

## TRUTH AND BETRAYAL USERGUIDE

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*Truth and Betrayal* deals with mature and contentious issues such as confidentiality, abuse, crime and justice—topics that are extremely relevant to youth. This film’s focal point is the impact of decision making.

The main characters, James and Nikki, are faced with the difficult choice between exposing the truth and betraying people close to them. Each must accept the consequences of choices that can ultimately change their lives. *Truth and Betrayal* invites young viewers to recognize their own ability to make important decisions and to communicate ideas about making a difference in their world.

This drama is an effective tool in social studies, health and personal development classes. It lends itself to discussions related to personal and social responsibility: how communication, conflict resolution and decision making are invaluable to personal growth and the well-being of a community.

See <<http://www.nfb.ca/truthandbetrayal>> for a full teacher’s guide and suggested lesson plans for secondary school.

### ***Suggested Pre-Screening Activities***

Youth at risk may act out through anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, criminal activity and even suicide. Risk factors can stem from family life, school experiences and other social relationships.

It is possible that students or audiences viewing this film are vulnerable to risk behaviour. It’s important in group discussions that no one be put on the spot; the facilitator or teacher should have on hand appropriate resources and ideas for follow-up.

Suggested questions for preparing for the film include:

- Examine what the expression “youth at risk” means to you, and how youth still have the power to make appropriate choices to avoid falling into anti-social behaviour, substance abuse or criminal activity. You may wish to make a list of risk factors and beside each risk, write the decisions for a different path.
- Have students read an article on the subject of youth at risk and write a personal response. Their ideas can serve as a springboard for more in-depth discussion.
- We suggest that teachers *not* talk about the plot of the film before screening it in class. *Truth and Betrayal* has an unusual storytelling style that should be revealed through the course of the film.

### ***Post-Screening Activities***

*Truth and Betrayal* is a complex film, so be sure to review the storyline with students. They may benefit from seeing it again. You may need to clarify that James is the same person in both stories. Ask the group for feedback on what they thought happened and use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Why is the film called *Truth and Betrayal*?
- What does "truth" mean? What does "betrayal" mean?
- What incidences of truth and betrayal are found in this film?
- What choices do the main characters face?
- What are your thoughts on how James handled the situations he faced?
  
- Assignment: Write an ending to the film. Describe what happens to Nikki and the situation with her father. What becomes of James and his friendship with Rick?
  
- Imagine that you are a friend of James or Nikki. What advice would you give them?
  
- In small groups, act out scenes from *Truth and Betrayal* or from the Interactive Plays listed in the teacher's guide. Add a character to the scene who changes the course of action. Discuss how this shows that one person's actions can be enough to make a difference in a community.
  
- Have a debate where students take different sides, encouraging everyone to see the circumstances from varying perspectives. Topics can include James's choice between telling and not telling about the plan to rob the video store, and Nikki's choice to stay at home with her abusive father or leave.

### ***Other related NFB titles***

Where Did You Sleep Last Night? (2001)

A Love That Kills (1999)

Love Taps (1996)