

A Lion in the House

a film by Steven Bognar & Julia Reichert

Discussion Questions

THE IMPACT OF CANCER ON FAMILIES

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.

PRE-VIEWING

All families face challenges. How families deal with these challenges can either pull them together or sometimes break them apart. Name some challenges to families that you know about:

How do you think a long-term illness, like cancer might affect families?

POST-VIEWING

When Tim's mother first took Tim to the neighborhood clinic, what was his diagnosis?

What was his diagnosis when he went to the hospital?

Why was Tim's mother on public assistance?

Do you think this was a sacrifice that she made? Why do you think that?

Why does Tim take a cab to the hospital?

What other pressures exist within Tim's family?

How do you see Tim establishing his independence?

Why did Jen's mother stop working?

How does she feel about not working?

Why does Justin go to Houston?

Is it easy or hard for the family to make the trip? In what ways?

What important decision does Justin have to make before his surgery?

What is a living will?

- A legal document that voices your medical decisions if you are unable to speak for yourself as a result of medical incapacitation. www.reidepot.com/Glossary/l.html
- A document that allows a person to state in advance his/her wishes regarding the use or removal of life-sustaining or death-delaying procedures in the event of illness or injury. dictionary.rare-cancer.org/dictionary.php

How old do you have to be to sign a living will?

Why do you think Justin does not want to sign a living will?

What would you do in Justin's situation – would you sign a living will or would you let your family make these decisions? (Optional: What would you state in your living will?)

How does Al's mother cope with Al's illness?

All families have unique strengths. What are the strengths you see in these families?

All families also have needs. What needs does each family seem to have?

What are some things that *you* could do to help families in your community who are fighting childhood cancer?

You can make a difference

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