

WORKING WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

STUDY GUIDE 29: "The People in the Pews"

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Make copies of handout: "The People in the Pews."
- Light a candle on a side table.
- Play soft background music.
- Tape chart paper to walls.

CALL TO LEARNING

In what ways can we support each other in our walk of faith?

OBJECTIVES

- To give youth a chance to respond to people with ordinary HIV-related concerns
- To emphasize the need for faith-based HIV prevention for all ages

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will:

- define the issues presented in the scenarios.
- outline an approach for responding to the persons involved.
- make a recommendation concerning faith-based HIV prevention education.

MATERIALS

Bibles

Markers

Chart paper

Masking tape

Candle

Inspirational music

Handout: "The People in the Pews."

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Proverbs 3:5-12

LEARNING CONTENT

▪ PREPARATION

With participants assembled in a large group, read the Scripture reference. Ask volunteers to briefly share one way that this passage speaks to them about their walk of faith. Then, break into small groups to read the handout: "The People in the Pews."

▪ ENGAGEMENT

Each group should follow the instructions at the bottom of the handout. They should also select a person to be the reporter. When the small groups have completed their discussion tasks, have them reassemble in a large group. Ask each reporter to summarize the small group's key arguments. When they announce their "advice," be sure they also disclose the rationale for the advice. Write each group's advice on chart paper and post around the room.

▪ APPLICATION

Apply the learnings from this session by writing a group letter to the pastor asking that HIV/AIDS education be established or enhanced for the congregation. Include at least one recommendation that reflects the potential risk of HIV infection that may exist within the congregation.

CLOSURE

Use the "Start, Stop, Continue" closure technique. Ask for random responses from individuals as to what they can start, stop, or continue doing with reference to HIV/AIDS prevention education.

TWO CASE SCENARIOS

DARRYL T. – Darryl T., a 26-year-old African American male, went to donate blood at a recent Red Cross Blood Drive and was informed that he is HIV-positive. Darryl contracted HIV by having unprotected sex with Nathan. He and Nathan are members of the same church in a Chicago suburb. Both sing in the young adult choir. Nathan knew that he was HIV-positive but, afraid of jeopardizing his job and his favorable standing in the church community, did not disclose his status until Darryl confronted him. Nathan is director of the church's youth choir and also the pastor's brother. The relationship between Darryl and Nathan has ended. Darryl has lived with Sonya, his girlfriend, for two years. He has not yet told her about Nathan or his HIV-positive status.

Darryl plans to move quietly from the Chicago area so as not to "cause trouble" for Nathan, Sonya, or the church. However, his family lives in nearby Chicago, he has very little money, and he has no health insurance. Darryl says he is disappointed in himself, afraid of what might happen to him, and wants to "get right with God."

Darryl comes to you, a young adult choir member, for advice and comfort. How do you advise Darryl on the issues he's facing?

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GEORGIA M. – Georgia M. is a 60-year old African American female whose husband of twenty-five years passed away three years ago. Nine months ago, she began dating Sydney, who had recently joined the church she attended. Georgia and her late husband had known Sydney and his former wife for years, but had infrequent personal contact.

The intimacy between Georgia and Sydney has been growing, but has not gone much beyond hugging and kissing. Sydney wants to get much closer; he has made it clear that he is interested in having sex. Georgia is considering it – she and her husband had an active sex life, especially after he started taking Viagra – but she has strong convictions against sex outside marriage. In addition, she has heard people talk about condoms, but knows nothing about using them or about the risk of STDs or HIV infection. Georgia does not know that AIDS cases are on the rise among older people. She is embarrassed to discuss such personal matters with Sydney or her pastor. She is searching for both information and spiritual guidance in making a decision about having sex with Sydney.

Georgia, feeling a little outside her comfort zone but desperately needing to talk with someone, comes to you – her grandson or granddaughter – for advice. How do you advise your grandmother regarding her concerns?