

## VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with  
Program 1

### **THE THREE R's OF GROWING UP**

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



#### EDUCATIONAL GOALS

##### YOUNG ADOLESCENTS LEARN:

- That taking responsibility for their choices and actions is an essential part of growing up.
- That making choices based on what is right usually produces the best results.
- That when we respect ourselves we usually make better choices.

*Big Changes, Big Choices* and this discussion guide were created and produced by Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc. © Copyright Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc. All rights are reserved

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

p. 2	Introduction
p. 4	Program Content
p. 6	Discussion Questions
p. 8	How To Be a Grownup
p. 9	Writing Assignments
p. 10	Group Activities
p. 11	About Michael Pritchard
p. 12	License Agreement

- ▶ **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 overview program gives young viewers a solid basis for choices and actions. The first R stands for taking responsibility; growing up is a process of taking increasing responsibility for our choices and actions. The second R is for doing the right thing, which almost always produces the best result and leaves us feeling good about ourselves. The third R is for respecting ourselves, which leads us to make better choices and care more about doing our best.

## PROGRAM CONTENT

Mike Pritchard on stage before a middle school audience introduces the topic of growing up with humorous comparisons between childhood and adulthood.

### PART I

#### BEING RESPONSIBLE

Teentalk: Pritchard leads a group of middle school students in a discussion about growing up. Pritchard asks, what is a grownup? The kids assert that growing up is characterized by becoming more responsible for their own lives. They say that some of the ways they are becoming more responsible is by making more of their own decisions and dealing with the consequences of their own actions.

They talk about responsible and irresponsible things they've done. One girl, who recently made a decision to continue with her piano studies, said she learned that she can make important decisions for herself. "I am somebody, and I can do stuff on my own," she said. "I can do it by myself and I can be responsible when I get older, too."

Pritchard asks how their parents react when they see that they're more responsible. They reply that their parents recognize that they're growing up and give them more freedom and trust them more.

### PART II

Pritchard on stage introduces the concept of doing the right thing by telling a story about his son coming to the aid of a dejected teammate.

#### DOING THE RIGHT THING

Teentalk: Pritchard offers this hypothetical situation: An elderly woman in a department store drops a \$50 bill & walks away. You are the only person who saw it. What do you do? There is a lot of disagreement over whether to keep the \$50 or give it back. Those who favor keeping it offer a variety of rationalizations. Those who favor giving it back maintain that keeping it would be wrong. Eventually, the entire debate turns into a

discussion of right versus wrong. When asked how it feels when they realize they've done the wrong thing, the kids respond that "it's a bad feeling in the pit of your stomach," and "you wish you hadn't done it and you look for a way to fix it." Pritchard then asks how they know when they're doing the right thing. They reply that "you feel really good about yourself," and "it's a sensation that starts in your heart and then spreads out." When Pritchard finally asks what's the right thing to do about the \$50 bill, they all say to give it back. One boy asserts that if he kept the money he'd respect himself a lot less because "then I'm no better than scum on the street." Another boy adds that "if I give the money back I know I'm a good person and it gives me more self-respect."

### PART III

#### SELF-RESPECT

Pritchard on stage tells his own version of "The Three Little Pigs" to illustrate the proposition that when we have self-respect we make better choices.

Teentalk: Discussion about self-respect brings out the insights that self-respect gives us the confidence and the motivation to make good choices and pursue our goals, and that people with self-respect are responsible and reliable and are not defeated by failures. One boy asserts that self-respect "makes you a better person when you grow up. No matter what other people say, if you know you're good, then you're good."

Pritchard on stage recaps the three r's by saying that respecting ourselves, doing the right thing, and taking responsibility, are what make a person a grownup.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

1. What is a grownup? How do you know when you are one?

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. The kids in the video said that the process of growing up involves becoming more responsible. Do you agree? What do you think they meant by that?

4. Exactly what does being responsible mean? Name some responsible behaviors.

5. What are the benefits of being responsible?

6. What is the connection between responsibility and freedom?

7. Does being responsible have any affect on your self-respect? How, in what ways?

8. In the video, Michael Pritchard gave his own version of the story of the three little pigs. What point was he was making, and what did it have to do with self-respect?

9. What does self-respect have to do with growing up?

10. The kids in the video identified several of the signs of self-respect. What were they? Can you think of any others? Make a list.

11. Do you think your self-respect sometimes affects the way you make choices? In what way?

12. Do you think the quality of your choices sometimes affects your self-respect? In what way?

13. Agree or disagree: When it comes to making choices, it's okay to do anything you can get away with! Why do you agree or disagree? Can you give some examples from personal experience?

14. When Pritchard asked the kids what they'd do if they saw somebody drop a \$50 bill, some of them changed their minds during the discussion. Why do you think that happened? Did you change your mind? Why, or why not?

