Chapter 2
LEARNING ABOUT ADOLESCENCE

OBJECTIVES
Participants will:
1. Identify the four stages of maturity in their life journey.
2. Name at least two changes that will happen during adolescence (to each of the four parts of their Circle of Life).
3. Name the things they are most and least looking forward to about adolescence.
4. Explain that volition helps youth stand up to peer pressure.

OVERVIEW OF ONLINE MATERIAL

A circle can represent the life journey. There are four parts to the life journey: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and elder. Adolescence is a time of change that affects all parts of the Circle of Life: physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional. With all these changes, a person can be very confused about what to do. Adolescents need to rely on their volition to make good choices and stay strong.

The physical changes that happen during puberty are discussed, including physical attraction and curiosity about sex. Although adolescents may be physically able to have sex, they should wait until they are older and are ready to handle the long term consequences of sex such as having a baby and/or getting a sexually transmitted disease.

In the same way that a person should make wise decisions to strengthen his/her Circle of Life, they should also make wise decisions that build strong relationships with others. A strong relationship is characterized by being strong mentally (sharing ideas and talking together), spiritually (respecting each other), emotionally (doing things to show you care for each other), and physically (doing things that are healthy).


LESSON OVERVIEW

ACTIVITIES
1. WARM UP ACTIVITY (5 min)
2. REVIEW (5 min)
3. QUESTION BOX (5 min)
4. CHANGES THAT OCCUR IN ADOLESCENCE (Game) (15 min)
5. ABOUT PUBERTY (20 min)
6. WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO? (Discussion) (10 min)
7. PAPER CHAIN (Game) (15 min)
8. RITES OF PASSAGE (Discussion) (10 min)

MATERIALS NEEDED
1) Small box that can be used for collecting questions
2) Paper and pencil for writing questions
3) Game cards*, COL game boards*
4) Paper Chain strips *
   *Found at the end of the lesson

PREPARATION
Activity 4: Each pair of youth will need a set of game pieces and Circle of Life game board. You can have the youth cute their own game pieces.
Activity 5: Review options and decide how best to present material.
Activity 7: Cut out the game pieces.
Activity 8: Find out about local rites of passage for teens.
Information for Facilitators about
Using a Question Box (Activity #3)

**Question Box**
In activity 3 the question box is introduced. It will throughout the rest of the program. The question box allows youth to ask questions anonymously.

**Preparation:** Provide a box along with paper and pencil for writing questions. Initially, you may need to remind youth about using the box.

**Guidelines for answering questions:**

1. Review the questions prior to class so you can prepare your answers (no surprises).
2. If you do not know an answer, it is okay to admit it. Let youth know that you will look up the answer later and report back to them.
3. Keep answers factual and to the point.
4. If a question asks personal information, you do not need to answer it directly. Instead, reword the question and provide a general answer.
5. If a slang word is used, read the question as it is but then provide the correct word in its place.
6. If a question makes you uncomfortable you can admit it. If it is inappropriate you can also say that and do not choose to answer it.
ACTIVITY 1: WARM UP (5 min.)
Purpose: To settle the group down and reinforce that they everyone is unique.

Instructions: Ask youth which they like better between two choices, such as pizza or hamburgers? Those who like pizza go to one side of the room, those who like hamburgers go to the other. Repeat using other choices (SUV or Truck? Cats or Dogs? etc.)

ACTIVITY 2: REVIEW (5 min.)
Ask: Can you name the four parts of the Circle of Life? Who remembers what the word volition means?

ACTIVITY 3: QUESTION BOX (5 min.)
Purpose: Provides a way for youth to ask questions anonymously.
Materials: The small box for questions.
Preparation: Prepare a box with a slit in the top where youth can put questions.

Show: The youth the question box and where it will be kept.
Explain: The question box is for asking questions that you may not feel comfortable asking in class. Each day before the class starts we will go over the questions.

ACTIVITY 4: CHANGES THAT OCCUR IN ADOLESCENCE (15 min.)
Purpose: To help youth realize that changes affect all areas of their life.
Materials: Set of game cards for each pair of youth.
Preparation: For each pair of youth, assemble enough copies of game pieces and a Circle of Life.

