

Planning to Parent, Day 2: Do I Want Children? How Many? When?

Grades 9 and 10, Lesson #17

Time Needed

one class period

Student Learning Objectives

To be able to...

1. Cite 3 reasons people might choose each of 3 different family sizes.
2. Cite 3 reasons people might delay parenting until maturity.
3. Cite 3 reasons people might choose to be adoptive, foster or unofficial parents.

Agenda:

1. Explain the lesson's purpose.
2. Assign 2 volunteers to each of the 10 sets of instructions. Conduct the exercise by having those 20 students prepare for 5 minutes, while you give instructions to the others.
3. Each team presents their decision to the class, while the others act as a timer, an M.C., and raters.
4. Add the scores, present the awards, discuss and summarize.

Material Needed

One class set of:

Instructions for Teams (cut into 10 Instructions, each taped to an index card, or copied onto cardstock and cut into cards)

Ten reusable copies of:

Issues Some Couples/Individuals Consider

Up to eight per class period (depending on class size) of:

Scoresheet

Two per class period of:

Child Planning Award

Stopwatch or watch with a sweep second hand

Ten Index Cards (see above)

Activities

1. Explain the lesson's purpose and relevance:

We have looked at the issue of abstinence and later we'll examine one of the potentially traumatic situations that may face people who don't abstain from intercourse, or use birth control, namely an "un-planned or mis-timed pregnancy."

However, I don't want anyone to forget that intercourse can have wonderful, happy consequences, as well ... it sometimes, after all, leads to the birth of much-desired babies. Today we'll explore the decisions people make about planning children. Yes, it does sometimes happen by choice!

This lesson will give you an opportunity to try to understand the decisions people make about whether or not to have children, how many children to have and when to have them. We'll also look at other ways people meet their needs to be parents, besides giving birth.

2. Assign 2 volunteers to each of the 10 sets of instructions. Note that teams number 2, 3, 6, 7, and 9 are "couples" ... although you may want to make most of these teams co-ed, the genders of the other teams are irrelevant.

In classes with fewer than 20 students, you will have fewer than 10 teams ... In that case, instructions 1 through 8 are the most crucial (see "Instructions for Teams") if you have to drop a couple.

Explain to the 20 volunteers (10 teams): *"You will have 5 minutes to plan your presentations. Then, each team will have 2 minutes to talk to the class. You will receive points for:*

- *both people participating,*
- *explaining the reasons for their parenting decision (the more reasons they give, the more points they'll get),*
- *using their entire 2 minutes,*
- *treating the exercise seriously and speaking with sincerity (the more seriously they take it, the more points they'll get)*

There will be awards and 10 extra credit points for the team with the highest score, just to spice up the game, but everyone who participates will get the usual participation points. The object of the game is learning, not winning, so it's important not to put competition above all else.

For teams who get "stuck," we've provided a list of issues some couples/individuals consider when deciding whether and when to have children. (We suggest providing that list only after teams have expressed a need for help.)

While those 20 students prepare their presentations, you give instructions to the others.

The **timekeeper's** job will be to let each team know when they have spoken for a full two minutes and to announce to the scorekeepers the actual presentation time for each team.

The **emcee** will introduce each team by name and will explain (using the "Instructions for Teams" card) what their decision is. (e.g., "This is Mark and Paul. They are each about to become an adoptive father. Mark, Paul, tell us why you've decided to adopt.")

One or more **scorekeepers** will rate the presentations. Discuss with them the point system (see top of Scoresheet). Make sure they understand that they will **not** be assigning points according to whether they agree or disagree with the team's decision. The **only** criteria will be those listed.

3. Begin the presentations. Ten presentations ought to take between 25 and 35 minutes, or about 2-3 ½ minutes each.

In very small classes, there may be time for interaction between the presenters and the audience. The audience can question the presenters about their experience and their decisions. This will enhance the interest of those not actually "on stage" at any one time.

4. Add up the scores each team received (this can just be done aloud, as it is not a popularity contest -- the criteria are very straightforward). Present Child Planning Awards to the winning team. Spend the last few minutes of class discussing and summarizing the exercise. In particular, emphasize that:

- there are advantages and disadvantages of any size family each person and each couple will make a different decision. (*Encourage students, because this is a matter of belief, to discuss this issue with family and clergy.*)
- there are some powerful advantages of postponing parenting until maturity ... although, of course, this too is a matter of belief *worth discussing at home.*
- there are other ways to experience the joys and rewards of parenting, besides having one's own biological children e.g. adoption, foster parenting, or helping, unofficially, to raise the child of a friend or relative ... or even through a career in teaching, daycare, pediatrics, etc.
- the decision to have children is perhaps the most awesome, serious, permanent decision a person ever makes and it **deserves careful thought.**

Instructions for Teams



<p>1.) You may or may not be a couple. You have both decided that you don't want children. Prepare to explain your decision to the class.</p>	<p>2.) You are a couple. You have one child. You have decided not to have any more. Prepare to explain your decision to the class.</p>
<p>3.) You are a couple. You have one child. You want one or two more. Then you plan to stop. Prepare to tell the class why.</p>	<p>4.) You may or may not be a couple. You have each decided that you want at least five children. Prepare to tell the class why.</p>
<p>5.) You are not a couple. You are both 18. You each have a toddler. Prepare to explain to the class why you wish you had waited until you were older.</p>	<p>6.) You are a couple. You are both 18. You have decided to postpone a pregnancy until you are at least 22. Prepare to tell the class why.</p>
<p>7.) You are a couple. You are both 29 and have recently had your first baby. Prepare to explain to the class why you are glad you waited until now to have children.</p>	<p>8.) You may or may not be a couple. You are both about to become adoptive parents. Prepare to explain to the class why you are adopting.</p>
<p>9.) You are a couple. You have recently applied to become foster parents. Prepare to tell the class why you want foster children.</p>	<p>10.) You are not a couple. Neither of you has any biological children, but you are both helping to raise friends' children. Prepare to tell the class why.</p>

Issues Some Couples & Individuals Consider...

IN THINKING ABOUT WHETHER & WHEN TO HAVE CHILDREN:

Money and other resources
(home, car, health insurance, etc.)

Whether either of them has serious problems
that could interfere with parenting

Personal and/or professional growth
including education plans

Parenting skills and interest

Age, personality and maturity
including self-esteem, patience

Relationship with each other
and whether they share cultures, races,
religions and beliefs
or can work out differences

Health and family health history

Support
(partner, family and friends available to help)

Other responsibilities
(how many children they already have, etc.)



Scoresheet

Directions:

1. If **BOTH** people on the team speak up, give the team 10 points in the column marked "B".
2. For each **REASON** they give for their decision, give them 2 points in column "R"... so they may get as many as 10 or more in that column.
3. If they speak for the whole two-minute **TIME**, give the team 10 points in column "T".
4. Give them anywhere from 0 to 5 bonus points, in column "S", depending upon how **SERIOUS** and sincere they sound (that is – the quality of their acting).

For example, suppose Chris and Pat are a team. They both contribute to a full 2- minute discussion. They give 3 reasons for their decision, but they sound fairly frivolous.

1. Pat, Chris 10 + 6 + 10 + 2 = 28

TEAM'S NAMES	B		R		T		S		TOTAL
1. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
2. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
3. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
4. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
5. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
6. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
7. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
8. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
9. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
10. _____, _____	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____