

A Lion in the House

a film by Steven Bognar & Julia Reichert

Discussion Questions

THE IMPACT OF CANCER ON SIBLINGS

Warning to discussion leader: The clips and discussion questions may cause strong emotional reactions in youth who have experienced, or are currently experiencing cancer in their families. It may be helpful to know which youth may be vulnerable prior to the viewing. These youth will be able to offer a deeper understanding of the issues. Sensitivity is required.

The clip about siblings offers content about very serious illness and death of children. The discussion leader should preview the clip to plan how to handle strong feelings that may arise in the group.

PRE-VIEWING

Who here has brothers and sisters?

What is the best part about having brothers and sisters?

Are there ever moments when your brothers or sisters are a “challenge”?

Does anyone here have a brother or sister with special needs? Describe what that’s like for you.

Has anyone here ever experienced the death of a sibling? Discuss.

What feelings, thoughts, or even fears come to mind if you were to hear that the brother or sister of a friend had cancer?

POST-VIEWING

How would you describe Alex and Jackie's relationship?

Why does Alex and Jackie's mom want to do special things with Jackie?

Why does Jackie have "no self-esteem"? How could you tell?

(If not discussed in the pre-viewing session) Have you or any of your friends ever experienced the serious illness or death of a sibling? (Explain that this was much more common in the past, before as many vaccines, when children did not always live as long; and is still a common experience in the developing world.)

What was that like for you/how did you get over it/do you still think about it?

Justin's Family - Why was Jennifer jealous as a child?

How has ten years of Justin's illness affected his big brother, Adam?

What would it be like for siblings to think that every birthday party may be the last?
How would that influence decisions?

How sick is Justin by the end of this clip?

About what decisions do Justin's siblings try to express their opinions?

What are some things that would have benefited these siblings – Jackie, Jennifer, and Adam?

What could *you* do to support a friend/classmate whose brother or sister has cancer?

You can make a difference

"You know you are truly alive
when you are living among lions."
— Isak Dinesen