



Of Boys and Men
(USA 2007, 90 minutes)
Director: Carl Seaton

Synopsis

A drama set on the West side of Chicago *Of Boys and Men* is about the journey of a family after a husband loses his wife in a fatal accident and has to raise his three children on his own. Robert Townsend stars as the patriarch of the family, devastated when his wife (played by Angela Basset) is killed in a senseless auto accident. Reeling with grief, each family member must find courage and vision to carry on, ultimately eager to do the mother proud. The story is seen through the eyes of the youngest son, who discovers through the loss of his mother what it means to be a man.

Themes Psychological Drama, Family Relationships and the Single Parent Family, Goals, Community, Coming of Age

Discussion Ideas

According to a paper by UC's Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies "teenagers living in non-intact families are on average less likely to graduate from high school and less likely to attend college. They also are more likely to use alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana and are more likely to initiate sexual activity at a younger age."

What are your thoughts regarding this study? What are some of the problems facing single parent families today? What are some of the resources available to these families?

Classroom Exercise

Write a letter to someone in your family. You may wish to give them the letter or you may decide not to. In the letter write about what it is that you appreciate about them. Be specific, if it's something they have helped you with, let them know. Maybe it's just for being there when you need advice or reassurance.

In the same letter, write a paragraph or two regarding changes that you would like to see as well. They may be changes in your relationship or changes in how the family works together as a whole. Choose changes that are realistic and significant.

Discussion After the Film

- Why is there tension between Holden and his eldest son? What does this say about their family? What does it say about manhood and maturity?
- How does the setting impact your understanding of the movie? Would the movie have the same meaning for you if it was set somewhere other than the Westside of Chicago?
- Did you recognize anyone you may know or knew in the characters?
- What characters do you sympathize with? Why?
- Why do you think the writer of this film choose to have the mother die instead of the father?
- Why do you think the director chose the title *Of Boys and Men*?