about themselves and their victims?

¥ What does Helene's brother think of the incident? Why do you think he was at first more interested in whether or not he was on TV than the crime's effect on his sister?

¥ How is Helene's grandmother able to cheer her up and put the crime in perspective?

¥ What finally makes Helene courageous enough to resume her normal life?

¥ What does the incident in the video tell about the society in which we live?

¥ Research the real life story which took place in the Bronx, NY in 1992, and relate it to the version portrayed.

¥ Research other hate crimes and find out how common they are. Do they represent society at large or do relatively few incidents given intense media coverage make society seem worse than it is?

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