

Teenagers

IN THE MOOD

☪ Gathering Music

Swing music and rock 'n roll, interspersed with a few songs popular with today's teenagers. Soundtrack of the musical *Bye Bye Birdie*.

☪ Objects to Display and Discuss

Telephone, Clearasil, *Seventeen* magazine, datebook, address book, book bag, transistor radio.

ACTIVITIES

☪ Teen Activities

With your group, make a list of typical activities of a teenager when the participants were young. Suggestions:

school	dances	talking on the phone
part-time job	whittling	eating fast food
drive-in movie	driving	studying
dating	washing your car	paper route
fishing	sports	clubs
combing your hair	soda shop	piano lessons
chores	Scouts	spending your allowance
4-H	camping	biking

☪ Parenting Teens

Ask participants to discuss how to be a good parent to teens. What limits should be set for teens (e.g., curfew, dating, driving, clothing, hair)? As a group, make a list of rules that a 16-year-old boy or girl should follow. Other questions to ask: *Were your parents strict with you? Were you a strict parent? How can teens be encouraged to make good choices? What kinds of discipline work? What freedoms or privileges can be given out at what ages? How do you instill morals in young people? What responsibilities should a teen have?*

☪ Coming of Age

The phrase "coming of age" is often used to describe an experience that moves a teen closer to adulthood. Talk about what experiences a teen must have in order to come of age. Suggestions: beginning to shave (boys), learning to wear make-up (girls), learning to drive, getting a car, getting a first job, starting to date, having a serious relationship, rebelling against parents, leaving home for college, work, or marriage.

U High School

Ask participants to share their memories of these aspects of high school:

extracurricular activities - sports, clubs, cheerleading, social events

homecoming celebrations - parade, football game, bonfire

school lockers - carrying around books, textbooks, book covers

dances - homecoming, Valentine's, senior prom

classes - subjects studied, memorable teachers, changing classes, study hall, tests, writing papers

discipline at school - detention and other punishments

dating - car dates, double dates, chaperones, age of first date

friendships - cliques, gossip, best friends

graduation - cap and gown, valedictorian, family attending, GED

U Surviving the Teen Years

Ask group members to list some problems of teenagers and then suggest solutions. Suggested problems to discuss:

Pimples

No money

Nothing to wear

Cliques

Too much studying

Problems with teachers

Lousy grades, flunking a class

Not enough freedom; too much freedom

Breaking up with boyfriend or girlfriend

Gossip

Don't like classes

Bullies

Need a job

What to do after graduation

U Movie Time

Show *Bye Bye Birdie*, a musical about teen life in the 1950s.

DISCUSSION

1. Did you enjoy your teen years or was it a difficult time of life? Would you like to relive your teen years if you could improve things? Why or why not? Would you like to be a teen in today's world?
2. What is a generation gap? How did you feel about your parents when you were a teen? How did your opinion change later? Was there a generation gap between you and your teens? What kinds of conflicts did you have? How did you deal with the conflicts?
3. Was there a teacher or another adult who acted as a mentor to you or who encouraged or inspired you when you were a teen? Tell us about this person. Did you ever act as a mentor or encourage a teen? Who?
4. What kind of music did you like when a teen? Did your parents like the music you liked? Did you like the music your children listened to? Did you put any restrictions on it? What kind of music do you like now?
5. What did you do when you finished high school? Did you appreciate your parents more after you moved out?