

# CROSS WIND PRODUCTIONS

## Discussion Guide

### Holly's Story

The Movie, Holly's Story, is a powerful drama of hope and restoration—a pro-life story of God's mercy and forgiveness for a teenage girl suffering from an abortion. It ministers primarily to the girl who has had an abortion and is trying to deal with the physical and psychological ramifications of that decision.

According to the website, [www.afterabortion.com](http://www.afterabortion.com), "By age 45, 43% of women in the United States have had at least one abortion."<sup>1</sup>

By viewing Holly's Story, teenagers have the opportunity to experience the consequences of abortion and the effects of post-abortion syndrome. Through this vicarious experience Holly's Story is an effective tool for addressing not only the sanctity of life but also the value of abstinence and God's forgiveness and healing for women who have had an abortion.

Holly's Story shows that there is healing and restoration through Jesus Christ.

*It is important that the movie, Holly's Story, be viewed in its entirety before entering in any discussion or asking the viewers any preliminary questions. Think of the movies you have watched and the importance of that fresh opportunity to form your own response without any preconceived expectations. The discussions following the movie will then be more original, candid and honest.*

#### NOTE TO FACILITATOR:

At the end of this curriculum, you will find some statistical information on abortions. This information is included in case your discussions lead to further questions on the topic of abortion and other options.

**All of the statistical information is designed for the facilitator's benefit. This information allows the facilitator to be better prepared for discussion after the movie has been viewed. The intent of this information is to enlighten the facilitator about abortion issues and to help the facilitator share with the viewers love and acceptance thru Jesus Christ.**

HOLLY'S STORY DEALS WITH THE MATURE, SENSITIVE TOPIC OF ABORTION AND POST-ABORTION SYNDROME. IT MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THIRTEEN.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOME GROUPS, PARENTAL PERMISSION MAY BE REQUIRED.

<sup>1</sup> [www.afterabortion.com](http://www.afterabortion.com), February, 2003.

## SHORT ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION for HOLLY'S STORY

1. Holly, the main character in the movie, made a series of choices. Identify and discuss several of them. What were the outcomes of those choices?
2. Discuss the choices made by the other characters in the story and the outcomes of those choices: (Chad, Will, Vanessa, Holly's parents, etc.)
3. Why didn't Holly tell her parents she was seeing Chad?
4. Vanessa and Will have the same parents and the same home environment. What makes them different?
5. Like the character Will, have you ever been in a situation where you could help a friend? *Discuss then read Hebrews 10:23-24.*
6. If a friend confided in you that she had an abortion, what could you say or do that would be of real help to her? *Discuss then read Romans 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 Peter 1:3-7.*
7. Would it have mattered if Will refused to cover for Holly? Why/why not?
8. Are people more easily influenced by bad or by good? Why?
9. How can you protect yourself from being influenced for the bad? How can you help yourself be influenced for the good?
10. What's the difference between a big sin and a little sin? *Read James 2:10.* Is one easier for God to forgive than the other? *Discuss then read 1 John 1:8-9 and 1 John 2:1-2.*
11. If God "remembers sin no more," why are there lasting consequences to sin? If you have lasting consequences to sin, does that mean you are not forgiven? *Re-read 1 John 1:9.*
12. Is it ever okay to have an abortion? *Discuss then read Ephesians 1:4-6 and Psalms 139:13-16.*
13. Do you believe abortion should be illegal? Why /why not?

## IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION for HOLLY'S STORY

### TOPIC I: PEOPLE

## Holly

1. Why did Holly feel the need to hide her relationship with Chad?
  - a. Discuss parents' response to certain friends/boyfriends.
  - b. Discuss using her friend Will to cover for her. Is that fair to the friend? Why/why not?
2. Do you agree with the phrase "Girls give sex to get love and boys give love to get sex"? Is this a fair statement? Why/why not? Is this true of Holly & Chad's relationship?
3. How did Holly change after her relationship with Chad became a sexual one?
4. Chad commented that he loved her innocent quality. Chad saw Holly's innocence as attractive. Why?
  - a. Can innocence be restored after a sexual relationship?
  - b. Can God restore innocence? Discuss "Second Virginity."
5. Once Holly thought she was pregnant, to whom did she go?
  - a. Why Vanessa?
  - b. How did Holly's parents react to her decision to have an abortion? How should parents react? *Thought question:* How would your parents react?
6. Do you think people who picket abortion clinics are effective in preventing abortions? Why/why not? How did Holly respond to the people outside of the clinic?
7. Inside the clinic, Holly seemed frightened. Why?
8. Why did Holly's mother pretend not to hear the girl crying?
9. Describe the other patients in the waiting room.
10. Describe the doctor and the nurse. How did they respond to Holly? *Read Matthew 18:7 and Matthew 18:10-11*

