

The Butterfly Circus Processing Questions

Listed below are some sample processing questions that can help students get the most from viewing *The Butterfly Circus* movie. *Select a few to use* and feel free to add your own. The important thing is to get them to make a connection between the messages in the movie and their roles as student leaders in their schools.

- How do you think Will felt when he was part of the sideshow in the first circus?
- Why did he spit on Mr. Mendez?
- How did Will change after he joined *The Butterfly Circus*?
- Why did Mr. Mendez treat Will the way he did?
- In what ways did Will begin to positively affect the lives of others?
- How do you think the two circus masters viewed life – what’s important, what does it mean to be successful? How did that affect how they treated people?
- How did Will discover his strengths and the courage to use them?
- What groups of society do the circus performers stand for? What do they have in common? The film shows these members of society were seen as unproductive before joining *The Butterfly Circus*. What happens in our society with the weakest? Is their human dignity and their right to participate in society recognized?
- The movie takes place in the 1930s. Would people treat Will any differently today?
- Can we change that which is negative in our lives? If so, how?
- What can we do to show others they can also transform their lives?
- Which character do you identify with the most? Why?
- What does Will believe about himself at the beginning of the film? At the end?
- Have you experienced something that changed how you view yourself, for better or for worse? What was it?
- Have you ever had any big challenges to overcome? What were they?
- What does the ringmaster of *The Butterfly Circus* represent to you?
- Have you ever known anyone like the ringmaster?
- What do you notice about the leadership style of Mr. Mendez? What is his greatest strength?
- Why was it called the Butterfly Circus?
- For each of the following quotes by Mr. Mendez, explain the meaning and share your reaction to it:
 - a. “There is nothing inspiring about a man’s imperfections on display.”
 - b. “If you could only see the beauty that can come from the ashes.”
 - c. “The greater the struggle, the more glorious the triumph.”
- Mr. Mendez says “I think you’ll manage” to Will when he is obviously floundering. Why? Has your adviser ever let you struggle to figure something out yourself? How did you feel once you had done it?
- Are there any comparisons you can make between the Butterfly Circus and your school?
- Are there people in your school who struggle to find their place or purpose?
- Is there anything from this movie that can help you be a better student leader?