

The Woodsman:

Discussion Guide Questions

Child sexual abuse is discussed daily through news stories and television programming, yet research shows us that most adults still do not know how to talk about the issue (Chasen-Taber and Tabachnick, 1999). The Woodsman is a unique film because it challenges us to open deeper conversations about this silent epidemic, and about the anger and fear that results when the adult or teenager abusing is someone we care about. Stop It Now! is joining with the film's director, producer, and Newmarket Films to challenge us all to learn more about child sexual abuse, to understand what is based in reality and what in stereotype, and perhaps most importantly, to explore what we can do to prevent sexual abuse before a child is harmed.

If you would like to explore the images, facts and subject of *The Woodsman*, this discussion guide will help you:

1. How did you feel watching the film? Did you identify with any of the key characters: Carlos (Benjamin Bratt), Walter (Kevin Bacon), Vickie (Kyra Sedgwick), or police Sgt. Lucas (Mos Def)? Could you relate to his or her actions?
2. Since 90 percent of children who are sexually abused are abused by someone they know, (Finkelhor, 1994) the film's off-screen stories present a more realistic view of the abuse in our communities than the on-screen story. For example, Walter's sister, Annette, has obviously been deeply hurt by Walter, possibly sexually abused by him, and may fear for the safety of her own daughter. How would you react if someone you loved or someone close to you had been sexually abusive toward a child? What do you think about the other off-screen stories such as Vickie's brothers and their families, Robin's story, or Carlos' relationship with his daughter?
3. Because the film is told through Walter's eyes, we do not fully see the pain and trauma that Vickie experienced through sexual abuse. What reactions did you have to Vickie telling Walter she was sexually abused by her brothers? Were you surprised when she said that she loved her brothers despite their abuse of her? How did Robin's pain connect, to Vickie and the film's other victims and survivors of sexual abuse?
4. This is the first major motion picture telling the story of child sexual abuse from the perspective of the abuser. The film's tension is built around whether or not Walter will re-offend. What choices and decisions could Walter have made differently? Were there people in the film that encouraged or discouraged Walter from re-offending?
5. There is a growing national movement to get adults and communities involved in preventing child sexual abuse before someone begins to sexually abuse. What could Robin's mother or close family friend have seen in Robin's father and what might they have done before he began to sexually abuse her? Can you imagine noticing Walter's behavior around young girls? What might you have done or said in that situation?

If watching this film has left you wanting to make your community a safer place for children, here are some basic steps you can take:

Educate yourself about healthy sexual development in children. Learn the warning signs that suggest a child may be vulnerable to sexual abuse, and the warning signs that an adult, teen, or child may be at risk to sexually abuse. Learn about the actions you can take if you see these signs.

Learn about the local organizations and people working in your community to stop and prevent child sexual abuse. They may include: a child abuse prevention organization, local police, child protection agency, child advocacy center, family support center, rape crisis center and many others. Make sure that you, your family and those you care about have this contact information and know how to use it.

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Use and share the resource list at the end of this discussion guide to find basic information on child sexual abuse and for more ideas about making your community safer.

If you have general questions about child sexual abuse:

American Humane Association, Children's Division (AHA)

63 Inverness Drive East, Englewood, CO 80112-5117
Office: (303) 792-9900 Fax: (303) 792-5333
Toll free: 1-800-227-4645 Website: www.amerhumane.org
A resource for professionals and concerned citizens providing the facts, resources, and referrals they need to help children and families in crisis and to prevent child abuse in their own neighborhoods.

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN)

300 C Street S.W., Washington, DC 20447
Office: (703) 385-7565 Fax: (703) 385-3206
Toll free: 1-800-FYI-3366 (1-800-394-3366)
Email: nccanch@calib.com Website: <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>
A resource and clearinghouse that collects, stores, organizes and disseminates information on all aspects of child maltreatment.

Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA)

200 South Michigan Ave., 17th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-2404
Office: (312) 663-3520 Fax: (312) 939-8962
Website: www.preventchildabuse.org
A volunteer-based organization committed to preventing child abuse in all its forms through research, public education, programs, and advocacy. Write for a catalogue of publications.

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PO Box 495, Haydenville, MA 01039
Office: (413) 268-3096 Fax: (413) 268-3098
Helpline: 1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368)
Email: info@stopitnow.org
Website: www.stopitnow.org
A national nonprofit with a ground-breaking public health approach to prevent the perpetration of child sexual abuse. Programs protect children by emphasizing adult and community responsibility. Stop It Now!'s confidential helpline is available for individuals and families who are concerned about inappropriate sexualized thoughts or behavior in themselves or in another adult, teenager, or child. Stop It Now! has sites in Georgia, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Vermont and the United Kingdom. Visit our website for contact information.

If you have questions about a child who may be sexually abused:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Charles B. Wang International Children Building,
699 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3175
Office: (703) 274-3900 Fax: (703) 274-2220
Website: www.ncmec.org
A clearinghouse for information on missing children and the prevention of child victimization. NCMEC's website brings images and information about missing children and a wealth of child protection information to a global audience. The CyberTipline, 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) is a toll free line to report any information pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children on the web or any industry that makes use of child pornography. (Report online at www.cybertipline.com.)

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)

2000 M Street N.W., Suite 480, Washington, DC 20036
Office: (202) 467-8700 Fax: (202) 467-8701
Toll free: 1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)
TDD: 1-800-211-7996
Email: webmaster@ncvc.org or gethelp@ncvc.org
Website: www.ncvc.org
An information and referral center for victims. Through its database of over 30,000 organizations, NCVC refers callers to critical services including crisis intervention, research information, assistance with the criminal justice process, counseling, support groups, and referrals to local attorneys in victim-related cases.

The National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC)

200 Westside Square, Suite 700, Huntsville, AL 35801
Office: (256) 533-0531, Fax: (256) 534-6883,
Website: www.nationalcac.org
A nonprofit providing prevention, intervention, and treatment services to physically and sexually abused children and their families through a child-focused team approach. Call for a local listing or affiliate.

If you have questions about sex offenders or sexually abusive behaviors:

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)

4900 S.W. Griffith Drive, Suite 274, Beaverton, OR 97005
Office: (503) 643-1023 Fax: (503) 643-5084
Email: atsa@atsa.com Website: www.atsa.com
A national organization developing and disseminating professional standards and practices in the field of sex offender research, evaluation, and treatment. Call for a referral to a local treatment provider.

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)

Center for Effective Public Policy, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 720,
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Office: (301) 589-9383 Fax: (301) 589-3505
Website: www.csom.org
Provides ready access to most of the current knowledge and effective practices in the field of sex offender supervision.

The Safer Society Foundation, Inc. (SSFI)

PO Box 340, Brandon, VT 05733-0340
Office: (802) 247-3132 Fax: (802) 247-4233
Website: www.saferociety.org
Provides services and publications for treatment providers, youth with sexual behavior problems, adult offenders, their families, survivors and mandated reporters. Call for a free catalogue. Call for a referral to a local treatment provider (M-F, 9-4:30PM EST).

Sex Abuse Treatment Alliance (SATA)

PO Box 1191, Okemos, MI 48805-1191
Office: (517) 482-2085 or (517) 372-8207
Email: help@satasort.org, Website: www.satasort.org
Provides a network of support for abusers who are currently in treatment, a newsletter on current issues for sexual abuser, and answers general questions about sex offender treatment.



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