



***Fighter* Teacher Resource**

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to the members of our Teacher Advisory Committee, who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets teacher resources.

TITLE: *Fighter*

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Denmark

RELEASE YEAR: 2007

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: Danish

DIRECTOR: Natasha Arthy

RUNTIME: 97 minutes

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

1. *Fighter* (2007)
2. *Se til venstre, der er en Svensker* (2003)
3. *Mirakel* (2000) – screened at Sprockets 2001
4. *Barbie* (1997)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

- Grades 9 and 10 Health and Physical Education (Girls)
 - Living Skills
- Grades 9 and 10 Social Sciences and Humanities
 - Self and Others; Personal and Social Responsibilities; Social Challenges; Diversity, Interdependence and Global Concerns

FOCUSING QUESTION: What is the importance of making wise decisions and choices?



SYNOPSIS:

One of the most gifted kung fu students in Denmark is seventeen, disciplined, driven, dedicated and talented. This student also happens to be female, and a Muslim. Aïcha's family expects her to study hard and become a doctor, just like her brother, but she would rather practise kung fu. Her passion for the martial art leads her to join an elite-level club. The only problem is that the club is mixed: Aïcha will have to both train and fight with males. Such physical contact with the opposite sex is unacceptable according to the traditions of her Turkish Muslim community, so Aïcha decides to train in secret. She quickly improves and becomes one of the team's best fighters.

But when Omar, a fellow member of Copenhagen's close-knit Turkish community, joins the club, he threatens to reveal her secret – a revelation that would shame her family and endanger her beloved brother's impending marriage. Torn between family and tradition, and the pursuit of her passion and dreams, Aïcha must make some big decisions. *Fighter* will enthrall audiences with its high-energy, exquisitely choreographed fight scenes, while Semra Turan's stirring performance as Aïcha and Natasha Arthy's wonderful direction provide sensitive insights into a young woman caught between two cultures on her journey of self-discovery.

N.B. Some violence.

Recommended for grades 9 through 12

AN EDUCATOR'S COMMENTS ON THE FILM:

"I would bring my students to view this film for its realistic depiction of the challenges involved in making wise decisions."

PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION:

A review of the decision-making process enriches the film experience. The protagonist is compelled to make choices between achieving her personal goals and conforming to family, peer and school expectations.



Large Group Activity: Identify a decision or choice that many students will be making soon; for example, whether to attend a party where the student knows drinking and possibly drug use will occur. Many of his or her friends will be there. Discuss what influences or values will determine the student's decision to go. Answers will vary – peers, parents, media, culture, religion, etc.

Small Group Activity: Arrange students into groups of three or four.

- a) Each group prepares a two-column sheet of paper with the left heading labelled *Decisions/Choices* and the right titled *Influences/Values*.
- b) Each group lists several decisions or choices they will likely be making in the next few years.
- c) In the right column, opposite the decision, students write what values or influences will affect their decision/choice.
- d) After about twenty minutes, students return to the large group and share their results.

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY

At the start of the film, Aïcha is a self-confident senior student focused on excelling at kung fu fighting. As some of her decisions and choices start to conflict with her family's expectations, she begins a pattern of behaviour that leads to increasing alienation and isolation from family, friends and school.

Here are some thoughts for students to consider when completing the small group assignment below: Is Aïcha really so selfish? Is her father unreasonably "old school"? (Remember that he allowed her to participate on a girls' kung fu team at school for three years.) Are Omar and Jasmin good role models for Aïcha's developing relationship with Emil?

On the next page, a table of some of Aïcha's decisions is provided. In groups of three or four, students should answer the following:

- a) Consider the values or influences that determined each of Aïcha's decisions and record them in the Values/Influences column.

- b) Suggest how she could have prevented or de-escalated the conflicts that arose from some of her choices.
- c) Comment on whether you feel that the issues have been resolved in a satisfactory manner.
- d) A recurring image of a masked kung fu fighter chasing Aïcha appears throughout the film. What do you think this image means? (Reminder: she fights with the assailant in the final scene.)

Aïcha's Decisions/Choices

Decision/Choice	Values/Influences	Consequence	Resolution
Disobeys her father and continues to attend kung fu classes		Father feels betrayed by her; he loses a job because of a broken wedding engagement	Apologizes to her father; tells him she will repeat her school year and make something of herself
Deceives Ali (briefly) as she runs to gym after Ali drops her off at school		Alienates her brother; his wedding engagement is cancelled	Apologizes to her brother; assists him during his attack; advises him to apologize to Jasmin's parents
Cuts classes; doesn't hand in assignments; lies to teacher about parental support		Fails her school year	Plans to repeat her year
Leaves party at Sofie's apartment because of drinking and talk of pre-marital sex		Alienates her friends	Sleeps in gym

Avoids romantic contact with Emil		Distances herself from Emil	Sets limits on her relationship with Emil
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After students have completed the chart and discussed the questions in their small groups (about twenty minutes), have them return to the large group and share their answers.

CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP:

Students should be aware of the effect their choices have on all aspects of their lives and the importance of making wise decisions for growth and development.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

1. *Bend It Like Beckham* (directed by Gurinder Chadha, 2002). The theme and subjects of this movie are the same as *Fighter* and would make an excellent comparison.
2. Covey, Sean. *The 6 Most Important Decisions You'll Ever Make: A Guide for Teens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
3. Covey, Sean. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens: The Ultimate Teen Success Guide*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.