

Close to Home Study Guide

Dealing with Teenage Pregnancy

1. Opening (1 minute)*

Acknowledge to the group that dealing with teenage pregnancy of any circumstance is multifaceted and complex. At different points in our lives, we may be children born of teenage parents, teens expecting a baby, or persons unexpectedly plunged into relationships with teenage parents and their children.

Lead the group in prayer—your own or the following: *Creator God, we have gathered in your presence to remember that you are the source of all life. We thank you that we can come to you even when our lives go in different directions from your plan for us. Help us to listen, help us to learn. Amen.*

2. Storytelling (8 minutes)

Read or tell Julia's story.

- What are other contributing factors to teenage pregnancy?
- Optional or rhetorical question: With whom do you most identify in this story?

3. Review of pamphlet (6 minutes)

Read "Teen pregnancy, the Bible, and the Christian story" (pp. 6–7). Invite each person to identify one point that speaks to them.

4. Reading of Scripture text (15 minutes)

Review the situation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-19. Note that the Luke account does not detail the problems faced by an unwed pregnant teenager. But Matthew 1:18-19 gives us an idea of how this situation would have been treated in the community.

- How did Mary and Joseph handle their unanticipated pregnancy situation?

What about the baby? Read Matthew 18:1-5.

- What do you notice about Jesus' inclusion of children in his kingdom?
- What does Jesus say, and what is left unsaid?

* The suggested time frames are for a 45-minute session. With more discussion and storytelling, you will need to adjust upward, and possibly extend to a second session.

5. Steps toward healing (14 minutes)

Review “Next Steps” (pp. 8–9). Highlight the importance of getting help. Choose from these perspectives for personal sharing.

- If you are a teenage mother- or father-to-be, what do you need right now? What kind of help do you wish would be available to you?
- If you are a parent or caregiver of expecting teenagers, what do you need right now? What kind of help do you wish would be available to you?
- How can your congregation be helpful in this situation?
- In light of your sharing, what are the next steps for this group?

6. Closing (1 minute)

Encourage the group to find and use the resources listed in “For further awareness.”

Read Psalm 139:1-18 as a prayer.



**Faith & Life
Resources**

This study guide is written by Sharon Williams, editor of *Adult Bible Study* (Faith & Life Resources) and Minister of Worship with Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pennsylvania. It is one of a series of free downloadable study guides for the *Close to Home* pamphlets, which can be ordered from MennoMedia of the Mennonite Church (see www.MennoMedia.org/closetohome) or the Mennonite Brethren Kindred Productions (www.kindredproductions.com/closetohome).