11. Describe Holly's parents' reaction after the abortion. Why did her mother ignore her? Why did Holly refuse her father's offer of his coat?
12. After the abortion, why didn't Holly's mother enter her bedroom when she heard Holly crying?
13. Discuss the downward spiral Holly experienced after the abortion.
  - a. Relationship with Chad
  - b. Alcohol, drugs
  - c. Shutting out parents
  - d. Relationship with Will
  - e. Nightmares
  - f. Thoughts of suicide
14. Does every woman experience what Holly experienced? Why/why not?
15. In what ways did the counselor help Holly?
16. Holly couldn't believe that God could forgive her. Are there sins so big that God won't forgive them? *Read James 2:10; 1 John 1:8-9; 1 John 2:1-2*

## Vanessa

1. Were Holly and Vanessa best friends? Why/why not?
2. Was Vanessa's experience with abortion the same as Holly's? Why/why not?
3. To whom would you go for advice in a situation like Holly's?
4. Why did Vanessa tell Will about Holly's abortion?
5. Why do you think Vanessa reacts angrily with Holly even when giving her advice?
6. Do Will and Vanessa have a close relationship? Did she ever tell Will about her abortion?

## Will

1. Why did Will lie for Holly?
2. Did Will ever feel like Holly was taking advantage of him? If so, why did he allow it?

3. If Will hadn't covered for Holly, would it have mattered?
4. Do you think Will tried to help his sister like he tried to help Holly? If so, why did she reject his help?
5. Vanessa and Will have the same parents and the same home environment. How and why are they different?
6. Like the character Will, have you ever been in a situation where you could help a friend?  
*Discuss then read, Hebrews 10:23-24.*
3. If you were Will, what would you have done differently?
4. What did Will know about the love of Jesus and His forgiveness?

## **Chad**

1. Chad confessed to Holly that he had been with a lot of girls before her. Why did he say this?
2. Why are guys admired for being with a lot of women? Is it the same for girls? If not, why not?
3. If guys decide to stay pure until marriage, how do their peers respond? Is it the same for girls?
4. Why is a girl blamed more than a guy when she gets pregnant?
5. How do double-standards differ from God's standard?
6. Did Chad really love Holly? If so, why did he later reject her?
7. Chad was very upset over the loss of his child. Do guys experience the same emotional pain after an abortion?
8. Should the father have a voice in the choice of abortion? Why/why not?
9. If Holly chose to keep her child, what would be Chad's obligations to her and his child?

## TOPIC II: GOD'S WORD

### Popular Excuses verses God's Word

#### ***Activity:***

*Break the group into mini-groups. Have each group take a "Popular Excuse" and read the Bible verses that coincide with that "Excuse". Ask them to talk about, in their own words, what the scripture really says about man's excuses verses God's Word. Have them write in their own words what the scripture says. Scripture references are taken from the New International Version.<sup>2</sup>*

At the end of this session distribute a wallet size presentation of the above table as a reminder of the lessons learned about this movie.

<b>When someone says...</b>	<b>God's Word Says...</b>	<b>What did you find in the Word?</b>
"It's her problem, not mine."	John 13:34; Galatians 6:2; Proverbs 31:8	
"It's my choice!"	Proverbs 14:12, Genesis 1:27	
"It's my body!"	Psalms 24:1, 100:3, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20	
"It's a mistake!"	Isaiah 45:9-12	
"It's not a baby yet!"	Psalms 139:13	
"A welfare case!"	Proverbs 22:2, Job 29:12	
"A baby? A burden!"	Psalms 127:3-5	
"Right to die!"	Job 12:10; Psalms 8:4-5, 71:18	
"God won't forgive abortion"	John 3:17, Romans 8:1-2, Psalms 34:22, Colossians 2:13-14, Philippians 3:13b	

<sup>2</sup> Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by International Bible Society. Use of either trademark requires the written permission of International Bible Society.

### TOPIC III: MICHELLE'S TESTIMONY

*An Interview on the Holly's Story DVD is the testimony of Michelle Sprawls. She talks very candidly about her abortion. It is an important testimony for all audience members to see.*

Discussion Questions following Michelle's Testimony:

1. Michelle was led astray being told that an abortion was a minor procedure. Are other young girls being told the same thing? Why?
2. A 2003 study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute says that 70.2% of abortions are among those professing to be Christians.<sup>3</sup> How do you explain that?
3. Michelle talks very candidly about her struggles after the abortion – drugs, alcohol, strained relationships with men. She was suffering from a symptom called “Post Abortion Stress Syndrome”. Women develop coping mechanisms to deal with their decision like rationalization, repression, suppression and compensation. How did Michelle exhibited each of these coping mechanisms?
4. How did Michelle finally receive God's forgiveness? Can Jesus do the same for any girl that finds herself in the same position as Michelle? What is needed before Christ can forgive you?
5. Connie Nykiel discusses the following STEPS OF FORGIVENESS in her book, No One Told Me I Could Cry: : A Teen's Guide to Hope and Healing After Abortion:<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Forgiving God
  - b. Forgiving Others
  - c. Asking God to Forgive You
  - d. Forgiving Yourself
  - e. Asking the Baby to Forgive You.

