



The
Florida
Project

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Warm, winning and gloriously alive, Sean Baker's *THE FLORIDA PROJECT* is a deeply moving and unforgettably poignant look at childhood. Set on a stretch of highway just outside the imagined utopia of Disney World, *THE FLORIDA PROJECT* follows six-year-old Moonee and her rag-tag gang of friends. Moonee and her rebellious mother Halley live week to week at "The Magic Castle," a budget motel managed by Bobby, whose stern exterior hides a deep reservoir of kindness and compassion.

Despite her harsh surroundings, the precocious and ebullient Moonee has no trouble making each day a celebration of life, her endless afternoons overflowing with mischief and grand adventure as she and her playmates fearlessly explore the utterly unique world into which they've been thrown. Unbeknownst to Moonee, however, her delicate fantasy is supported by the struggle and sacrifice of Halley, who is forced to explore increasingly dangerous possibilities in order to provide for her daughter. With *THE FLORIDA PROJECT*, Sean Baker gives life and a voice to a community rarely seen on screen. Through the eyes of Moonee, Halley, and Bobby, Baker has created a spellbinding and transformative portrait of contemporary lives lived in the margins that are otherwise too easily forgotten. *THE FLORIDA PROJECT* declares, boldly and proudly, that anywhere can be a Magic Kingdom - it just depends on how you see it.

To watch *THE FLORIDA PROJECT* is to be deeply affected by it. The film raises really important questions. What can I do to help kids like Moonee? What causes this situation? What are the solutions? This action guide is meant as a jumping off point to answering these questions and hopefully encouraging new ones. Here you'll find some helpful resources as well.

Total Running Time: 1 hour 55 minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE OVERVIEW

Watching *THE FLORIDA PROJECT* can be an incredibly moving experience. You may feel afterwards that you want to do something to help families like Moonee's. Talking about the emotions the film evokes can be the next step to advocating for change. This discussion guide will help you to generate a conversation about family homelessness – what Sean Baker, the director of *THE FLORIDA PROJECT*, has called "hidden homelessness." We hope it will also encourage viewers to become a part of the solution to end family homelessness and poverty.





MAIN CHARACTERS

- Moonee, the six-year-old protagonist (Brooklynn Prince)
- Halley, her mother (Bria Vinaite)
- Bobby, the motel manager (Willem Dafoe)
- Jancey, Moonee's best friend, who lives at Futureland Inn (Valeria Cotto)
- Jancey's grandmother (Stacy Josie Olivo)
- Scooty, Moonee's friend, whose mother, Ashley, works at the restaurant (Christopher Rivera)
- Ashley, Scooty's mother and Halley's friend (Mela Murder)

ISSUES TO WATCH FOR

The film touches on some heavy issues that are often felt by families experiencing homelessness. As you watch, note which of these arise and how they affect the story.

- Housing instability
- Helping each other
- Job loss/unemployment, or lack of living-wage jobs
- The high cost of housing
- Generational poverty
- Resilience and survival behavior
- Gaps in our social safety net
- Foster care and the child welfare system
- The effects of childhood trauma
- Lack of quality childcare
- Child hunger