Instructions:
The online lesson taught about the different stages of a person’s Life Journey.
1. Ask: Who can name the stages in the life journey? Who can think of someone who is in each stage (family, community members or public figures)?
2. **Game:** Have youth divide into pairs. Give each group a set of game cards and a Circle of Life. Have youth divide the cards between them. Youth will take turns placing the cards in the correct part of the Circle of Life.

Afterwards go over which cards were put into each area. Note: that there may be more than one “right” answer. Discuss that many things affect more than one area of the Circle of Life.

**Option:** This activity can also be done with the whole group. Pass the cards out to the class and let each person take a turn placing their card on the Medicine Wheel.

ACTIVITY 5: ABOUT PUBERTY (READ/VIDEO/TEACH) (20 min.)

**Purpose:** To provide information about puberty and/or reproduction that supplements the online lesson. By ensuring that youth have a solid foundation of accurate knowledge they will be better equipped to understand subsequent lessons that discuss sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy.

**Materials:** Will way according to the options chosen.

**Preparation:** Consider the resources below and others you may be aware of and decide the best way to cover this topic. For facilitators who would like to review the subject of puberty, we have provided following link: http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/documents/freebies/pubertybckgrd200209.pdf

**Note:** Facilitators may choose to divide their group based on age, maturity or gender for this lesson.

**Instructions:**
This activity can be presented in a variety of ways. Some ideas and resources are presented below:

1) **Narrated On-line reading:** Websites where youth can go to learn about puberty.
   http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body_stuff/puberty.html?tracking=K_RelatedArticle#

2) **Online site about puberty**
   http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/body/index.html

3) **Websites with puberty articles to print and read.**

4) **Reading from a book or pamphlet on puberty:** (examples below)
5) Show a DVD or YouTube video.

6) Have a health educator, nurse, or physician come and talk to the group.

**ACTIVITY 6: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO? (10-15 min.)**

**Purpose:** To help youth realize that they are entering a time in life when they have new opportunities and new decisions to make. Peer pressure can influence them to make unwise decisions but they can use volition to stand up to peer pressure.

**Materials:** none

**Instructions:**

**Ask:** What things about adolescence are you looking forward to the most? The least? If they are hesitant, ask them questions like:

- “What excites you about growing up?”
- “What’s scary about the idea of growing up?”

If it doesn’t come up in the discussion on its own, introduce the topic of peer pressure.

**Ask:**

- How does peer pressure make you feel?
- What do you do when you feel peer pressure?
- What ideas do you have about resisting peer pressure?

**Explain:** Teens are more susceptible to peer pressure because their bodies are going through many changes. Chemicals called hormones help your body change from a child to an adult. Hormones also cause you to have new feelings. Sometimes your feelings can be very strong and you don’t know how to handle them. That is all part of growing up.

All these changes can cause your Circle of Life to become unbalanced. For example all of a sudden the emotional part of the circle, your feelings, may become the strongest part of your circle. As you grow up you will learn how to keep your circle balanced so one area does not take control over the others. One of the things that can happen if your emotional part of the circle becomes too strong is that you may try to find ways to run away from your feelings. Sometimes this can lead teens to try things like drugs or alcohol. And it might also cause teens to want to be accepted by others even if it means doing things they don’t really want to do.

That is called peer pressure. Peer pressure can sometimes make people do things – risky and/or dangerous things – that they really don’t want to do.
By keeping your personal Circle of Life strong and using your volition you can resist doing things that are risky or dangerous.

**ACTIVITY 7: PAPER CHAIN GAME (10 min.)**

**Purpose:** To teach the meaning of words used about puberty that were used in the online chapter.

**Materials:** Printed slips of paper with words and definitions (found at the end of the lesson plan).

**Preparation:** Cut out the slips of paper and the slits at each end.

**Instructions:**
Show the slips of paper and how connecting the slits can create a paper chain. Explain that youth may not know these words so they can use the symbols on the slips of paper to find their match.

