

INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher, you desire to help your students become perceptive, informed, creative and responsible adults. Students, however, are increasingly being confronted at earlier ages with potentially life-changing choices. The ***DreamMakers-DreamBreakers*** curriculum addresses the needs of elementary students to build character and prepare for the challenges of life. Your role as a teacher is key to the success of your students. Coming alongside your students and taking an interest in their lives above and beyond the subject you teach and the knowledge you share with them is very important to the overall learning process. This curriculum is a companion to one for secondary students similarly named ***DreamMakers-DreamBreakers***.

In Unit 1, ***DreamMakers***, you will find lessons to help guide your students in how to set and achieve their goals, make wise decisions and build good character. Like you, we want students to dream about their futures and learn how to make those dreams come true.

In Unit 2, ***DreamBreakers***, you will find lessons to help your students avoid obstacles and temptations to achieving their dreams and goals such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc. Our goal is to guide them toward making wise decisions about hard challenges in life, so they will not break their dreams.

In Unit 3, ***Keys to your Dreams***, you will explore the keys to integrating what the students have learned about ***DreamMakers*** and ***DreamBreakers*** with how to help your students be successful and fulfilled. They will be encouraged to look at the decisions they have made about their character as you have progressed through this curriculum and how it can affect them physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Our desire is to help them succeed in life, becoming the best and most fulfilled person they can be!

OVERALL APPROACH

For several decades, in many countries, different educational curricula have attempted to influence the behavior of elementary students. Most have met with failure or, at best, extremely limited success. Most of these curricula have relied on two strategies: giving information and/or instilling

appropriate fear. Longitudinal studies indicate an authority figure simply telling facts and warning of dangers does not, in the long run, deter poor choices of students. When young students fail to prepare themselves to face difficulties, which will inevitably come, they are fertile soil for destructive behaviors. The ***DreamMakers-DreamBreakers*** curriculum for elementary students is a positive approach to helping students deal with the challenges of identity and character as well as helping them make healthy and wise choices in life.

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

DreamMakers-DreamBreakers begins constructively and continues with several distinctive components including:

Individual Development: This curriculum begins by helping students develop a sense of identity and value, which will affect the person they become and the choices they make. A strong foundation provides skills to make choices and set goals to help guide their paths in a positive direction.

Narrative: Woven throughout this curriculum is an adventure story of three elementary students, Trish, Dugan and Hector, and their exciting encounter with a mysterious Librarian and the Map of Wonders.

Active Student Involvement: As teachers, we realize students learn more quickly and remember better when they are involved in the learning process. This curriculum employs a variety of active-learning exercises, games and activities. This active involvement is a crucial part of each lesson. These activities engage students, keep their attention, encourage focused participation and foster healthy life decisions.

Personal Journal: Some lessons make creative use of a personal journal to give opportunities for remembering important facts, answer personal questions and record life decisions. This can be a formal journal-type book or simply paper designated to collect their thoughts.

Age Appropriateness: The aim of this curriculum is to be used with students in elementary school. When appropriate, suggestions are given

designating activities for younger and older elementary students. In today's world, it has become necessary to address, prepare and equip younger students with decision-making skills as they begin facing many adolescent situations. Teachers should adapt any of this material to fit the age level of their students.

Timing: Each section of the lesson gives an approximate time necessary for the activity. This is a suggestion as the time required will differ with the age and ability of your students. Please take the time you need to fully engage your students and allow for sufficient discussion, even if you need to divide the lesson into several parts within a few days.

CURRICULUM EMPHASES

DreamMakers-DreamBreakers is more than simply information about certain topics. It presents three distinct levels of motivation to encourage students to build a good foundation in the hope it will help them avoid destructive behavior in the teenage years and make positive choices. The flexible design of the curriculum allows you to employ just the first level, the first two levels or all three levels.

Level 1: Informational - Each lesson has specific information to be taught throughout the lesson to help guide students' decision-making processes concerning life skills. This information is to help teachers with the academic knowledge and preparation needed in order to teach each lesson.

Level 2: Emotional - Students often make choices influenced by their emotions. This curriculum helps students develop life skills to make wise choices in the future. As teachers, we must not ignore the emotional component in decision making. Elementary students are often more drawn to what appears fun, trendy or popular than to what seems merely logical or wise.

Level 3: Spiritual - Every culture of the world has recognized humans are not only physical and psychological beings, but individuals who also have a spiritual dimension. Cross-cultural studies indicate while morals are transmitted by various means such as families, media and education, enduring values are nearly always rooted in spiritual tradition.

The **Going Deeper** section of each lesson explores the mysterious, but powerful influence, of the spiritual dimension of life. For many students, a strong spiritual foundation will be the compelling force to restrain them from the pressures that would draw them into self-destructive behaviors. Your role as a teacher is not to convince your students to believe what you believe. That is a decision best left to the students and their families. When a student makes a voluntary choice about what to believe, the decision can play a powerful role in avoiding the **DreamBreakers** discussed in this curriculum.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Why does this curriculum use educational games and active-learning activities? They are not used merely to entertain the students or to hold their attention. Active learning provides an appropriate way for students to develop knowledge and a positive attitude toward learning. Students learn best by doing, thinking and exploring. The goal of this curriculum is to inform and inspire students to develop their character as well as contribute toward decision-making skills concerning choices they will face during the difficult challenges in teen and adult years.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Consider making a poster or bulletin board listing the key concepts and terms you want your students to learn in each lesson.

