

“Mothers Too Soon” Teaching & Discussion Guide



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Channel One’s three-part series exploring the lives of teen mothers 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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“Mothers Too Soon”: Part I Teaching & Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

- ❶ What do you think would be the hardest part of being a teen mom?
- ❷ We heard many of the teen moms say, “I didn’t think it could happen to me.” Why do you think these girls did not feel that pregnancy could happen to them? Do you think this feeling is typical?
- ❸ How would your life change if you/your partner had a child? What would the implications be for school? social life? family life? money? job?
- ❹ Some of the teen moms featured in the video thought that their boyfriends would help raise their children. But the reality is, only 16 percent of teen fathers live with their children. Do you think the guys you know would stick around to help raise a child? Why or why not?
- ❺ In the introduction, we heard one of the teen mothers remark, “I never thought I’d have a baby at age 17. He told me that I wouldn’t get pregnant and I believed him.” What could she have done to protect herself against pregnancy?

Activity: Create a Schedule

Write up your current weekly schedule including all commitments and activities. Now, factor in a baby, and re-write the schedule.

- ❻ Do you have the time to care for a baby?
- ❼ What changes would you have to make in order to support a child?



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

Discussion Questions

- ❶ Tiffany was a cheerleader with a great social life before she got pregnant. Is Tiffany someone you'd expect to get pregnant? Why or why not?
- ❷ Why do you think teen girls get pregnant? (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?)
- ❸ Tiffany and Jesus's relationship changed after the birth of their baby. Why do you think this might have happened? Do you think your relationship might suffer similarly if you/your partner had a baby?
- ❹ Jesus is becoming less and less involved in his son's life and Tiffany suspects that she might wind up raising their son, William, on her own. How might William be affected if he grows up without his father around?
- ❺ Did anything surprise you about the daily life of a teen mom? (Did you know how many times they get up at night? Did you know how much money it costs?)
- ❻ Does it surprise you that only one-third of teen mothers receive their high school diploma?

Activity: True/False

- To prevent pregnancy, you only need to take birth control pills when you are going to have sex. (*False*)
- If you trust your partner, there is no need to use protection. (*False*)
- You can get pregnant even if a girl takes a shower or bath right after 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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“Mothers Too Soon”: Part III Teaching & Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

- ❶ All of the teen moms in the video said that they wished they had better communication with their parents. Do you think most teens want to talk to their parents about sex, love, and relationships? (Teens said parents influenced their decisions about sex more than any other source, according to a national poll taken in 2000.)
- ❷ Stephanie commented that she wished she had waited to have sex. Do you think many teens regret having sex? Why might teens regret having had sex? (In a recent national poll, sixty-three percent of teens under 18 who have had sexual intercourse wish they had waited longer. Fifty-five percent of these teen boys and seven of ten teen girls said they wish they had waited longer to have sex.)
- ❸ Why do you think the average income of a teen mom is half of the poverty level? What effect might this serious lack of money have on a mother and her baby?
- ❹ Why do you think girls with low self-esteem are more likely to have sex? What can be done to prevent these girls from feeling this way?
- ❺ There are many teens that are waiting until they are older and/or married to have sex. What are the advantages of waiting? (The overwhelming majority of teens [eighty-seven percent] do not think it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins.)
- ❻ What could you teach others from the stories of these teen moms?

Activity: Role Play

- ❷ Help a friend who is feeling pressure figure out how to wait.
- ❷ Say no to a partner that is pressuring you to have sex.
- ❷ Discuss with your partner how you will care for a baby.