

Ponette (1996)

(French with English subtitles)



If I could have every Sunday School teacher and adult coming in contact see this wonderful little film about a girl who has lost her mother in an auto accident in which she also is slightly injured.

Little Victoire Thivisol is incredible as the child trying to come to terms with grief and death. When her atheist father leaves her with her Aunt Claire the latter tries to comfort Ponette by telling her the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Taking the story to heart, Ponette keeps going out and waiting. When asked what she is waiting for, she says that she is waiting for her mother, like Jesus, to return. No one can convince her that the resurrection of others will take place a long time in the future.

When Ponette and her two little cousins, who try to comfort her also, go off to boarding school, Ponette continues to wait for her mother. Told that Ada, a Jewish girl, is "a child of God, Ponette befriends her and submits to a series of tasks so that she too can become a child of God and secure her mother's resurrection. She is given a magic word (which the translator

apparently does not realize is Jesus' Aramaic command from the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter) "Tal itha cumi," but it doesn't seem to work.

When she learns about God's special room at the school, the chapel, she sneaks in to petition "God Almighty" to please let her mother come back for a visit. Her father, of course, during his visits, tries to dissuade Ponette from what he regards as fantasy: "God' doesn't talk to the living. God's for the dead, not for us." But she persists. The result of her child-like faith makes for inspiring viewing. You owe it yourself to seek out this charming film, whose makers take seriously Jesus' own love for children.

V-1; L-2; S/N-0 Rated PG