

TEACHABLE MOMENT LESSON PLAN

WHAT IS A FATHER?

Objectives:

After the session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss their perceptions of the role of fathers; and
- Identify the influence fathers have on their children.

Materials:

- DVD and DVD player
- Paper and pens for each participant

Time: 45-60 minutes

Planning Notes:

1. This is a good clip to show if you have the impression that many participants in your group have had troubled relationships with their fathers.
2. Expect some strong emotional responses from participants during this discussion, and be prepared to provide referral information for anyone who wants or needs to discuss any unresolved issues that come up.

Procedure:

1. **(2-3 minutes)** Introduce the activity:

Tell participants they will view a short clip from a video that features a group of young fathers who are attending a program that is helping them find work and assisting them with their role as parents. Say that in this clip, several fathers discuss their definition of fatherhood.

2. **(1 minute)** Show the clip "What Is a Father?"

3. **(7-10 minutes)** Use the following questions to discuss the clip:
 - What was your reaction to the men in the clip?
 - Which of their comments could you identify with?
 - So many of these young men grew up without fathers. How do you think that will affect their ability to be good fathers?

4. **(15-20 minutes)** Have participants pair off (or form groups of 3 to 4 people) and consider their relationships with their own fathers. (Note: You also can discuss these questions in the large group.) Ask them to discuss the following questions:
 - What was your father like?
 - What role did he play in your life?
 - How do you think your relationship with your father has affected you (your feelings about yourself, your attitudes toward men and fathers, your style of being in relationships, the way you plan to raise your own children, etc.)?

5. **(15 minutes)** Reconvene the large group, and get reactions from the pairs. (Note: Make the point that our fathers do influence us whether or not they have been actively involved in our lives. The influence can be positive, negative or mixed.) Use the following questions to lead the discussion:
 - What was it like to talk about your own father (easy, hard, fun, uncomfortable, etc.)?
 - What were some of your fathers like?
 - How do you think your father influenced you? (Probe for types of influences. Sometimes participants want to emulate things their fathers did. Sometimes they have not had their fathers in their lives and are angry. They may be working on forgiving their fathers or reconnecting with an absent father. They may be trying to resolve issues related to their relationships with their fathers. Some women may have had a negative experience with their fathers that affects relationships with other men in their lives.)
 - What kind of father do you want to be (or do you want for your child)?

6. **(3-5 minutes)** Close by asking participants what they will take away (any lessons learned) from this discussion.