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October sky movie science worksheet

TOPICS — Space research; U.S./1945-1991 & West Virginia; Science technology; SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING — Parenthood; Father/son; mother/son; Break out; Friendship; MORAL-ETHICAL EMPHASIS — Responsibility; Care. AGE: 10+; MPAA rating — PG for language, short teen sensuality and alcohol consumption, and for some thematic elements; Drama; 1999; 108 minutes; Color. Available from Amazon.com. Inspired by the launch of Sputnik (October 1957), a high school student in a coal town in West Virginia decides to build his own rockets. Despite his father's initial resistance, Homer and his outsider friends remain and succeed. They have the support of their science teacher and Homer's mother, who is determined that her son will not end up as a miner. Despite all the adversity, the boys win the national science fair with an entry that describes their rockets. All the boys go to college, something unusual in coal country at the time. Homer becomes an engineer at NASA. October Sky is a charming story and the success of the boys is inspiring. The film is from an autobiographical novel by Homer H. Hickam with the original title Rocket Boys. The book was republished under the same name as the film. October 4, 1957 - Sputnik destroys THE U.S. complacency Selected Awards: None. Starring: Jake Gyllenhaal, Chris Cooper, Laura Dern, Chris Owen. Directed by Joe Johnston. This film can be used to illustrate an important event in American history, the launch of the first space satellite by Soviet Russia. It can arouse or increase interest in space sciences, engineering or mathematics. It can inspire children to work hard to fulfill their dreams. October Sky shows the rewards of working on a goal against daunting odds. The film shows the positive influence that teachers can have on their students, a mother's support for their child's dreams, a son's love for their father and his need for his father's consent, and the value of people who are different from most of us. The fact that the film is based on a true story reinforces these lessons. Small. The film contains mild profanity, which is used in stressful situations. The film changes the true story in many ways. See discussion below. Make sure your child understands that this is a true story in almost every way. Check the points that were made in Before Watching the Movie. When the movie is over, check with your child what is true and what is not true. See After Watching the Movie. When your child is ready to book the get it for him or her from the library. It's better than the movie. The film teaches important lessons in social-emotional learning. It shows that a child with a dream can go far beyond the expectations of the family. This concept is emphasized in the film and parents can reinforce it by commenting on the topic or giving examples of people who are known to the child who with their lives, which were much different than expected of them. The film also highlights the concept that children can prevail against frightening odds. A comment from parents about how great it was that these children did not give up will help to emphasize this idea. In addition, the film tells us that excellence is usually the result of community work, or at least comes with the help of many people, as was the case in this case. Parents can investigate this problem by asking their child and helping them answer the question of quick discussion. See also the questions on social-emotional learning discussions and on the moral-ethical focus issues. The following will greatly improve the understanding and appreciation of a child for this film: from 1946 to 1991, the US was locked in a Cold War with Russian communism. The Soviets claimed that communism was the wave of the future and would bury capitalism, democracy, and the United States. Russia and communism posed a serious threat to the US and Western democracies. In the 1950s, the United States believed that its technology was the best in the world. We had more cars than any other country in the world. We had the best TVs, refrigerators, turntables and a variety of other consumer goods. At that time, U.S. factories were building these products. Japan was still recovering from World War II, and China was still undeveloped. We were first with the atomic bomb and first with the hydrogen bomb. Our planes and jet fighters were the best in the world. We thought our military equipment was better than that of the Russians. The Americans consoled themselves in the belief that we had the best scientists and engineers who ever lived. The belief in America's technical superiority changed in 1958. Sputnik was the first man-made satellite to orbit the Earth. It was not sent by the Americans, but by the Russians. The Americans looked up to see a communist star crossing the sky and realized that our technology in the important arena of space was inferior to that of the Russians. People were worried about what would happen if the Russians put an atomic bomb on one of their satellites. This uncertainty deepened when the first US efforts to orbit a satellite failed miserably. Rockets exploded on the launch pads or crashed shortly after takeoff. All of this happened live on global television. It was more than embarrassing. It was terrifying. For years, the Soviets led the space race and lifted greater payloads into space than USA, including the first animal in space and the first human in space. All this happened in one of the most suspicious and competitive periods of the Cold War. The launch of Sputnik shook the United States to its roots. October Sky shows a boy's reaction to this event. The story that this film tells is pretty true. The film is set in a coal town in the west Coal towns existed exclusively for coal mining. Everything in the