

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BAMBI

A Child's First Encounter With Death

A gentle story that helps children understand loss, grief, and the continuation of life.

The sadness a child feels is real. It is also, in important ways, useful. They are learning something about how loss works in the world they are growing into."

ABOUT THE FILM

Bambi follows a young deer from birth through loss and into adulthood. When Bambi's mother is killed by an unseen hunter, he must learn to survive, with the help of his father and the support of the forest, until he becomes a parent himself.



WHAT CHILDREN LEARN



UNDERSTANDING LOSS

Children learn that loss is a real part of life and that feelings of sadness are okay.



FEELINGS CAN BE HELD

It's okay to feel many emotions—sadness, love, anger, or fear.



LIFE CONTINUES

Even after loss, life continues, and new growth is possible.



CONNECTION HEALS

Support from others helps us get through hard times.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



What part of Bambi's story stood out to you the most?



How did Bambi feel when his mother didn't come back? How could you tell?



Why do you think the story didn't show his mother getting hurt?



What helped Bambi get through his grief?



Who are the people or animals that help Bambi in the story? Who helps you when you feel sad?



What does the story teach us about life continuing?



How can we remember someone we love who has died?

What gives you hope in this story?

GO DEEPER

- How does the forest community show care for one another?
- What are some "life continues" moments in your own life?
- How do seasons in the story remind us that change is a natural part of life?
- How can we honor someone we miss while still moving forward?

*Life goes on.
We grow, we change,
and we carry love
forward.*

ACTIVITY: OUR MEMORY TREE

- 1 Draw or cut out a tree.
- 2 Add leaves with memories, words, or pictures of someone you love and miss.
- 3 Talk about what you remember and what made them special.
- 4 Find a special way as a family to honor their memory.



Even in the hardest moments, love and connection help us keep going.



FOR PARENTS

Your calm presence helps children feel safe. Answer questions honestly, listen with open hearts, and let them know it's okay to feel whatever they feel.



BE PRESENT

Sit close, listen, and let feelings be shared.



USE SIMPLE WORDS

Speak honestly in age-appropriate ways.



NORMALIZE FEELINGS

Sadness, crying, anger, and quiet are all okay.



CREATE RITUALS

Small traditions can help honor love and memory.



LOOK FOR GROWTH

Point out signs of life and new beginnings around you.



Children don't need us to have all the answers. They need us to be with them, to love them, and to walk beside them.



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.