



The Allegory of the Cave & *Chocolat*

**High School Language Arts Lesson Plans
The Parthenon
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Introduction by DeeGee Lester, Education Director, The Parthenon

Belmont graduate student Weston Jones created the following lesson plan for the Parthenon in the summer of 2009. He first invites students to explore Plato's brief, but powerful *Allegory of the Cave*, and then extends the allegory into the modern world with exploration of the Joanne Harris novel/2000 motion picture, *Chocolat*.

Standards:

**CLE.3001.8.1 (Demonstrate knowledge of significant world literature)
CLE.3001.8.4 (Analyze works of literature for what they suggest about the historical period in which they were written).**

√3001.8.5

√3001.8.6

√3001.8.17

The Allegory of the Cave And Chocolat

Lesson Plan Goal:

The student will understand how to compare/contrast ancient and modern allegories by studying Plato's Cave and the novel/2000 motion picture, *Chocolat*.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will be able to:

- Analyze two works of literature from two different time periods.
- Compare/contrast the two works.
- Answer meaningful questions about the two works.
- Discover the relevance of the literature to their lives.

Activities:

1. "Once there were prisoners chained in a cave from birth. Their only reality was of shadows on a wall created by objects carried in front of a fire. One prisoner manages to free himself. He turns around, and sees what is going on. He eventually drags himself out of the dark cave into the daylight. He sees the real world, and finally the sun itself, the source of all daylight. He returns to the cave with the good news, but his fellow prisoners not only don't believe him, but threaten him with violence if he insists on repeating his adventure to them." (Robinson and Groves, 2000).
2. Read the excerpt below about the movie "*Chocolate*."
Setting: 1960, a small town in France. Vianne Rocher and her pre-teen daughter move into town and open a chocolate shop just as Lent is beginning. The town's mayor can't accept this and does his best to shut her down, but her warm personality and incredible chocolates manage to win over many townsfolk. Things get shaken up even more when a group of river drifters, led by Roux, stop into town (to the even greater distress of the mayor), and Vianne becomes involved with the charming Roux. Meanwhile, Vianne helps Josephine out of her abusive marriage and assists her free-thinking landlady, Amade Voisin, get together with her grandson Luc, over the protests of his mother. (Written by Jon Reeves).

The people of the town have been told that the chocolate is bad and evil. They are told not to taste it or there will be bad consequences. Even though they cannot see anything wrong with the chocolate, or Ms. Rocher, they blindly follow the mayor's advice. When a few people see how the chocolate has actually enhanced their lives, they become extremely happy and try to tell the other citizens. However, those who follow blindly after the mayor become angry with those who are "freed."

3. **Review and Reflection:**
- A. What are the differences in the allegory of Plato's cave and the movie?
 - B. Can you see similarities?
 - C. Why were the prisoners angry at the person who was allowed to see the real world?
 - D. Why were the townspeople who didn't eat the chocolate angry with those who did?
 - E. Write a paragraph to summarize what you have learned about the parallels of the two stories.

Weston Jones

Dear Teachers:
An alternative to the movie is to have students read the short 1884 novel, *Flatland* by Edwin Abbott. You may then combine this lesson on the "*Allegory of the Cave*" with the Parthenon's *Flatland* lesson plan listed under Educational Resources on our website.