city was owned by the coal company: the shops, the church, the schools and the houses where the miners lived. When a miner was unable to act and could no longer work, his family was forced to move out of their own house, which meant leaving the city. Often, when the father was injured, the children had to work in the mines to pay the rent and remain entitled to live in company-owned apartments. When a miner died in the mines, his family had a very short time (usually two weeks) to move. The coal company did not want the gloomy memories of the mine's dangers to be there for too long. Coalwood, where Homer lived, was one of the better corporate cities, but it was still subject to harsh practices by mine owners. In a mine, coal dust pollutes the air and literally covers everything. A common disease among miners is black lung disease (pneumoconiosis), which is caused by the inhalation of coal dust. Homer's father suffered from the disease. The mine owners refused to compensate the miners for this occupational hazard, so the federal government stepped in and set up a health and worker compensation plan for the miners. December 6, 1957: Two seconds after takeoff, Vanguard was four meters from the pad. The push stopped, it crumpled and exploded. It was very unusual for all boys from Homer's hometown to go to college, except on a sports scholarship. Each of the Rocket Boys graduated from college, and Homer Hickam fulfilled his dream by becoming an engineer for NASA. The U.S. eventually moved to the Russians in the space race and was victorious in the Cold War. Russia abandoned communism in 1991 and adopted a capitalist model. It is no longer a superpower that competes with US space exploration, is now a cooperative international effort. The Russians make money by demanding millions of dollars for very rich people (often Americans) to travel into space in a Russian space capsule. Homer Hickam's book, The Rocket Boys, is better than the film and contains a number of wonderful vignettes that are not in the film. For example, when the boys built more complex rockets, Homer realized that they needed to learn calculus to take the next steps in rocket design. Homer and the science teacher convinced the headmaster of the high school to offer a new course of study in calculus. Enrollment was limited to six people, the exact number of boys involved in the effort to build the missiles. Nobody expected anyone else to attend the school for class would sign up. But the girl who had Homer with a damper also signed up, and since Homer's grades in math were the worst of all applicants, he was excluded from the class. The captain at that time wasn't sure if the Rocket Boys were really good and called them Bombers, a nod to their first effort that made the Homer's mother fence

blown up. The principal would not increase enrollment in the class by one person so That Homer could take over it. At first Homer felt that his dreams of a career in rocket art were over, but in the depths of his depression he found a calculus text on the bookshelf at home. There were notes in the book in his father's handwriting that showed that his father, who had never gone to college but was called upon to supervise engineers, had taught himself calculus. Homer began to study the text and the other members of the club helped him. Homer learned calculus without the class, to his own astonishment and that of his teachers and the headmaster. The film does not present a sympathetic view of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW) locally in Coalwood. This is a departure from the book. While Homer's father was the manager of the mine and a company man through and through, and while he believed that the reasons for the strike were trivial, it is not clear that he was right. In addition, the Union men supported the Rocket Boys long before Homer's father did, and they were instrumental in supporting the company when it wanted to shut down the boys' test shooting range (it was on a massive area of tails from the mine). Overall, UMW has made an important positive contribution to US history, forcing coal operators to make the mines safer and pay a living wage. For a film that shows some of the difficulties, the miners had to organize their union and gain recognition from the mine owners, see *Matewan*. Also in the book, not in the film, is a clear explanation of how the Rocket Boys got the precision jets needed to fly their rockets. After Homer's father sent Mr. Bikovsky (the first machinist who helped the Rocket Boys) to the mine as punishment, the city scared behind them. Homer then persuaded the supervisor of another mine machine workshop to make the nozzles, and Homer's father allowed the use of company time and materials. A fundamental truth illuminated by this story is that people not only need to be engaged and hard-working, but often also need the support of their communities to accomplish amazing achievements. In addition, they must seek and receive this help. This is especially true for today's complex environment. The order in which Homer leaves high school and works in the mine is fictitious, but it sounds true from an earlier era when the mine owners did not grant benefits to miners or their families. (The real Homer Hickam did in the summer after his College year worked in the mine, but he was not forced to take over the job.) Homer Hickam had that to say about the movie and this incident: It was great fun to see Rocket Boys become the movie *October Sky*. Of course I thought they should have filmed it exactly as I wrote it in my book, but has its ways, and they are generally not the same as book authors. But only good things came out of it, I would have to say, even if I didn't like the fact that the film showed me that I was finishing high school. I would never have left school. My parents would have lived in a tree before they ever