

Lesson for Is It OK for a Teen to Date Someone in His or Her Twenties?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe at least one benefit and one concern about a teen dating an adult after reading the above story from *Sex, Etc.*
- 2) Clarify their personal values about teens dating adults after ranking characters in a case study.
- 3) List at least two values that are different from their own regarding teens dating adults after discussing a case study in small groups.

TIME NEEDED

50 minutes

MATERIALS

- Copies of “Is it OK for a Teen to Date Someone in His or Her Twenties?”
—one per student
- Copies of “Statutory Rape: A Case Study”
—one per student
- Index cards or scrap paper
- Pens and pencils (if students won’t have them)
- Newsprint—prepared
- Tape

PREPARATION

Prepare a piece of newsprint with the following stem sentences written on it:

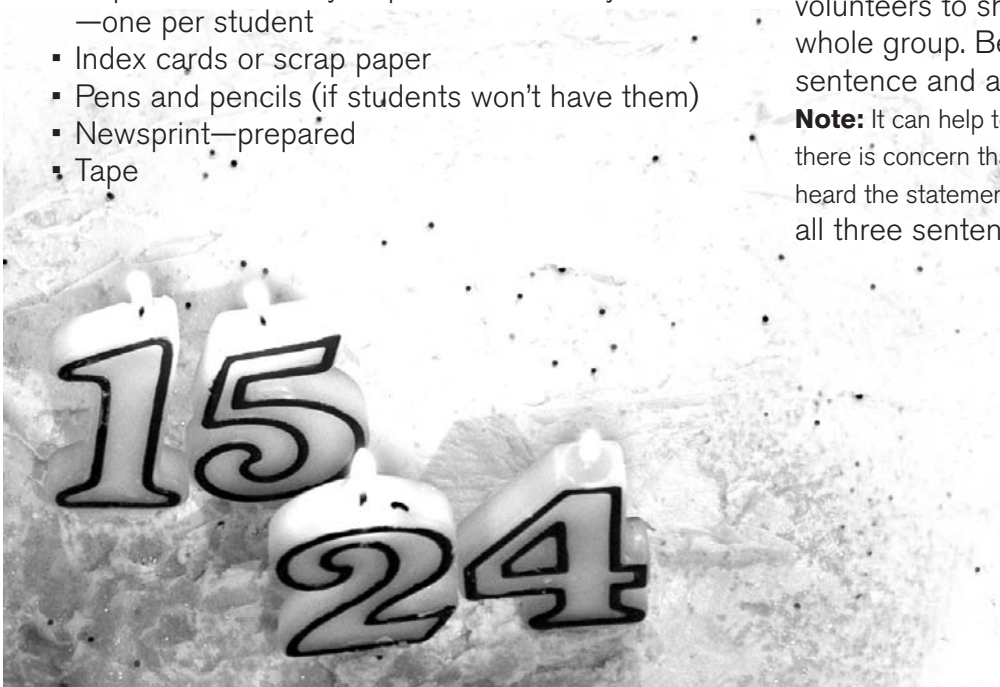
- 1) Teens who date adults are . . .
- 2) Adults who date teens are . . .
- 3) One thing I don’t understand about teens and adults dating is . . .

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to raise their hands if they know someone who has ever dated someone who was at least four or more years older or younger than the other partner. (**Facilitator’s Note:** Depending on the response, point out that most people know someone who has had this experience.) Explain that teens dating adults is a complex issue and one that can result in a variety of consequences. Explain that this lesson will look at some of the pros and cons of teens dating adults. [1 minute]

2. Distribute an index card/scrap of paper and a pen/pencil to each student. Tell students that you will be reading three sentence stems and they are to write the first thing that comes to mind on their paper. Tell group that this is an activity designed to allow students to hear a variety of opinions and beliefs but not the time to engage in a debate, since there is no right or wrong when it comes to personal opinions. [2 minutes]

3. Read each sentence stem twice and allow students a few seconds to write their responses. When you are done reading all three, tell students that you will now read them again and ask for volunteers to share what they wrote with the whole group. Begin by reading the first stem sentence and ask for volunteers. (**Facilitator’s Note:** It can help to repeat what students have said if there is concern that the whole group may not have heard the statement.) Continue this process with all three sentence stems. [10 minutes]



