

A Teacher's Guide

Here are a few activities and discussion points that can help your 6th-8th grade students get the most out the sensitive topics covered in TeenZine Issue 1.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. What ceremonies or events can you think of that are designed to mark or celebrate a teen's "coming-of-age"? Why do you think some cultures have created ceremonies to mark "coming-of-age" and puberty? (See page 2 for additional examples).
2. What is the difference between body image and self-esteem?
3. What are the toughest and best parts about going through puberty?

Help Students Design their own Coming-of-Age Ceremony

Coming-of-age ceremonies are held when a child or youth becomes recognized by their family or community as an adult for the first time. Many coming-of-age ceremonies incorporate:

- **Contact with the natural environment:** One or more days spent in nature, experiencing isolation, beauty and grandeur.
- **Ordeal:** A test of strength, self-discipline, and endurance (i.e. a fast, an all night vigil, or a difficult task).
- **Solitude:** A complete physical withdrawal from the pressures of life.
- **Public recognition:** An announcement, ceremony or gathering with family and friends to acknowledge the person's new status.
- **Symbolic representations:** Some object that symbolizes the person's new status (i.e. a totem, ring, etc.).

Rank Your Values Activity

The purpose of this activity is to help teens become more aware of what they value. You will need approximately 30-40 minutes for this activity. For materials, you will need the activity worksheet entitled "Rank Your Values" for each participant. Have teens read and rank the values listed on the handout alone or in small groups.



Rank Your Values Activity Discussion Points:

1. Would anyone like to share his or her top five value statements with the group?*
2. How did it feel to have to make a decision like this, when it means missing out on other things you may want to do?
3. Would anyone else have chosen a different option? Why?
4. When more than one thing is valuable to you, are there times when it's important to know what's most valuable to you?
5. Does everyone have the same values as you? Is it wrong to have different values?

****Teacher's:** Take note of which value statements were selected by the student and describe a scenario using three of the values, in which he or she can choose only one option. For example, if three of student's top values were "Being Popular With My Friends," "Getting Along With My Parents," and "Being Good in Sports," ask the student what he or she would do if:

- There is a huge party coming up on Friday night and everyone is going to be there;
- You're on the school basketball team, and you have a big game against your arch rivals on Friday night;
- Your family reunion is coming up this weekend, and your parents want you to fly out with them Friday night.

The student can only choose one of these. During this process, the student will better understand what is most important to him or her.

Additional Information to help with your Planning

Coming-of-age ceremonies and rituals take many forms among different religions and countries:

- **Apache Tribe:** The Apaches have a four-day rite of puberty -- the Apache Sunrise Ceremony, called "na'ii'ees." It is one of the most important events in an Apache female's life, and is intended to imbue the girls with the spirit and characteristics of White Painted Woman, the Apache's first woman. The girls pray, dance, sit with their backs straight, and perform other physically draining activities. They are given instruction in sexuality, self-esteem, dignity, confidence, and healing.
- **Catholics:** Catholics believe that Confirmation "...completes the process of initiation into the Christian community, and it matures the soul for the work ahead."
- **Igbo tribe:** Young men spend the night with the Otu Umunne fathers, while the young women do the same with the Otu Umunne mothers. The teens are taught teamwork, leadership, values, responsibilities, moral decisions, freedom, and about their heritage.
- **Judaism:** Girls reach the status of Bat Mitzvah on their 12th birthday. Boys achieve Bar Mitzvah on their 13th birthday. Afterwards, they are recognized as adults and gain new rights and responsibilities within their community.
- **Japan:** Since 1948, people who will have their 20th birthday during a given year celebrate the Coming of Age day on the second Monday in January. It is a national holiday. The male Samurai warriors once had a similar celebration called Genpuku, which was observed between the ages of 12 and 18.

Rank Your Values

One way to find out what you value is to make choices between certain skills or characteristics. Look over the statements provided and put them in order so that your most important value is at the top and your least important value is at the bottom.

Getting Along With My Parents

Being Good In Sports

Getting Good Grades

Being Popular With My Friends

Being Funny

Working Hard

Being Trustworthy

Being Respected By My Elders

Helping Others

Knowing About My Culture

