



# Discussion Guide for

## GLOSS

### Objectives

- To explore how the media tries to persuade young girls to look and act older.
- To dramatize the difficulties and consequences of lying.
- To present some of the benefits, as well as realistic liabilities, of being honest.
- To learn how Cultural stereotypes such as body image can lead to eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia.
- To dramatize how a girl's reputation can be damaged by dressing and acting "cheap."

### Synopsis

Girls in modern society are more and more pressured to look, dress and act older than they are. Particularly with the advent of breast development and rounded hips, girls are perceived to be sexually advanced far beyond their age-appropriate emotional development. The cultural push is to subordinate your own values and thoughts to conform to a cultural model of being cool, sexy and "sophisticated." Gloss explores this conflict between authentic individuality and cultural stereotypes, and the confusion, suffering, personal and social consequences of being someone other than who you really are. Angel, an 8th grader in middle school passes herself off at a party as someone older.

She is about to have a serious date with Terry, a boy in late high school, whom she met at the party. Angel gets her sister to give her a complete make-over for her date with Terry. The problem is that Terry, taking Angel for a peer, tries to seduce her and bring her home to his parents house while they are away. Angel, who is deeply into the status of having an older boyfriend but no way into being seduced, has to decide whether to seriously compromise her values, or to come clean and be honest with Terry.

### Questions To Ask Before Viewing

1. What are some of the ways the media influences kids your age?
2. How does the media portray middle school girls?
3. What are some of the ways the media exploits sexuality?
4. Do you think all cultures are so focused on whether or not girls look "sexy?" Explain.
5. IS there anything wrong with dressing and acting like you are older than you really are?
6. What happens if you lie to a friend?
7. True or false: Dating an older guy is a status symbol for many girls. Explain.
8. True or false: If a girl's body has developed in puberty, then she is ready in all ways to be sexually active. Explain.

### Time Out Exploring Possibilities

Mike: (to Angel) "So what are you gonna do? It's time to make up your mind."

1. What are some options available at this point for Angel?
2. What are some positive and negative consequences of each option?
3. Given what you know about Angel and her situation, what do you think she will do? Why?

### Questions To Ask After Viewing

1. What were some of the articles Angel's friend is reading at the beginning of the video? (Some of the articles were "Ten Ways to Snag Your Crush," "Be a Venus Guy-Trap for Those Yummy Hunks," and "Fat Attack.- Ditch that Flab Fast.
2. Why is Angel's report card so poor? (Angel is so into her looks and popularity that she doesn't seem to take her schoolwork seriously. She doesn't take homework seriously, and doesn't seem to care that she gets low grades.)
3. Angel says her friend Tiffany is a "phony." What is a phony to you? (Subjective, but worth talking about since it is such a major issue in middle and high school.)

4. What would have happened if Angel had gone home with Terry? (There is no right or wrong answer to this question, but it should be clear that Terry is significantly older, and seems to expect dating behavior that is inappropriate to Angel.)

5. Do you blame Terry for walking out on Angel at the end? Explain. (Again, there is no right or wrong answer. However, it is true that Terry feels tricked, which in fact he was. Also, he must feel humiliated that he fell for it. Terry, to some people, seems like a kid who would like to be cool," but doesn't have a clue. Therefore he might be sensitive to being teased by others if they found out.)

6. Mike, Angel's friend's brother, seems to like Angel, Did you like Mike as a person? Why or why not? (There is no right or wrong answer. However, Mike does seem to like Angel for the person she is, not for her image. He also tries to warn her from going home with Terry, but does not put her down-)

7. What are some reasons Angel doesn't want to date a middle school boy? (One answer is that her friends might think it's a status symbol to date older boys. Also, some girls develop faster than boys, and so look to older boys as dates rather than dating boys that to them are immature.)

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8. Why does Angel's sister, Slo Mo, give her a complete make-over to look 18? (Slo Mo seems to be very much into looks. She herself dresses and acts older than she is, and so she naturally assumes it's all right to do a make-over on her younger sister to help her be more attractive to older boys.)

9. Do you think Angel has learned any important life lessons from this experience? Explain. (Subjective, Angel did, however, tell Terry the truth and face the consequences of her deception. Also her friends support her at the end for being herself.) 10. Do you think the media tries to make young girls act and dress older than they are chronologically? Explain- (There is no right or wrong answer, but the media-magazines, TV, movies—often show young girls in a sexy, pseudo-sophisticated light. Also, millions of dollars is spent on advertising that cries to entice girls to wear sexy clothes, make-up and perfume.)

### Additional inquiry

- Research: What are some different ways that other cultures view female beauty?
- Discuss: All cosmetics should be thrown away so that people can relax and be who they really are.
- Discuss: Girls are often several years more advanced physically and socially than boys in middle school and early high school.
- Discuss: Girls often have sexual experiences only because they want the other person as a partner.
- What are some of the ways people in your school try to gain status?

### Programs Details

#### Length:

14 minutes

#### Subject Areas:

Health & Guidance

#### Audience Levels:

Junior-Senior High

#### Order Number:

1-9109SG

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