

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 9

SPEAKING OF SEX

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



EDUCATIONAL GOALS

YOUNG ADOLESCENTS WILL:

- Learn that abstaining from sexual activity during the middle school years is both normal and desirable.
- Learn that the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are very real and should be taken seriously.
- Learn ways to prevent being pressured into choices about sex that they are uncomfortable with.

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- ▶ **Trigger group discussion**
- ▶ **Stimulate critical thinking**
- ▶ **Boost self-esteem**

Big Changes, Big Choices helps young teens work their way through the turmoil of early adolescence while making positive, healthful life choices. In each program TV cameras follow comedian / youth counselor Michael Pritchard to middle schools around the country, as he thrills young audiences with warm humor about growing up and engages them in problem solving sessions about serious issues that affect their lives.



The purpose of this video program is to shape young people's attitudes by appealing to their minds and their hearts. By watching and discussing these videos, kids will come to a deeper understanding of the issues presented in the tapes, think more critically about their own choices and behaviors, and gain confidence in their own better instincts.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

You can greatly enhance the effectiveness of this video by following it up with group discussions, writing assignments, and learning activities. This guide is intended to help you in your efforts.

We recommend that, before showing the tape, you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some useful questions on page 6. Also, you can expect your students to have a lot to talk about after viewing the tape, so it's a good idea to allow ample time.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this video program.

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

This program gives young adolescents the message that abstinence from sexual activity is normal and desirable at their age. We consider the emotional dangers of sexual activity, the reasons why young people often turn to sex to compensate for other emotional needs, and the realities of unwanted pregnancy and teen parenthood. Also, we emphasize the health risks of sex due to AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Mike Pritchard on stage tells about all the misinformation he got about sex when he was a child.

PART I

Teentalk: Pritchard leads a group of middle school students in a discussion which reveals that most of what they learn about sex comes from the media. The media portrays sex as the cool thing to do.

PRESSURE

They go on to talk about the pressures to be sexually active. The girls report feeling pressure from boys. Boyfriends say things like "if you really loved me you'd do it," or threaten to get satisfaction elsewhere. Older guys take advantage of younger girls by suggesting that having sex will make women of them.

The boys reveal that most of the pressure they feel comes from other boys in the form of peer pressure. It's considered a sign of power and maturity. They say a lot of guys brag about their sexual activities.

Pritchard asks for wrong reasons for having sex. Answers are: to see what it's like, to feel mature, and to spite parents. One girl says it's often due to romantic delusions. "It's not a fairy tale book, it's reality."

Pritchard on stage talks about the transitory nature of romantic relationships, particularly at this age, and cautions against making important decisions based on temporary feelings.

PART II

SETTING LIMITS

Teentalk: Pritchard gives the girls this hypothetical situation: A cute boy you don't know well wants to take you home from a basketball game. What do you do? After a variety of responses, Pritchard suggests that maybe it's good to think ahead and determine what you'll do in different situations.

Pritchard gives the boys this hypothetical situation: A girl you like invites you over because her parents are out of town for the weekend. Most of the boys say they'd go, but they wouldn't let the physical contact go too far. One boy admits that he doesn't know how he'd stop things. "It's like a freight train." Pritchard asks, "how do you stop things when they're going to far?" A girl says she changes the subject, suggesting that they watch TV or go for a walk. A boy says he just tells the girl he doesn't feel ready for it. Generally, they admit that it's difficult, and that the best way is to decide ahead of time and prevent things from progressing that far in the first place.

Pritchard on stage talks about the importance of not being pressured into making choices you don't want, and not pressuring others, either. He warns that the consequences of sexual activity are too high to allow yourself to lose control.

PART III

RISKS

Teentalk: The discussion turns to the issue of pregnancy. A girl tells about a friend whose life is dominated by her baby. She learned that if you aren't ready to change your life, don't take chances with sex. They talk about the responsibilities of having a baby, and about how the baby takes over your life and prevents you from doing things you want to do, including finishing your education and getting a good job.

They talk about friends they know who got AIDS and how that affected them and how it affects their decisions about sex. But they admit that when the situation arises they often don't think about the risks and the consequences.

They conclude that it's not a good idea for kids in middle school to be having sex.

Pritchard on stage concludes that decisions about sex are confusing and difficult and can have lifelong consequences. So it's important to take the time to make good choices, and in our early teens that means choosing to wait. And in this life it's up to you to make the right choices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question to ask **before** showing the tape.

1. Agree, or disagree: If you aren't having sex, there's something wrong with you.

Questions to ask **after** showing the tape.