4. Distribute a copy of “Is it OK for a Teen to Date Someone in His or Her Twenties?” to each student and read together as a group. Ask the following discussion questions:

- What do you think about the story?
- Could you see both sides of this issue? Why or why not?
- What other factors can have an impact on whether it's OK for an adult and teen to date? [10 minutes]

5. Distribute a copy of “Statutory Rape: A Case Study” to each student. Instruct students to read the case individually and rank the characters based on what characters behaved most or least honorably.

(Facilitator's Note: Alternatively, you can read the scenario aloud or ask for volunteers to read it aloud to the group.) Give participants five minutes to complete this task individually. [5 minutes]

6. Next, divide students into groups of four and have them arrange their seats together. Explain that groups will talk about the scenario, their rankings and try to come to a consensus about the rankings for each character. Allow groups ten minutes to complete this task. **(Facilitator's Note:** During this time it is helpful to circulate among groups to clarify any questions about the task and facilitate disagreements, if any arise, among group members.) [10 minutes]

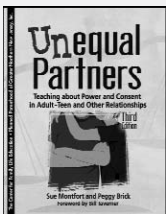
7. Gather groups' attention and ask the following questions:

- How many groups were able to reach consensus?
- How did it feel to try and do this?
- Using your fingers, show me what rating you gave Denise. Why did you give Denise that particular rating?
- Using your fingers, show me what rating you gave Taylor. Why did you give Taylor that particular rating?
- What did you learn from this scenario and the discussion?

(Facilitator's Note: Depending on your group, participants might have very strong opinions about what characters behaved most or least honorably. This is to be expected. The facilitator should ask probing questions to clarify people's opinions and remind the groups that there is no “right” answer.) [10 minutes]

8. End discussion by explaining that there are additional factors involved when teens who are under the age of consent date adults. Those factors can be much more serious and dangerous for both people involved. Encourage your students to talk with their parents or other trusted adults about their beliefs and opinions about teen relationships. [2 minutes]

Special thanks to Sex, Etc. teen editor Natasha Ramsey for her review of this discussion guide.



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Statutory Rape: A Case Study

This case study is based on actual events.

Taylor, 18, is an honor student and senior at Morristown High School in Georgia. Taylor has a 3.75 grade point average and a full scholarship to attend a prestigious university next fall. Taylor met his girlfriend, Denise, a sophomore at the same school, in home economics class. After dating for a couple of months, the subject of having sexual intercourse came up. Initially, Denise was really nervous, but Taylor finally convinced her and they had sexual intercourse. Denise visited a local clinic to get birth control and talked with the nurse about the fact that she was having sexual intercourse with Taylor.

Taylor's mom knew that he was dating Denise and had always liked her, although she did worry that Denise was a bit young. She has always trusted that she raised Taylor right and trusts that he won't do anything to jeopardize his college scholarship.

Denise's father found out they had sex and completely freaked out. Since Taylor was three years older than Denise, having sex is legally considered a crime because she is under 17, the age of consent in Georgia. This means that even though Denise agreed to have sexual intercourse with Taylor, the law says that she is not able to give consent due to her age. Taylor also did not know that Denise had been keeping their relationship a secret from her father.

Denise's father reported the incident to the police, and Denise was examined by the sexual assault center. Vaginal bruising and tearing were found, which could mean there was forcible sex or which could have happened because it was Denise's first time having intercourse. As a result, Taylor was charged with statutory rape and awaits trial. His university scholarship was revoked and as a result of all that has happened, he and Denise are no longer speaking.



Rank the five characters below. Number 1 would be the person who behaved most honorably and Number 5 would be the person who behaved least honorably.

___ Denise

___ Taylor

___ Denise's Father

___ Taylor's Mother

___ The Nurse at the Clinic

Idea adapted from Teaching Safer Sex, by Peggy Brick and Colleagues, The Center for Family Life Education, www.ppgnnj.org