TEEN PREGNANCY

Program Target: To stimulate young people's thinking about the issues around teen pregnancy.

What to do: Divide your group into six smaller groups and give one of the scenarios below to each group (if you group is quite small, divide them into three groups and give each group two scenarios). Allow about 15 minutes for them to discuss the scenario, then come back and report to the whole group. As each group reports on the scenario they discussed, use the discussion questions below, as appropriate, to guide the whole group in discussion around this scenario. Allow about 45 minutes for the large-group discussion of the six scenarios.

Scenario 1: Brianne and Rob are high school seniors who have been dating each other since their sophomore year. They've been having sex for the past year and using protection. They're very serious about each other and both agree that they're mature enough for a sexual relationship even though they're not ready to think about marriage yet. Despite the fact that they were using birth control, Brianne discovers she's was pregnant a few months before the end of the school year. The baby is due in September, just when both Brianne and Rob were planning to start college. Discuss: What are the best options for Brianne, Rob, and their baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Scenario 2: David and Charisse are high school seniors who have been dating each other since their sophomore year. They have talked about getting married after high school graduation but aren't sure they are ready, since they both plan to go on to college. They are both very committed Christians and believe that premarital sex is wrong. However, they have gone pretty far with kissing and "making out" despite their best efforts to resist temptation. One night while they are studying together at Charisse's house and her parents are out, they have sex. Both feel very sorry about it afterwards and ask for each other's and God's forgiveness. They make an extra effort to resist temptation by trying not to spend much time alone after that, and they discuss the possibility that maybe it would be best to get married sooner rather than later. Two months later, Charisse discovers she's pregnant. The baby is due in September, just when both Charisse and David were planning to start college. Discuss: What are the best options for Charisse, David, and their baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Scenario 3: Emily is a pastor's kid and she's always been a little rebellious. She's had sex with three guys since she was 14. During her junior year in high school, she goes out with Joel, a guy from church. They go pretty far together, but don't have sex. When Joel breaks up with her, Emily decides to "get back at him" by going out with Mike, a very tough gang member who has already dropped out of school. She has sex with Mike on their first–and only–date. Two months later, Emily finds out she's pregnant. She's not dating anyone at the time. Discuss: What are the best options for Emily, for Mike, and for the baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Scenario 4: Katie's basically a good girl who goes to church and gets along pretty well with her parents. She's a junior in high school and has been dating Keith for a year. When they break up, Katie gets really depressed. Two of her friends invite her to a party to cheer her up. At the

party, Katie gets drunk for the first time in her life. She starts flirting with Ben, one of the best-looking guys at school who she's always admired. He invites her upstairs to watch TV in one of the bedrooms, and they end up having sex. After the party, he doesn't talk to her at school or act as though he even knows her. Katie is upset, but she's even more upset when she finds out that she's pregnant. Discuss: What are the best options for Katie, for Ben, and for the baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Scenario 5: Jenni's home life has been a mess ever since her dad and mom split up four years ago. Her mom has had a string of boyfriends and is always out late drinking and partying. She doesn't even seem to care that Jenni exists, and is sometimes verbally and physically abusive to her when she's drunk. Now that Jenni is 16, she tries to stay away from home as much as possible. She's not seriously involved with any guy and has never had sex; she's trying to avoid getting into the same kind of mess her mom has been in with relationships. One night she comes home late and finds herself alone in the house with Bill, her mom's new boyfriend, who is drunk. Bill attacks Jenni and rapes her. Jenni doesn't tell anyone. Soon after, she finds out she's pregnant. Discuss: What are the best options for Jenni, for her mom and Bill, for the baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Scenario 6: Karyn and Ted are in their second year at a Christian college. Ted is studying for the ministry and Karyn is studying to be a teacher. They are both very active in campus organizations (Ted is president of the Campus Ministry student program) and are admired by many as an "ideal couple"). They have been dating for three years and are committed to staying sexually pure until marriage, but in the last few months they have begun having sex. Though at first they both felt bad about it, asked for forgiveness and tried to stop, it kept happening. Because they plan to get married when they're both finished school, they have tried to convince themselves that it's OK, but they still feel guilty. In September, Karyn finds out she's two months pregnant. Their baby would be born in March. They are willing to marry each other, but know their reputations and possibly both their future careers would be damaged if others know they "have" to get married. What are the best options for Karyn, for Ted, and for the baby? Try to come up with a solution your whole group can agree on, if possible.

Discussion Questions:
1. What do these situations have in common with each other? How do they differ?
2. Do the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy make a difference to what you consider "right" in that situation? Why or why not?
3. How should the church treat each of these pregnant teenage moms? Should the circumstances make a difference to how they are treated?
4. What advice or help would you offer to each of these young women if you were a friend?

Preparation Time:
This activity only requires time for you to copy each scenario for the groups to discuss. As you guide the discussion, be sensitive to situations that may exist in your local group and try to ensure that no hurtful comments are made if there are teenage mothers in your group.

Vesper or Closing Thought:

Two messages should come through clearly in this activity. As leader, you need to make sure that these messages are central in the discussion and reinforced in the wrap-up at the end. First, abstinence before marriage is God's plan for Christian youth, and is the only sure way to avoid an unplanned pregnancy. Second, God looks on everyone with love and compassion, no matter what choices they have made in the past, and He calls us to look on others the same way.