2. Did anybody in this video say anything you disagree with? What would you say to that person?

3. Boys: Do you feel like your manhood is on the line every time you're around a girl?

Girls: Do you feel like your womanhood is on the line every time you're around a boy?

4. When it comes to getting sexual, whose job is it to set the limits? Why?

5. Some people think that you haven't become a "man" or a "woman" until you've had sex. Do you agree? Why, or why not?

6. What are some of the emotional risks of having sex?

7. How can you tell when you're being pressured?

8. Is it ever okay to pressure another person into having sex with you? Explain why you feel that way.

9. What can make it difficult to say no to sexual pressure?

10. Is it possible to love another person (in the romantic sense) and not have sex?

11. Does having sex with someone prove that you love that person?

12. What are some other ways, besides sex, to express your love or affection for a boyfriend or girlfriend?

13. Some people believe that if a boy wants to have sex, his girlfriend owes it to him. What do you think about that idea? Do you agree or disagree? Why? How does that idea make you feel?

14. How does it make you feel when people brag about having sex? Does it make you respect them more? Does it make them more cool? Why do you feel that way? Why do you think some people brag about having sex?

15. Do you know anybody your age who has been harmed by being sexually active, or who regrets being sexually active?

16. How does something as dangerous as AIDS effect how you feel about sex? How do you think it is going to effect your decisions about sex?

17. How do you know that a potential sex partner is not infected with the AIDS virus or another sexually transmitted disease?

18. What are the benefits of refraining from sexual activity at your age?

19. Is there anything wrong with not being sexually active at your age?

20. When is it okay to start having sex? Why do you think that?

21. What role, if any, should your parents play in helping you make choices about sex?

22. What was most meaningful to you in this video?

HOW TO DECIDE ABOUT SEX (AND MAKE YOUR DECISION STICK)

If you aren't already, you will soon be making choices about sex and sexual activity. It will be one of the most important decisions of your life. Here are some things you can do to help you make a good decision.

- 🍏 Get good information from people you trust.
- 🍏 Talk to people about your feelings, especially your parents and family.
- 🍏 Understand all the consequences - physical as well as emotional.
- 🍏 Think about what you want out of life.
- 🍏 Think about your values and who you are.
- 🍏 Don't let anybody rush you into something you aren't ready for.

Once you've made the choice, how do you stick to your limits? Here are some suggestions for staying in control when you're under pressure.

1. Know before hand what you do and don't want to do.
2. Stop things when you start to feel uncomfortable. Never push someone else to do anything they don't feel comfortable with.
3. Clearly state your feelings.
4. Point out the consequences.
5. Suggest something else to do.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Make an inventory of your attitudes and beliefs about sex. Select two that you feel most strong about and write a paragraph defending each one.

What is the best choice or decision about sex you ever made? What was so good about it?

2. Imagine that some day you will have a child. Write a letter of advice for that child to open when he or she reaches the age you are right now. Tell the child how you feel about sexual activity during the middle school years, and the kinds of choices you hope he or she will make at this age.

3. Write about someone you know who has become sexually active. How did it happen? How did it make you feel? Did you change anything or make any decisions based on that experience? What did you learn from it?

4. How do you set your own limits about sex? How do you go about deciding what you personally feel comfortable with? When do you know you've set the limit properly? What role do your parents or other adults play in your decisions about sex?

5. How is sex portrayed on television and in the movies? Is it accurate? Is it helpful to you? Does it influence you in any way? How does it affect you? What do you think about it? How would you change it?

6. Write an imaginary dialogue between you and another person (your boyfriend or girlfriend, for instance) in which you resist having sex. Explain your limits to this person, and suggest something you'd rather do instead.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. List as many good reasons as possible for not having sex at your age.
2. Imagine that you are on a date and your boyfriend or girlfriend is trying to pressure you into having sex. What are some of the things he or she might say (make a list)? What are some good ways for you to respond to these "lines?"
3. Imagine that someone you really like wants to have sex with you, but you don't feel ready for it. Brainstorm some ways to say "no" without jeopardizing your relationship. Try role-playing this situation with both girls and boys in the role of the person saying "no."
4. Have the class list as many sexually transmitted diseases as they can think of. Then, break the class into groups and have them research each of these diseases and present their findings to the class. Their presentations should include:
 - a) How do you get it?
 - b) How do you know you have it?
 - c) What does it do to you?
 - d) How do you treat it?
 - e) How curable is it?

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is
a good laugh."

Big Changes, Big Choices®
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