Key Concepts: This list will help orient you to the fundamental ideas communicated in the lesson.

Objectives: These are specific goals you should help your students achieve as a result of the lesson.

Key Terms: These are definitions of terms which may be unfamiliar to your students or, in some cases, even to you.

Background Information: This section includes notes and additional information which, while not crucial to your preparation, may be helpful.

Materials/Preparation: This is a list of what you will need to bring to the class or prepare in advance.

PARTS OF THE CLASSROOM LESSON

Beginning the Lesson: Each lesson begins with a few comments summarizing the previous lesson and sets the tone for the current lesson.

Note, throughout each lesson, bracketed, *non-bolded italicized text* indicates an instruction to you as a teacher. **Bolded text** is designed for you to say to your students. Regular type is informational. For example:

These are statements for you to say to your students.

[These are instructions to you as a teacher.]

Story: Every lesson includes one or more episodes of the adventure story of three students, the Librarian and the Map of Wonders (a mysterious map that initiates adventures for the children). You may want to read the story to your students or have your students take turns reading it at the beginning of each lesson. For variety, you may wish to occasionally assign students to read the various roles in the story. Sometimes, a group of students could dramatize the story with props, etc.

Lesson Format: Each lesson is designed using **Five Steps of Active Learning**. Within some of the active-learning steps, you may see suggestions for younger elementary students and older elementary students. As the teacher, you can decide which activities are appropriate for your class.

Five Steps of Active Learning

- **READINESS:** The story is used in each lesson to focus students on the intent of the lesson.
- **EXPLORE:** This section of the lesson introduces information to students.
- **DISCOVER:** This section helps students encounter the benefits or consequences of the lesson concepts.
- **APPLY:** This section leads students to take the truth they have discovered and use it in practical ways.
- **SHARE:** This section encourages students to share with others what they have learned and are applying in their lives.

Ending the Lesson: This section includes a few thoughts to help you conclude the lesson for your students.

Going Deeper: This part of the lesson is an **optional** enrichment resource which can help you deepen the spiritual influence of this curriculum. One goal of the **Going Deeper** segment is for students to discover the historical teachings of the Bible as a practical and relevant resource to their own lives. Even if your situation will not allow you to teach all of the **Going Deeper** segments, you will want to carefully read and consider them as you prepare for each lesson. Sometimes, you will find the learning activities helpful to expand your lesson or as an alternative to ones in the main portions of the lesson. In most cases, the learning activities can be taught with or without the underlying spiritual content.

Parent-Teacher Connection: Research has proven that children become more productive citizens in the world when parents and teachers work together. We encourage you to invite your parents to participate in the *DreamMakers-DreamBreakers* curriculum. Together, you can encourage each child to think critically and creatively, learn to communicate well, solve problems and evaluate information from a well-informed point of view. At the end of the introduction, you will see an example of a letter you could give to your parents. Adjustments can be made to the letter to make it appropriate for your parents. It would be helpful if you could introduce the curriculum to your parents at your class orientation meeting at the beginning of the year.

Explain to your parents that the final resource segment of each lesson has a few questions for the student to discuss with a family member. This person does not have to be a parent – it could be a grandparent, guardian or other trusted adult.

There are several ways you might consider sharing the **Parent-Teacher Connection** with students' parents:

- You may choose to distribute the questions to the parents as part of an introduction packet at the beginning of the year.
- Students could copy the questions at the end of each session.

- You could make copies of the **Parent-Teacher Connection** section, which is at the end of each lesson, to send home as you teach the lesson.

The **Parent-Teacher Connection** is one of the most crucial ways of helping students avoid wrong choices. Open discussion between students and parents can be an important factor in helping students make long-lasting healthy decisions.

FINAL THOUGHTS FOR YOU AS A TEACHER

Research indicates spreading the teaching of this curriculum through a longer period of time is more effective. Our lessons are developed so you can teach them throughout the school year.

It is important for you to prepare the lessons ahead of time as you ready yourself to teach this curriculum. When possible, leave time for discussion at the end of each lesson. Your purpose in teaching this curriculum should be to help protect and guide your students, not merely to cover content. Remember, the more your students talk and interact, the greater the chance they will learn the values suggested in these lessons and continue to develop them long after the class is finished.

The authors hope you enjoy teaching this curriculum and will be encouraged as you see your students developing good character traits, making wise life choices and becoming strong, positive contributing members of society.

Standing with you and your students,
DreamMakers-DreamBreakers Elementary Curriculum Development Team
International School Project



Dear Parents,

We are excited your child will be participating in class with a new curriculum called ***DreamMakers-DreamBreakers***, which explores life choices that may affect his or her future. We will be discovering ways for your child to analyze risks, use decision-making skills and weigh the value of morals and ethics as they journey through life.

Your child will be developing dreams for the future and evaluating how his or her choices will affect those dreams. We will look at some roadblocks in life and discuss how we can learn to wisely navigate them. We will also be discussing the value of good character traits and how developing those traits can help us share a more fulfilling life with others. Research has shown when parents and teachers work together to create healthy, safe learning environments at home and at school, children develop into stronger and more productive citizens.

I will be sharing information about the lessons each week as we learn and grow through this curriculum. You will be invited to be involved with your child at home by sharing memories or discussing questions raised in our study. I hope you enjoy sharing this learning time with your child.

Sincerely,