

## **TEMPLE GRANDIN** (whole movie to be viewed)

### **Themes for Discussion**

- Twice-exceptional
- Fitting in
- Being different

### **Materials needed**

- DVD or Digital Copy of MOVIE (Dir. Mick Jackson, 2010)
- Equipment for showing film screen/monitor/dvd player/computer/speakers
- Paper/Journals/Writing Utensils
- Activity Descriptions/Directions
- Discussion Questions

### **Purpose of activity**

- To promote awareness of people with differences
- To discuss the challenges faced by twice-exceptional individuals
- To compare positive and negatives, pros and cons of autism
- To discuss how to be understanding of others who may be different

### **Plot summary**

- The movie is based on the book which is described here:

“When Temple Grandin was born, her parents knew that she was different. Years later she was diagnosed with autism. Temple’s father recommended she be institutionalized, but her mother believed in her. Temple went to school instead. Today, Dr. Temple Grandin is a scientist and professor of animal science at Colorado State University. Her world-changing career revolutionized the livestock industry. As an advocate for autism, Temple uses her experience as an example of the unique contributions that autistic people can make. This compelling biography and Temple’s personal photos take us inside her extraordinary mind and open the door to a broader understanding of autism.” –Houghton Mifflin Harcourt [www.hmhbooks.com](http://www.hmhbooks.com)

### **Description of activity**

- Write a SOMEBODY, WANTED, BUT, SO statement about the movie. Then write a select passage from the movie to share and why you selected it. Read your passage aloud and after 2 group members guess why you choose the passage, share your reason.
- Use the following prompts: (copy in your journal)

**TELL ME...**Who is/are the somebody/somebodies in the story?

**WHAT** is the motivation/what does he/she want?

**BUT** is a conflict of the movie:

**SO** is the resolution (or what you think should be the resolution) to the conflict:

**Passage to share:**

**Why I chose this passage:**

(Activity reference: Dr. James, UWF)

## **Discussion questions**

The following were taken directly from

<http://www.grandin.com/inc/Montgomery.TempleGrandin.DiscussionGuide.pdf>

- What traits do most people with autism share? How do these traits make it difficult for autistic people to socialize?
- In what ways does Temple say autistic people and animals think alike and similarly perceive their world?
- Why did Temple's parents fight about her?
- What do you think would have happened to Temple if she had been institutionalized as her father wanted?
- Why was Temple's elementary school a good environment for someone with her disorder?
- How did Temple's experience in elementary school compare to her experience in junior high?
- Have you ever seen students with mental or physical disabilities teased or bullied in your school?
- Did you do anything to stop it?
- What were some things about Temple's personality that made her difficult for her classmates to understand?
- Why did Temple play pranks on her classmates in junior high? How did playing the pranks make her feel?
- How have ideas about what constitutes mental illness changed over the years? What is "neurodiversity"?
- If you know someone who has autism, in what ways is he or she similar and different to Temple? What do you think would be most difficult about having autism? What does autism enable Temple to do that most people with a "normal" brain cannot do? In what ways has autism helped Temple be successful in her work?

- What things has Temple done to improve the lives of animals? In a sidebar, the author writes: “Doctors, parents, and teachers are asking, should a kid with Asperger’s or mild autism be labeled handicapped—or should he be in a gifted and talented program?” (p. 44). After viewing Temple Grandin’s story, what do you think?

Additional questions for discussion (created by me):

- Do you think being female played a role in Temple Grandin’s experience? If so, in what way(s)?
- How do you think being female with autism differs from being male?
- Do you think her father would have reacted differently to Temple if she had not been a girl with autism? How so?