15. How often do you think about whether something is right or wrong before you decide to do it?

16. Why do people sometimes do the right thing even when it's not as easy or as much fun as something else?

17. Do you think you usually know right from wrong? How? What are your guidelines?

18. What is the "golden rule?" Does it help you distinguish between right and wrong?

19. What are the benefits of doing what you believe is the right thing? Does it make your decisions any easier? How?

20. Agree or disagree: By the time you are thirty five years old you are certainly a grownup. Why do you agree or disagree?

21. What was most meaningful to you in this video? Why?

## HOW TO BE A GROWNUP

### 1. BE RESPONSIBLE

Most people think of a grownup as someone who takes responsibility for his/her own life. And being responsible shows your parents that you are growing up and can handle more freedom. Here are six ways to be a responsible person:

- Take care of your own affairs.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Answer for your own actions.
- Be trustworthy.
- Don't procrastinate.
- Always use your head.

### 2. CHOOSE TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Some decisions are easy to make, others are more complicated. When it's a choice between right and wrong, you don't need to weigh the pros and cons. Choosing to do the right thing is an act of self-respect and responsible decision-making. Here are some guidelines for deciding what's right:

- What do my heart and conscience tell me?
- Could it hurt anyone - including me?
- Is it fair?
- How would I feel if somebody did it to me?
- How will I feel about myself later if I do it?
- What would adults I respect say about it?

### 3. RESPECT YOURSELF

Respecting ourselves helps us make good choices. And making good choices lifts our self-respect. Good self-respect helps every aspect of our personal and social lives, and makes it a lot easier to get through the tough times. Here are some things that are almost guaranteed to make you respect yourself.

- Take responsibility for yourself.
- Always do what you believe is right.
- Be true to yourself and your values.
- Respect others and treat them right.
- Set goals and work to achieve them.
- Say "no" to negative pressures.
- Don't let others make your choices for you.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write about some ways you are becoming more responsible for yourself. For your community. For our planet and environment. How does this increasing sense of responsibility make you feel?
2. Write about a time when you did something really responsible. Describe it. What was the outcome? How did it make you feel about yourself? Describe a time you did something really irresponsible. What was the outcome? How did it make you feel about yourself?
3. One girl in the video said that when a person does something that's wrong "it gets on your conscience and you don't realize it until the fun is stopped, and then you realize, well, maybe I shouldn't have done that." Has that ever happened to you? Write about it. What have you learned from it?
4. Write a letter to someone in the news who did something that you don't think was right. Be specific about why you don't think it was right, and why you think this action sets a bad example for young people. Mail the letter.
5. Write at least five things you can say to yourself when you are tempted to do something you feel is wrong.
6. Write about a time when you or a friend made a choice that showed good self-respect.
7. Make a list of the qualities you respect most about yourself. Pick two of them and write about why you respect those qualities and how you think they will benefit you as you grow up.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Here are four hypothetical situations for the group to consider. For each situation, let them argue about what to do until everyone has come to a decision. Then ask the following three questions:

- Does your decision indicate that you are a responsible person? In what ways?
- Do you believe you decided to do what's right?
- Would you respect yourself more, or less if you actually carried out your decision?

For some help in considering each of these three questions, see "How To Be A Grownup" on page 8.

2. You've made a commitment to spend the weekend working on your part of a class project that's due Monday. Then, some friends invite you to go on a weekend camping trip in the mountains. You'd love to go, but you can't do both. What do you do?

3. There's a group of popular kids in school that you've been wanting to get in with. They start liking you, but they think your best friend is weird and they want you to stop hanging around with him/her. You've been best friends for years. What do you do?

4. You and a girl or boy you really care about share an intimate romantic moment after a party and agree not to talk about it to others. A few days later you discover that a lot of people have heard about it. What do you do?

5. Your parents reluctantly permit you to go to a party after you promise there will be no alcohol or other drugs. Your date's older brother is driving. After an hour you notice that he's on his third can of beer. Nobody else at the party has a car. What do you do?

Have members of the group perform role plays on any of these situations.

## 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®  
LICENSE AGREEMENT

This license grants you some very useful rights regarding the use of this videotape, including public performance rights:

You **may** show this video to groups of any size, for educational, cultural, entertainment, or counseling purposes, as long as you do not charge admission.

You **may** play this video on your institution's closed-circuit television system within a single building or campus. This right **does not** extend to multiple schools within a district.

You **may** permit viewers to watch this video on your premises, or lend it to them to take out.

**Along with these rights come some equally important restrictions:**

You may **not** duplicate, alter, or reproduce this tape in any manner, in whole or in part.

You may **not** broadcast, narrowcast, or cablecast this tape, in whole or in part.

These restrictions have the force of federal law, which provides severe civil and criminal penalties for infringements. (Title 17, United States Code, sections 501-506).

If you have any questions regarding this license agreement, or your intended use of this tape, please contact:

**ELKIND+SWEET  
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.  
273 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103  
1-800-359-5437  
[info@livewiremedia.com](mailto:info@livewiremedia.com)**