

**Overview:** This is the true-life story of Jimmy Braddock who was a promising boxer in the 1920's. Like many people in *The Great Depression*, he lost most of his money and had to find various ways to provide for his family. In this time, he kept a positive attitude and his integrity. He was given a second chance at boxing and eventually became the heavy-weight champion of the world. In the process, he inspired a nation.

**Authors Notes:** 1) Be cautious with the swearing in this movie. This is a boxing movie and swear words are thrown around quite casually. This is a trend in movies. Please discuss context and appropriateness of swearing. 2) While this is a "boxing" movie, there are no boxing scenes below. The lessons of this movie have to do with attitude, heart, courage, integrity and perseverance in the face of adversity (The Great Depression). If your students want closure, show the final scene, which is thirteen minutes long.

**Moral of the Story:** This movie makes the point that it is easy to have a positive attitude when times are good, but maintaining a positive attitude (heart, courage, integrity) when times are tough is more difficult. The way we view life (attitude) and the initiative we bring to a certain situation will usually determine the outcome.

#### Selected Scenes

Scenes 2-7 (7:59 – 49:00)	40 minutes
Beginning of Scene 13 (1:23:28 – 1:24:04)	2 minutes
Beginning of Scene 14 (1:28:12 - 1:31:13)	<u>2 minutes</u>
Total	44 minutes

#### Discussion Questions

- 1) Ron Howard, the director of this film, shows us that attitude is not necessarily about being "happy-go-lucky" or being a "rah-rah guy." Attitude is about showing heart, demonstrating courage, having confidence in yourself and others and finding a way...especially when life isn't going your way. Reflect with your students to make sure they get this message.
- 2) This movie should provide perspective. Viewing movies about The Great Depression should remind us how tough it was for many people at that time. Ask your students to compare and contrast that era with current economic times.
- 3) In the worst of times, Jimmy Braddock's son stole a piece of salami (scene 2). Jimmy imparted a lesson about self-reliance and integrity. Do parents still impart such lessons?
- 4) With great reluctance, Jimmy goes on public assistance (scene 6). When he turns things around, he gives the money back. Why do you think the director includes this in the movie? Would you have gone on assistance? Would you give the money back?
- 5) Life is not easy and it isn't always fair. Everyone has struggles. The lesson here is that attitude and determination will greatly determine the journey and the outcome. Create a discussion that allows students to consider this point and to personalize it (school, personal struggles...).