

## *Village of the Damned* (dir. Wolf Rilla, 1960)

Lesson by Michael Aitchison, Teach First

English,  
Key Stage 4

In this lesson, students study the moral dilemma at the heart of *Village of the Damned*: *what to do with a group of dangerous children who are putting the lives of the local villagers at risk?* Students will take on a role and a position and engage in a group debate to decide on the fate of the children. They will then present their conclusions.

### Lesson Objectives

- To discuss a key moment in *Village of the Damned* and reach an informed group decision.
- To present a group decision and the reasoning behind it.

### You will need...

DVD of *Village of the Damned*  
A3 paper and  
coloured markers

### Curriculum Links

- Work effectively in groups of different sizes and take on required roles, including leading and managing discussions, involving others productively, reviewing and summarising, and contributing to meeting goals/deadlines.
- Listen to and build on the contributions of others, ask questions to clarify and inform, and challenge courteously when necessary.

## Activities

### TRAILER: Silent debate

After the students have watched the film, place an A3 sheet of paper with a different question on it on each group of tables. The questions should be open-ended, and be designed to engage the students with the moral dilemmas that occur during *Village of the Damned*. For example:

- Are the children evil?
- Was Gordon right to kill the children?
- Was Russia right to sacrifice lives of the villagers?

In complete silence, the students then write down their answer to each question on the A3 paper anonymously. Students rotate around the groups of tables, and are given the chance to write their own answers, or comment on the answers of others. The task is completed in silence so that all students have equal opportunity to give their opinion.

When students have commented on each question, display each A3 sheet on the whiteboard, and follow up with a discussion on the ideas presented.

### MAIN ATTRACTION: Villagers of the Damned

Gordon Zellaby has been asked to advise the Government about the situation in the village. In groups of four, students take on the role of villagers in a five minute group discussion to come to a final answer to the following question:

- What should we do about the children?

Each student in the group is given a role:

- Leader - Chairs the discussion.
- Encourager - Insures that all members of the group give their opinion through encouragement and questioning.
- Reviewer and summariser - Presents the decision and reasoning behind it to the rest of the class. This student will be required to take notes.
- Deadline manager - Insures that the group reaches an informed conclusion within the five minute time limit.

### END CREDITS: Village Meeting

The reviewer and summariser from each group is given the chance to present their group's findings and reasoning. After all groups have been represented, the class votes

on what solution they think is the most reasonable and well considered. A class decision is thereby reached.

### Extras

#### Read

*The Midwich Cuckoos* by John Wyndham (1957)

*The Body Snatchers* by Jack Finney (1955)

*The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells (1897)

#### Watch

*Children of the Damned* (Anton M. Leader, 1964)

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956)

*The Quatermass Xperiment* (Val Guest, 1955)