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<sup>3</sup> Physicians for Reproductive Choice & Health; The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2003. The Guttmacher Institute (formerly a special affiliate of Planned Parenthood), actively collects the abortion data directly from providers. All numbers reported are voluntary; there are no laws requiring abortionists to report to any national agency the numbers of abortions they perform. 2006-2007 are estimates of 1,206,200 abortions annually.

<sup>4</sup> No One Told Me I Could Cry: A Teen's Guide to Hope and Healing After Abortion, Connie Nykiel, Life Cycle Books Ltd., Lewiston, NY. 2001.

6. Discuss each step. How would each of these steps help someone suffering from Post Abortion Stress Syndrome?
7. When Michelle finally allowed God to forgive her, what did she say happened?
8. Even though God forgave her, she still had to deal with the consequences of her actions. What were they?
9. If God clearly forgives us and forgets our sin, why must we suffer some consequences?
10. If you have lasting consequences to sin, does that mean you are not forgiven? *Read 1 John 1:9.*
11. How is God healing Michelle's wounds?
12. What was God's plan for Michelle's life following her abortion?
13. *Read Jeremiah 29:11-13.* Does God's have a plan for your life? Can that plan still be fulfilled even if you have sinned?

#### TOPIC IV: DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

**One of the by-products of the movie, Holly's Story, is to equip teenagers to counsel a friend who is considering an abortion or has had an abortion. The previous discussions should prepare viewers to respond Biblically to the following questions.**

1. One of the goals of Holly's Story is for you to be able to talk openly about abortion and equip you to help others. From our discussion if a friend confided in you that she had an abortion, what could you say or do that would be of real help to her?
2. If a friend confided in you before she chose to have an abortion, how could you influence her to choose life?
3. Is it ever okay to have an abortion? *Discuss then read Ephesians 1: 4-6 and Psalms 139: 13-16*
4. Do you believe abortion should be illegal? Why or Why not?

5. In Connie Nykiel's book, No One Told Me I Could Cry, the author describes abortion as a "secret sorrow,"... a grief that cannot be shown in public, is not allowed by family and friends or is not recognized by others." How does this describe Holly's situation?
6. If 100,516 babies are aborted every month then probably there are at least 25,000 grieving teenage mothers/fathers each month. Teen mothers who do not heal, who do not understand God's grace and forgiveness, are more likely to have more abortions. How can you make a difference?
7. Author Connie Nykiel recommends the mother name her baby and ask the baby for forgiveness. How could this help a teen mother who has had an abortion?

### RESOURCE INFORMATION FOR FACILITATORS:

It has become fashionable in America to avoid the discussion of sensitive or painful topics like abortion in order to not hurt anyone's feelings. Though it is important to be sensitive to the feelings of others, the Bible gives clear direction to tell the truth in love. *Read James 5:19-20.*

There are two key attributes of God discussed in this Discussion Guide. First, that God is a just God. It is not a matter of choice; it is a matter of the value of human life. The Bible admonishes us to take up the standard for those who are not in a position to defend themselves. *Read Proverbs 31:8.*

To dismiss abortion as a normal procedure—one that has no lasting, devastating consequences leaves that woman who had an abortion lost in her pain and despair. We must share the healing forgiveness found in God's Word.

Secondly, God is a forgiving God. As stewards of God's Word to this generation of teenagers, we must share God's grace and forgiveness to those who have had abortions. Abortion is not an unforgivable sin.

### Helpful Resources:

No One Told Me I Could Cry: A Teen's Guide to Hope and Healing After Abortion, Connie Nykiel, Life Cycle Books Ltd., Lewiston, NY. 2001.

Psalm 30:11-12

Your prepared list of local, trusted Christian counselors.

1-800- HELP.

## Statistics/Facts:

United States Abortion Statistics, last update, February 13, 2008, reports that 49,523,945 abortions have occurred between the years 1973 to 2007.

Life begins at fertilization. Genetically, a new human being comes into existence from the earliest moment of conception. As early as 21 days after conception the baby's heart begins to beat, and the baby has his or her own unique blood type, often different than the mother's. <sup>5</sup>

At 40 days after conception, brain waves can be read on an EEG, or an electroencephalogram.<sup>6</sup>

## Scripture References:

Genesis 1:27

Matthew 5:21-22

Jeremiah 1:5

Job 10:8-12

Exodus 20:13

Exodus 21:22-23

Psalms 139:13-14

Matthew 6:14

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<sup>5</sup> Moore & Persaud, *The Developing Human*, p. 310; Nilsson & Hamberger, *A Child is Born*, p. 86; Tugh & Shettles, *From Conception to Birth*, p. 217.)

<sup>6</sup> Dr. H. Hamilin, *Life or Death by EEG*, *JAMA*, Oct. 12, 1964, p.113.