Pass out slips of paper to each youth. Some slips contain words and some contain definitions. Have youth go around the room and find the person who matches with them (word=definition). The word-definition pairs have matching symbols to make matching easier. Have matching pairs create a paper chain by linking the two strips together. Collect all the paper chains and read over the words and definitions to group.

**WORDS**
- Adolescence/adolescent
- Puberty
- Reproductive system
- Estrogen
- Testosterone
- Menstruate
- Ovulate
- Sperm
- Fertilize

**ACTIVITY 8: RITES OF PASSAGE – Ceremonies for becoming a man or woman (10 min.)**

**Purpose:** To learn about traditional puberty or adolescent rites of passage that are conducted in the community.

**Preparation:** Look into local rites of passage to aid the discussion.

**Instructions:**
Discuss rites of passage for boys and girls. If there are any traditional puberty or adolescent rites of passage conducted in your community, discuss how these
ceremonies mark a very important transition in a person’s life journey.

You may want to ask youth to go home and ask their parents or elders about rites of passage and have them report back to the group at the next meeting.

If there are no local examples to discuss, some examples of Native American rites of passage for teens are listed below:

• Lakota: Hanblecheyapi (“crying for vision” or vision quest) for males. It involves fasting, journeying in the wilderness and can last 2-4 days.

• Navajo: Kinaalda ceremony for girls becoming women. It includes dancing, cleansing rituals, physical activities and a special cake.

• Apache: Na i i ees (Sunrise Ceremony) for girls becoming women. It is believed that during the ceremony the young woman has special powers that allow her to bless others.
Circle of Life Game Board
Circle of Life Game Cards

You might doubt yourself at times.

You worry more about whether your friends like you.

You are happy when friends are happy, sad when they are sad.

Your body seems clumsy or awkward.

You are asked to show you are becoming an honorable man or woman.

You begin to realize how to be a better person.

You learn to show respect for other people and your culture.

You experience deeper and stronger feelings.
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<thead>
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<th>Physical</th>
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<tr>
<td>You grow body hair.</td>
<td>You think about what you want to be or do when you grow up.</td>
<td>You become more independent in your thinking.</td>
<td>You might get pimples on your face.</td>
<td>Your mind becomes sharper.</td>
<td>You learn more ways to take care of yourself.</td>
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Puberty/Reproduction Reading: (optional)

Puberty is the name for the time when your body changes from being a child to an adult. Puberty usually starts between ages 8 and 13 in girls and ages 10 and 15 in boys. Puberty starts when your pituitary gland, a small gland located at the bottom of your brain, releases hormones (special chemicals). These hormones travel through the blood to different parts of your body.

In boys, the hormones travel to the testes. The testes are two round glands that are located in the scrotum (the sac that hangs under the penis). These hormones cause the testes to make testosterone and sperm. Sperm are the male sex cells that are necessary for reproduction. Testosterone is the hormone that causes most of the changes in a boy’s body during puberty. These changes include: voice deepening, growing taller, hair growing in new places, and growth of the penis and testes.

For girls, the hormones travel to the ovaries. The ovaries produce estrogen. Estrogen is the main female sex hormone. It causes most of the changes in a girl’s body during puberty. These changes include: growing taller, developing breasts, widening of hips, getting menstrual periods, and hair growing in new places.

During puberty the reproductive system matures and boys and girls begin to have the ability to reproduce—or have babies. Boys produce male sex cells called sperm and females produce sex cells called ova or eggs. Each month a female goes through a cycle called menstruation. During this cycle she will release one egg from her ovary. The egg travels from the ovary through the fallopian tube and into the uterus. If a male (boy) and a female (girl) have sexual intercourse around the time the egg is released, it is possible for the girl to become pregnant. During sexual intercourse, the male inserts his penis into the female’s vagina. The male ejaculates sperm from the penis. The sperm swim up through the vagina. If a sperm finds an egg, then it can enter into the egg. This is called fertilization. A fertilized egg will grow into a baby. This is the very beginning of how a baby is formed.
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<td>A stage in development occurring during adolescence when the body goes through sexual maturation.</td>
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<td><strong>Reproductive system</strong></td>
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<td>Parts of the body that are involved in conceiving and bearing offspring</td>
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