

“Fathers Too Soon” Teaching & Discussion Guide



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Channel One’s three-part series exploring the lives of teen fathers offers an excellent starting point for discussion about teen pregnancy and its consequences. The purpose of this discussion guide is to help youth program leaders, teachers, parents, and young people explore in greater depth some of the issues raised in the video. Because no single message will work for everyone, we urge you to begin a dialogue and help your group identify its own priorities, views, and expectations – and ideas for how to *prevent* teen pregnancy in the first place.

To find out more about the facts, consequences, and prevention messages that can help young people avoid pregnancy — or to order postcards, pamphlets, posters, or additional videos — visit the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy’s web site (www.teenpregnancy.org). The site also contains interactive quizzes and surveys designed specifically for teens.



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“Fathers Too Soon”: Part I Teaching & Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

- ❶ What do you think would be the hardest part of being a teen dad?
- ❷ How would your friends react if you had a child?
- ❸ How would your life change if you had a child? What would the implications be for school? social life? family life? money? job?
- ❹ Both Allan Edwards and Allen Cunningham talked about how their relationships with their girlfriends changed after pregnancy. Why do you think this happened? Do you think your relationship might change if your partner got pregnant?
- ❺ How would you react if you found out that your partner (or you) was pregnant?
- ❻ How do you think your partner would react if she (or you) were pregnant?
- ❼ Since fathers are required, by law, to financially support their children, how would you (or your partner) help earn the \$5,000/year it costs, on average, to raise a baby? What in your (or your partner's) life would have to change?
- ❽ Do you think Allan and Allen took responsibility for their actions?
- ❾ How can a guy prevent himself from becoming a teen dad?

Activity: Create a Budget

Write up your current monthly budget – making a list of all income (i.e. allowance, paychecks, gifts) and expenses (i.e. money spent on CDs, movies, food, clothes). Now, factor in a baby, and re-write the budget.

- Can you afford a child on your current budget?
- What changes would you have to make in order to support a child?



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“Fathers Too Soon”: Part II Teaching & Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

- ❶ Do you think you (or your partner) are ready to be a father? Why or why not?
- ❷ Max regrets becoming a father too soon. Do you think most teen dads feel this way? Why?
- ❸ Nearly eight out of ten teen dads don't marry the mothers of their children. Why do you think so many of these relationships don't last?
- ❹ The video mentions that children born to teen parents are twice as likely to drop out of school and girls are 22 percent more likely to become teen mothers themselves. What other ways might children born to teen mothers suffer? (Partial Answer: They are twice as likely to be abused and neglected. Sons of teen mothers are more likely to end up in jail. Babies born to teen mothers are at greater risk of mental retardation, blindness, deafness, mental illness, cerebral palsy, and infant death.)

Activity: True/False

- ✓ You can get pregnant the first time you have sex. (*True*)
- ✓ You can use plastic wrap if you don't have a condom. (*False*)
- ✓ The only 100% effective way not to get pregnant is not to have sex. (*True*)
- ✓ Fewer than half of teens in high school have ever had sex. (*True*)
- ✓ 2 out of 3 teens say they are not embarrassed to admit that they're virgins. (*True*)



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“Fathers Too Soon”: Part III Teaching & Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

- ❶ All of the teen dads in the video say they wish they had waited to become parents. Why do you think they didn't? (Poor moral and values? Parents not paying attention? Lack of sufficient motivation to avoid pregnancy? The influence of alcohol and drugs? Too hard to get other protection? The media?)
- ❷ How would Allan's life be different if he had waited until after college to start a family?
- ❸ What sources/people might make guys feel “pressure” to have sex? How about for girls? (In a recent national poll, more than one-third [37 percent] of teen girls said they have felt pressure from a partner to have sex and almost half [45 percent] of teen boys said they have felt pressure from friends.)
- ❹ How would you react if one of your friends got someone (or got) pregnant?
- ❺ What could you teach others from the stories of these teen dads?

Activity: Role Play

- ☒ Help a friend who is feeling pressure figure out how to wait.
- ☒ Tell your parents that your partner is pregnant, or that you are.
- ☒ Tell your girlfriend (or boyfriend) that you're not ready to have sex.