let it happen! But so many people around the world have been inspired by the film. Many astronauts even watch it at night before climbing aboard the shuttle. Well, that's something very special! [Quote from Bookwire speaks to Homer Hickam.] The black machinist tells Homer that he flew with the Red Tails. This is a nod to the Red Tailed Angels of the African-American 332nd Fighter Group. During World War II, the 332nd was the only group of fighters that never lost a bomber to enemy aircraft, destroying the prejudice that blacks could not fly modern fighters. See Learning Guide to The Tuskegee Airmen. There are two main methods of coal mining. Striped coal near the surface is the most economical, but also the most polluting. Power equipment (power shovels or towing lines) removes the earth and the rock to expose the coal. The coal is then broken up and loaded onto trucks or railway wagons. If the coal is not near the surface, a method called underground or deep mining is used. A shaft is dug at the position of the coal seam, either vertically, on a slope or, if the coal is in a mountain, horizontally. The coal is cut with machines or controlled explosions. The key to deep mining is to control cave swells, disperse gas, especially methane and carbon dioxide, and suppress coal dust. Columns made of coal are left to support the roof. Steel beams are placed over the roof to prevent the rock from falling on the miners. In some mines, the roof behind the coal wall may collapse as the face moves forward along the seam. Huge fans and complicated ventilation systems are used to pull out the gases and bring clean air. Coal dust is highly combustible and must be strictly controlled. Limestone dust is sprayed into the mine to keep coal dust at bay. The work in the deep mines is automated as much as possible. Continuous mining machines combine the individual steps of cutting, drilling, blasting and loading the coal at rates of up to 10.8 tons of coal per minute. The coal is then brought to the surface by electric trolley, where it is taken to treatment plants. There it is screened, washed, size sorted and crushed before shipping. 1. See discussion questions about use with any film that is a work of fiction. 2. Would people in the early U.S. space program have been deterred by their many failures in rocket launch? Suggested response: Daniel S. Goldin, former administrator of NASA, said that you should never be deterred by announcements, but If you learned from your mistakes, they would be the building blocks for later success. Address to the final class of the Engineering School of the University of California, Berkeley. 3. What would have happened to Homer's family if no one had worked in the mine, even though his father was still recovering from injuries he had suffered to save the lives of other miners? Suggested answer: If no one in the family worked at the mine, the family would have been driven out of their homes by the coal company. This was true even if the miner was still recovering from the injuries he had suffered in a mine accident. (We don't know if the mine owners applied the same standard to management staff as Homer's father. But it applied to the miners, the vast majority of the company's employees.) If a miner died or was too badly injured to work, the mine owners would expel the family. This meant forcing them to leave the city, as the mining company owned everything in the city. The family would normally have to move within a few weeks of the miner's injury or death. The company didn't want gloomy memories to stay around and haunt the other miners. 4. What have the Rocket Boys proven by their success? Suggested answer: That you can achieve great things by putting your mind on it. Success and success can come from very unlikely places and you have to keep an open mind about people. 1. Everyone in Homer's family wanted to get out of Coalwood, except his father. (Remember the mural the mother painted throughout the film.) How did each family member deal with this desire? Suggested answer: The mother has submitted. The brother excelled in football, a way to get approved and accepted by the community. Homer went his own way. 2. Check Homer's father's feelings about his son changing as the movie progresses. Describe how Homer's father felt about his youngest son at each of the following points in the film: (a) when Homer begins to experiment with rockets; after Homer had gone to work in the mine; b) when Homer leaves the mine; and (c) at the end of the film. [When students respond, ask them to illustrate their point of view directly with the film.] 3. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of Homer's father as a parent. Suggested answer: The weakness is that Homer's father took far too long to see his son as a man who would go his own way, and that this path may not have been the way his father went. The father obviously loved his son and eventually came to efforts to become an engineer. When students respond, they ask to illustrate their point of view directly on the film. 4. Give some examples of care between individuals and in relation to the community as a whole. Suggested answer: Almost everyone in this movie, and certainly all the important characters nurture others. Make sure you're safe the class sees the nurturing qualities in the father and in the members of the community in general. His father fed Homer when he went to the mine. In fact, as the book shows, the community has always been supportive of the Rocket Boys. FRIENDSHIP 5. How does Friendship Help Homer Break Away From the Path of Work in the Coal Mine? What was the strongest act of friendship shown in this film? Suggested answer: Individual responses may vary. Any well-supported response will be appropriate. When students respond, they ask to illustrate their point of view directly on the film. Discussion questions on ethical issues will facilitate the use of this film to teach ethical principles and critical consideration. Further questions are listed below. RESPONSIBILITY (Do what you should do; Persistent: Keep trying!; Always do your best; Use self-control; Be self-disciplined; Think before you act — consider the consequences; Be responsible for your decisions) 1. Perseverance means continuing to act despite difficulties and lack of success. Give examples of perseverance in this film. Suggested reaction: In this film, the Rocket Boys tried to perfect their rockets despite initial success. The issue also persistently refers to the US space program, which, despite its failures in the beginning, eventually triumphed over the Russians in most areas of space exploration. See also the quote by Daniel Goldin, former NASA administrator, in the proposed answer to discussion question #2. 