



Creating Family

by Paul Kivel

Objectives

Young men will be able to:

- acknowledge the diversity of families in the world
- describe qualities of both caring and unsupportive families
- describe the kind of family they want to create
- identify the positive and negative pressures to have children
- identify their own reasons for having or not having children

Agenda

1. Check-in
2. Many Kinds of Families
3. Creating Family
4. Having Children
5. Checkout

Session Outline

1. Check-in

Ask:

What have you noticed about the way that men around you treat women?

2. Many Kinds of Families

State:

Family life is part of everyone's future. Families are people who love and care for one another regardless of whether they are related biologically or by marriage and whether they live together or many miles apart. Love makes a family.



Explain:

We create family as we go through our lives. We build relationships that turn into family as we keep or lose members of our biological families.

- Ask group members to think about or write down their responses to the statement above. After a few moments allow time for volunteers to talk about who is part of their families.

3. Creating Family

Ask:

What kind of family would you like to create around you?

- Have group members talk in as much detail as they can about the qualities, atmosphere, and kind of relationship between people they would like to have in their families.

Ask:

What are some of the things that get in the way of being able to create caring families?

- Have the group discuss work, housing, child care, personality differences, cultural differences, addictions, disabilities, hostile neighborhoods, poor schools, and any other aspects of peoples lives that can make family life difficult.

Ask:

How have you seen people care of each other in families despite these kinds of contradictions?

- Have group members describe a time when they saw someone take care of or support a family member in a way they would like in their families. Also have them describe a time when they supported or helped out a family member.

4. Having Children

Explain:

Children are often [but not always] part of families. Some people decide to live without children. Many people see living with children as part of their future family life. Our society puts tremendous pressure on adult women to become mothers and to expect to have children.

Ask:

What are some forms that pressure takes? What kinds of pressure do parents put on women to have children? What kinds of pressure do men put on women? There is also pressure on men to have children, often from other men. What forms does that pressure take?



Explain:

Some young women become pregnant without having made a clear decision to do so. These pregnancies may be a result of pressures on women to have children or to be responsible for birth control [because many men don't want to or won't use birth control], or they may be the result of sexual harassment or assault. Regardless when these young women are not married, they get blamed for being unwed mothers.

Ask:

What do people say about unwed mothers to blame them for being mothers?

Ask:

- Have you ever taken care of a baby, younger brothers or sisters, or other children?
- What do you think it would be like to do it twenty-four hours a day. seven days a week?
- What do you think it would cost?
- What would you have to give up to do it?
- What might a young woman have to give up if she becomes pregnant unwillingly or unintentionally?

Explain:

One core of women's struggles for justice and equality has centered around control over women's bodies. For hundreds of years, women have been fighting for adequate and accessible health care, including prenatal care, access to abortion, and information about reproduction, sexuality, and birth control. In recent times, women of color and low-income women have had to fight for freedom from unwanted sterilization (a medical procedure to prevent a woman from having babies). Some men have supported these struggles and have been strong allies to women. Other men have exploited women, have had as much sex as they could with women and then left some of them pregnant or responsible for the children.

Ask:

How can you be an ally to women on this issue? What will you do to stand up for women's right to control their own bodies?

5. Checkout

- *Close* with appreciations and a Safety Check.

Please send comments, feedback, resources, and suggestions for distribution to paul@paulkivel.com

Further resources are available at www.paulkivel.com



EXPERIENCE OF FAMILIES

1. What are all the kinds of families or family groupings that you know about? For example, what different kinds of family living arrangements do you see on TV?

2. Draw an outline picture of your present family as you define it.

3. What are your earliest memories of your family?

4. What messages do you receive from TV shows and movies about what families should be?

5. Qualities or behaviors that make a family caring are ...

6. Qualities or behaviors that make a family dangerous or unsupportive are ...

7. These people are part of my extended family. For support, advice, fun, and love, I look to ...



CREATING FAMILY

I want to be part of a family that supports all its members and provides ...

Pressures on me to have a baby are ...

Pressures on me not to have a baby are ...

Reasons I might want to have children later are ...

Reasons I might not want to have children are ...

Someone I can talk with about what it's like to be a caring father is ...

Someone I can talk with about birth control is ...

Someone I can talk with about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is ...

Someone I can talk with about pressure on men to have sex is ...