



La Belle Vie

THE GOOD LIFE

DIRECTED BY RACHELLE SALNAVE

High School Module 9th-12th



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For this curriculum module, students will explore the film *La Belle Vie: The Good Life* in-depth over 3-4 class sessions (45-60 minutes each). They will examine themes of identity, diaspora, and belonging through film analysis, reflective journaling, creative storytelling, and discussions. The curriculum will encourage students to connect the film’s themes with their own experiences, cultural heritage, and broader global perspectives.

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white one-piece swimsuit, is crouching on a large rock in the foreground of a waterfall. She has a serious expression and her hands are resting on her shoulders. In the background, several other people are visible: a man in a white tank top and patterned pants is walking on the left, a woman in a floral tank top and black shorts is standing in the middle, and a man in a white shirt and hat is partially visible on the right. The scene is set in a lush, green, rocky environment with water cascading over the rocks.

ABOUT THE FILM

La Belle Vie: The Good Life is a story about a Haitian-American filmmaker's journey to discover her Haitian roots by examining the complexities of the Haitian society as it pertains to the overall political and economic dichotomy in Haiti. Using her own personal family stories interconnected with capturing the voices of Haitians and experts overall, this film chronologically uncovers the rationale behind its social class system but also how it has affected the Haitian American migration experience as well. With the proliferation of political turmoil, poverty, and now an Earthquake shattered nation, *La Belle Vie: The Good Life* in the end beckons all to lay down their arms, be it the tangible weapons of death and pain or the psychological and spiritual tools of division and prejudice, and work as one to rebuild and prosper in the name of a new and stronger Haiti. This film in the end, invokes the question whether or not its tragic event will shift the consciousness of all Haitians (living in Haiti or abroad) by motivating them to unite to build a new Haiti.



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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

SESSION 1 INTRODUCTION AND VIEWING

- **Activity:** Introduction to the documentary and discussion on themes of diaspora, identity, and culture (10 minutes). Set the stage by discussing the concept of identity and how it can be shaped by both heritage and experiences in a new country.
- **Viewing:** Watch the entire documentary (59 minutes).
- **Homework:** Reflective journaling on the main idea of the film. Students should focus on the central themes the filmmaker is addressing and their personal reactions.
- **Prompt:** What do you think is the main idea of the film, and why is it important? How do the filmmaker's experiences relate to the concept of identity?



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SESSION 2: ADVANCED DISCUSSION

Activity:

Facilitate a discussion on key themes, including identity and belonging. Clarify concepts to make them accessible for high school students. (15 minutes)

Discussion Questions (30 minutes):

- Can a sense of belonging be imagined, or does it have to be rooted in a physical place?
- How might a person feel connected to a homeland they have never visited, and does that connection feel less real?

Homework:

- Research and write a short report on the concept of "home" from a universal perspective—this could include cultural, historical, or personal interpretations of what home means to different people around the world.
 - Alternative Prompt: Write a short report on what "home" means in different cultures or how people connect to a homeland without living there.



CREATIVE EXPRESSION

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SESSION 3: CREATIVE EXPRESSION

"My Story, My Roots" Narrative Writing and Sharing (45 minutes)

ACTIVITY

Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by discussing the power of storytelling and how the filmmaker, Rachelle Salnave, uses her personal story to explore themes of identity, diaspora, and belonging. Explain how narratives can shape our understanding of culture and self-identity.

Writing Activity (25 minutes): Students will write a personal narrative or short story that explores their own experiences with identity, belonging, or cultural heritage. They should reflect on questions such as:

- What does identity mean to you, and how has it been shaped by your family, culture, or experiences?
- Have you ever felt a conflict between different parts of your identity? How did you navigate it?
- If you could create an "imagined space" that represents your roots and identity, what would it look like?
- Sharing and Feedback (10 minutes): Students pair up to share their stories with a partner and provide constructive feedback. Encourage them to focus on what resonated with them and any insights gained from their partner's perspective.

Alternative Option: Digital Storytelling Project

- Instead of a written narrative, students could create a digital storytelling project using tools like PowerPoint, Google Slides, or a simple video editing app. They would combine images, text, and voiceovers to tell their personal story or explore a theme from the film. This approach allows for creativity and can be shared with the class in future sessions.

SESSION 4:

ROLE OF THE DIASPORA

Discussion Questions (30 minutes):

- What role can any diaspora play in supporting and developing their home country?
- Reflect on your own background or that of a diaspora community you know—what role could they play in their home country or community?

Activity:

"Round Table Discussion" format where students are divided into groups representing different diaspora communities. Each group discusses potential contributions or challenges their diaspora faces in their homeland.



FINAL PROJECT AND PRESENTATION

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SESSION 5:

FINAL PROJECT AND PRESENTATION

- **Activity:** Students create a final project (essay, presentation, video, or artwork) on "Imagined Spaces and Realities" and present it to the class (45 minutes).
- **Wrap-Up Discussion:** Reflect on what was learned throughout the module (15 minutes).

Assessment: Quality of the final project, depth of analysis in discussions, and active participation.



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EXTENSIONS AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



- **Guest Speakers:** Invite members of the Haitian community or diaspora scholars for Q&A sessions.
- **Comparative Study:** Research and compare other diaspora communities (e.g., Irish, Jewish, African-American) to discuss similarities and differences.
- **Field Trip:** If possible, visit cultural centers or museums focused on Haitian culture or diaspora studies.



Project Recognition: Awards & Honors

Nominated for the 40th Annual Emmy® Awards (2016)

Awards

- Beacon of Hope Award – General Consulate of the Republic of Haiti
- Best Content in a Documentary Award-- Boston International Film Festival
- Special Recognition for Directing Award – BlackStar Film Festival
- President of the Jurors – Montreal Black Film Festival
- Best Director Award-- REEL Sisters Film Festival

Film Festivals

- 23rd Pan African Film Festival (Los Angeles, CA) 2015
- Toronto Black Film Festival 2015
- Africa World Documentary Tour (Nigeria, Barbados, South Africa, Jamaica, Philadelphia) 2015
- Haiti Film Festival | Brooklyn, NY | 2015
- Women's International Film Festival 2015
- BlackStar Film Festival | 2015
- Montreal International Black Film Festival |2015

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