

Stand by me (movie review for small group com)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Summer To Remember

The movie Stand By Me is based upon a novel by Steven King. It doesn't have the same eerie feel as some of his other books and is generally a more serious movie. It takes place in the small town of Castle Rock, Oregon. It is the middle of the summer in approximately the early 1960s. The kids are bored and that is the setup for their adventure to go find a dead body in the woods.

The main role of Gordie LaChance is played by Wil Wheaton. He is having trouble in his life at this time because he just lost his brother and his parents are having a very difficult time dealing with it. Chris Chambers was played by River Phoenix. Chris is considered a loser because of his family and everybody thinks he will do nothing in life. Through it all, the group of kids looks up to Chris and he is admired by them. The role of Teddy Duchamp is played by Corey Feldman. Teddy has a difficult time in life largely because his father was very mean to him before getting thrown in an insane asylum. The lack of discipline shows in that Teddy has a serious problem staying in control. He is always going crazy and his behavior presents a problem more than once to the group. Vern Tessio is played by Jerry O'Connell. He is the short little fat kid that remains a constant pest throughout the movie. Together the four kids embark on a trip through the woods that will be a challenging adventure for them all. Over the course of the movie the group has problems with individual group members, they have to work as a team, and leadership roles emerge.

In any group, dealing with difficult group members is vital to the groups success. Stand By Me has three different types of difficult group members that cause problems in their own way.

Vern is probably the most difficult member to deal with. He would be characterized as a blocker. He thwarts the progress of the group, opposes much of what the group attempts to accomplish (Rothwell 145). Throughout the movie he tries to get the group to do other things. Though he usually goes along with the group after some convincing, it definitely slows the group down. Right when they take off on the trip he begins to voice his opposition starting by complaining about why they are bringing the pistol. His character is further developed when he complains about having to walk the entire trip and says they should hitchhike. When they stop to get food and they flip a coin, they get all tails. Vern whines that it means they are all doomed and should go back. Vern also slows the group when he refuses to go into the woods away from the tracks towards the trail. He then plays the role of backseat driver (class notes) when they reach the swamp saying, I told you we should have kept following the train tracks. Vern hindered the development of the group. While they could have been devoting time to the task at hand, they had to spend time helping him with trivial things like dealing with him being scared when they are in the woods. While Vern slowed the group by challenging many of the groups ideas, Teddy presented a much different challenge to the group.

Teddy is described in the beginning as being reckless and wild. He holds to that description right in the beginning with two crazy incidents. When they leave in the beginning and are walking on the train tracks, Teddy goes a little

bit nuts and says he is going to dodge the train. It takes the entire group to pull him away from the train tracks before the train comes. Teddy also becomes difficult when the run away from the old man in the junkyard. When the old man calls his father looney Teddy flips out. He starts kicking and punching even though hes on the other side of the fence. This remains a problem with the group because they have to spend time comforting him before they get back on the road again. On more then one occasion Teddy got in small fights with almost all of the different group members. For that reason he might be called a Fighter-Controller by Rothwell (145). Teddy hinders group development by forcing the group to devote time and effort to control his behavior.

Chris remains one of the leaders, but even at times presents a problem to the group. He has a very tough attitude and almost gets his eye burned out in the beginning trying to stand up against bigger, tougher kids. At the end of the movie he almost get attacked with a knife for mouthing off to a the same group of kids, but Gordie bailed him out. By standing up against difficult group members Gordie really showed his leadership skills.

Successful groups almost always have leaders whether it is the President of the United States or John Elway of the Broncos. In the beginning Gordie said how Chris Chambers was the leader of the group. Whether he realized it or not; he himself was the actual leader. Gordie provides strong leadership for a group that needs it. Through the movie it is demonstrated that he is a competent, respected leader in the group of four boys.

In the beginning Gordie starts out by planning how they are going on the trip. He devises a way for them to go without getting in trouble and the group immediately endorses him as their leader. The group will reinforce the bid of that member perceived to be the most skilled (Rothwell 145). The group shows that they look up to Gordie when they are sleeping in the woods. They are all scared and ask Gordie to tell them a story. Chris confides in Gordie when he tells him the truth behind what happened to the milk money. It is a typical characteristic of leaders to have other group members to confide in them. A good example of this is when people have a problem, they often go to their parents or boss to seek resolution. In perhaps the most dramatic scene in the movie, Gordie shows his leadership for the group by pulling out the handgun and firing a shot in the air. He makes Chriss attacker back down when he finally realizes that he means business. A good leader stands up for his group. Gordie stood up for his group in the toughest of circumstances, and risked having to kill a person. Gordie helped exemplify exceptional teamwork.

One thing that keeps the group on track is the way they work together in times of peril. Cooperative intergroup relations (teamwork) will increase the level of task satisfaction and performance (Van Oostrum 272). At first glance, the kids do not appear to be much of a team. They hit each other and often pick on the fat kid. But when it gets down to crunch time they are there for each other. When Gordie gets the hat his brother gave him taken away, Chris jumps up, ready to protect his group member. The most important demonstration of teamwork comes at the end, when rather than back down to the big guys they stand their ground together. Another good example of

teamwork occurs when they are crossing the bridge and the train comes. There is nowhere to go so they have to try to outrun the train to the other side. Vern falls, and it would have been easy for the others to keep going, but Gordie stops to help him get up and together they make it across the bridge in time.

Overall the groups teamwork contributed to the overall success of the group. Had they not worked together they probably wouldnt have made it all the way to the dead body and surely would have had problems dealing with the gang of older kids.

As you can see the four kids in this movie matured a lot through such a complicated circumstance at the end of the movie. You can ask anyone who has ever pulled a gun or had a gun pulled on them; it changes your life and everyone around you. No matter what anyone says, you are a lot different after your life (or anothers) has been placed in the hands of others. The boys not only matured a lot, but leadership roles emerged. It became obvious that Gordie was a leader in the group less than halfway through. And as groups tend to do, they relied on his leadership more and more until the end. The group was faced with the additional challenge of dealing with difficult group members. But the group discovered the concept of synergy when they found if they stuck together and used teamwork, they are a lot stronger unified than individually.

The leadership in this movie was provided primarily by Gordie. He didnt melt in times of pressure. The group liked him and looked up to him. In the movie Gordie had to deal mainly with two types of difficult group members. Vern

was a backseat driver and Teddy had trouble controlling his behavior. Gordie would be considered a leader because he is more likely to direct other group members (de Souza). Gordie's efforts were combined with the groups to show that when working cooperatively, they achieve goals more often, and more effectively (de Souza).

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