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**THE PALEY** CENTER FOR MEDIA

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presented by **citi**  
What We're Watching



## Greetings from The Paley Center for Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of "What We're Watching." Twice a month the education department reaches out to the community with tips and ideas for consuming media with kids by highlighting different themes that connect to two selected programs, one for younger viewers and one for older viewers, each with related activities and resources.

Watching media alongside your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. You can [view our first newsletter about media literacy best practices archived here](#). We also recommend the [National](#)

[Association for Media Literacy Education's Parents Guide](#)—it's a terrific introduction!

## What We're Watching: Black Joy - A Juneteenth Celebration!

Social movements are historically depicted as long struggles for justice, where resistance can be seen as numerous actions and campaigns to stop oppression and achieve social equality. From the Civil Rights era to recent movements for black lives, the dominant media narrative is often a painful construct of brutality and violence: TV cameras broadcast police dogs and fire hoses unleashed on peaceful protesters, cell phones share deadly police chokeholds through social media news feeds. The story is tragedy, a singular genre of sorrow. But it doesn't need to be this way. Freedom is joy, whether now or within the deferred dreams of ancestors, and Black Joy has always been a tool for survival, a means to remain and reclaim the richness of African American identity and culture. In the spirit of Juneteenth, a time to honor a history that holds both the hurt of injustice and the glory of liberation, we raise high two programs that embody the restorative power of Black Joy.

## This Week's Recommendations for Younger Viewers

### **Class of 3000: "Peanuts! Get Yer Peanuts" (2006)**

*Recommended for Grades 3+*

*Available on Apple TV+ and [the Internet Archive](#)*

This heartwarming cartoon program, short-lived like many gems on television, focuses on Sunny Bridges, a superstar music artist who forsakes the limelight to teach kids in an Atlanta music school. Voiced by André 3000, series cocreator and one half of the hip-hop duo Outkast, Sunny tells his young students he knows nothing about teaching to which Li'l D the brassy young drummer assures him they “barely know how to learn.” Building from this collaborative teaching model, students and teacher learning together, comedy, calamity and cognition ensue as the music class stages a spectacular Peanut Pageant for members of the Peanut Funding Board. Since the board's support is critical to maintaining enrichment programs like music, the performance takes on an urgent tone as the young and gifted musicians “tear down the walls of convention with the wrecking ball of creativity!”

### **Viewing Questions**

- When Sunny asks his students to close their eyes and show what their instruments feel like when they play, what are the moods or spaces that Tamika's harp, Madison's violin, Eddie's horn, or Philly Phil's bass create?
- What does Principal Luna say when Sunny assumes that being a teacher is about teaching? What does Principal Luna believe teaching is all about?
- Why is there so much pressure for Sunny to put on a successful Peanut

Pageant?

- What does Sunny mean when he tells his music students that they must “tear down the walls of convention with the wrecking ball of creativity?” What are some of the different ways his students misquote this phrase?
- To prepare for the show, Sunny advises his students to each work with a different school department to help with specific parts of the show. For example, Philly Phil will work on special effects with the audio/visual department and Kim Chan will work with the drama department on costumes. How is this way of working a good method and how is it a problem when different people work on one show. What is needed to make this method work?
- Why did Sunny not have enough time to teach his students? What occupied much of his time? And what might be some ways to change this so a teacher can teach?

## Additional Resources

[Chrome Music Lab](#), website for lively, hands-on musical experimentation

### Read

[Free At Last: A Juneteenth Poem](#) by Sojourner Kincaid Rolle, illustrated by Alex Bostic

[Opal Lee and What it Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth](#) by Alice Faye Duncan, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo

[The Real History of Juneteenth](#) by Elliot Smith

### Watch

[Juneteenth—All About the Holidays on PBS Learning Media](#)



## This Week's Recommendations for Older Viewers

David Makes Man: "Gloria" (2019)

*Recommended for Grades 9+*

*Available on Max*

A delicate, powerful, and dream-infused drama, *David Makes Man* is a poetic and realistic coming-of-age story. Winner of a Peabody entertainment award, this beautiful series, created by Tarell Alvin McCraney, cowriter of the 2016 Academy Award–winning film *Moonlight*, holds the tension of joy and pain within its compelling and lyrical story lines. Although the show’s central character is David, his mother Gloria is the featured protagonist of episode four of the first season. Gloria’s story begins at her job, a diner where she waitresses but aspires to be an assistant manager. Projecting a confident “sass” that shines brightly throughout her daydreams, Gloria’s ambition and courage face immense trials. A single mom in recovery from addiction, she is the image of postponed or projected joy, living for tomorrow she sacrifices everyday for her children. As her world unravels Gloria asserts a bold resolve through a joyful past, a freedom that “Ms. Glo” found dancing in the ballroom subculture of Miami. Gloria finds it again, deep inside herself, through a faraway stare she soothes her grueling today with magical ointments from a glamorous and glorious yesterday. Dreams mend and heal perpetually.

### **Viewing Questions**

- In the episode, several scenes have two different versions, one is wishful and dreamlike while the other is sobering and real. Describe the two versions of Gloria’s application to the assistant manager position, her hospital discharge after her injury, or her “night out” with Mx. Elijah. What do we learn about Gloria through her daydreams?
- Describe Gloria’s relationship with her boss. How do they interact? Are there instances of harassment? What behaviors or actions indicate this?
- How does Gloria’s community of customers and co-workers care for her when she loses her job?
- When Mx. Elijah tries to get a job for a young trans runaway, how are they treated by the job’s administrator? What do you think “Y’all Queens stay on the scam” means? How do homophobic and transphobic attitudes limit opportunities for trans and gender non-binary people?
- Which scenes reveal Gloria’s past drug dependence and her current efforts to stay “on the wagon?” How do you think she maintains her resolve?
- When Gloria encounters the ghost of her younger self on the bus with an older man, what might this scene symbolize for Gloria? What do you think the producers of the show were trying to say with this scene?
- Describe Gloria’s relationship with her elder son, David? Are there examples when David takes on the role of parent for his younger brother, J.G., when Gloria is unable to?
- What do we learn about Gloria when Mx. Elijah asks her to join him for the wonderland of the ballroom. How might the community of ballroom culture inform the families that Mx. Elijah and Gloria are a part of?

## **Additional Resources**

[Juneteenth Digital Toolkit from the African American Museum of History and Culture](#)

## Read

[Hidden Black History: From Juneteenth to Redlining \(The Fight for Black Rights\)](#) by Amanda Jackson Green

[Stamped \(For Kids\): Racism, Antiracism, and You](#), adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul from *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You*, by Jason Reynolds, a remix of *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi; with art by Rachelle Baker

[The Book of Awesome Black Americans: Scientific Pioneers, Trailblazing Entrepreneurs, Barrier-Breaking Activists and Afro-Futurists](#) by Monique L. Jones

[Black Joy: Resistance, Resilience and Reclamation](#) by Elaine Nichols

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at [eduny@paleycenter.org](mailto:eduny@paleycenter.org).

Happy viewing,

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Photos—*Class of 3000*: Cartoon Network; *David Makes Man*: Warner Brothers

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