2. Put yourself in homer's position in this story. Her father is seriously injured and cannot work. Someone has to work in the mine if the family is to prevent the expulsion from the company life and be forced to leave the city. Her brother is on track to go to school on a football scholarship, but he has to finish school. He will never have a chance to go to college again. If you go to work in the mine, you will probably do well and take a position in administration, just like your father. What would you do if you were in Homer's position? Suggested answer: This question tests the limits of responsibility and care. Homer and his brother had some responsibility to help the family keep a home. This did not require one of them to work only in the mine, but they had to shoulder the burden, or at least part of the burden, that their father could no longer bear. Homer, because he cared for his brother, didn't want him to miss the chance to go to college on a sports scholarship. There is also the feeling that Homer that while going into the mine risky, his father had made a good career there. Homer would probably also rise to the position of manager. In the face of these facts, what Homer did was the most ethical thing to do because of his responsibility to his family and his love for his brother. There are other interesting points about this subplot. First, there are limits to what a child can do for the family. Had entry into the mine been a complete impasse for Homer, the answer to that question would have been different. See e.B. The glass menagerie. Second, the real Homer Hickam only worked for one summer while in college at the mine. This subplot is one of the few parts of the film that didn't really happen and he didn't like it. He commented on the situation in which the Homer Hickam character in the film dropped out of high school: My parents would have lived in a tree before they would ever let it happen! This fact shows that there are many situations in which both parents and children bear a responsibility. Third, compare the scene in which Homer has to put his dreams aside and work in the mine with It's A Wonderful Life, in which the main character gave up his dreams of a career as an architect in New York so that his brother could attend college and still lead a wonderful life. 3. Homer's brother was to receive a football scholarship, which was the only way that in the past children from Coalwood had come to the bigger world. Did Homer's older brother do the right thing to make Homer work in the coal mines so that his brother could go on to college? Suggested answer: Yes. There is no responsibility not to accept the gifts or moral behavior of others. Homer's brother, however, owed Homer a great debt. CARING (Be kind; Be compassionate and show Sichsie; Express gratitude; Forgive others; Help for People in Need) 4. Name the characters in this film who honored the concept of care and describe what they have done, what will lead you to this conclusion. Suggested answer: The mother, because she always wanted what was best for her sons. The teacher who encouraged the Rocket Boys. The Rocket Boys, who unanimously voted Homer for the Science Fair. The members of the Union, including the machinists, and the people of Coalwood who encouraged and helped the Rocket Boys. Homer's father, who eventually came. (See question below for more on Homer's father.) 5. Who had the greatest difficulty in practicing the concept of care in this film? What were the reasons? How did he or she solve it? Suggested answer: Our voice goes to Homer's father. In the beginning, he wanted Homer to work in the mine and eventually become a manager as he was. He saw a lot of himself in Homer, which is probably why he was so strict with the boy. When Homer began to branch out on his own path, his father felt rejected and insecure. These are not suitable for a parent. Parents should recognize that children are not born to embrace their parents' values on a grand scale or to follow in their footsteps. Children must be able to find the right life for them and be encouraged. This is the true true of a caring parent. Eventually, Homer's father supported the Rocket Boys' efforts. In doing so, he recognized and fulfilled the love he had for his son. Homer's father was forced to choose between his dream that homer would work with him in the mine and what was best for his son. After some delay, he made the right choice. The book *October Sky* (original title: *Rocket Boys*) is ideal for advanced young readers. It contains important additional details about Mr. Hickam's experience and life in the United States in the 1950s. *Rocket Boys* is part of a trilogy. The other volumes are *The Coalwood Way*, which focuses on the Rocket Boys' last Christmas in 1959, and *Sky of Stone*, which describes the summer of 1961, when Homer worked at the mine after his graduation. This learning guide was last updated on February 10, 2012. 2012.

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