

# *THE MYSTERIOUS BOX: YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS*

LESSON

1

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### KEY CONCEPTS

In our journey toward freedom, there are many rites of passage. Some help us to reach our goals and dreams, and others are foolish and harmful.

### OBJECTIVES

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

1. Identify some rites of passage in the journey toward freedom.
2. Recognize obstacles to successful navigation of the journey toward freedom.
3. List some necessary resources for transitioning to a rite of passage (people, knowledge, goals, character).

### KEY TERMS

**Rites of Passage:** Ceremonies that mark transitions in life. They may be formal, traditional and public as in a wedding ceremony; informal as in a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party; innovative as in new family traditions parents initiate; or somewhat private as in religious membership rites.

**Freedom:** Not under the control of an arbitrary person or power, able to think and act without compulsion or arbitrary restriction (dictionary definition). A more nuanced definition and description will come in **Lessons 2 and 3** in this curriculum.

**Community:** A group of people who hold a common set of personal values and communicate regularly, affirming these values, and their commitment to each other.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Rites of passage are never intended to be a solo experience. They are intended to be a community experience.
2. A successful passage should be marked with a celebration.

## MATERIALS / PREPARATION

1. **Lesson Timing:** At the beginning of each learning activity, an approximate duration for the activity is shown in the column just under the activity name. At the end of each activity, the total time used since the beginning of the session is estimated in the left column as:

 = \_\_ minutes

2. **The Box:** Ideally an old wooden box; size may vary, but something close to 30 cm by 30 cm by 20 cm (12 in. by 12 in. by 8 in.). A small chest will also add a sense of mystery if you have one available to use in your classroom. If nothing else is available, a cardboard box can work.
3. **In the Box:** Grandmothers' Letter.
  - Slips of paper or cards – one for each obstacle identified in the activity.
  - One piece of cloth large enough to make a blindfold.
  - Small cloth bag.
  - Bottle cap (preferably recognizable as coming from an alcoholic beverage).
  - Clothing label (preferably from a popular brand).
  - A ticket stub from a movie or popular concert.
4. Several obstacles (such as chairs) that can be moved or rearranged. Other students may crouch down to serve as obstacles.
5. Each student will need a notebook and journal for lessons. You will want to have a sample of each to show during this lesson.

**Note:** There are three learning activity options described in this lesson. You will likely have time to do only one of the three with your class. Two of the options are versions of the “Obstacle Course Game.” The third option is a less active “Life Hurdle Game.” Read through each option carefully and choose the one that best fits your classroom, students, and time frame. Most future lessons will not include this kind of three-option choice.

- Option A is simpler to organize, takes less space, and requires less class time (45 minutes total).
- Option B is more complex, more competitive, actively involves more of the students but requires a larger room and takes more time for the activity (55 minutes total).
- Option C is a learning activity that students complete at their desks (45 minutes total).

## LESSON

## BEGINNING THE LESSON

## INTRODUCTION

ABOUT 1 MINUTE

This class is called “DreamMakers-DreamBreakers”. This class may be quite different from any class you’ve had in the past. In this class you’ll have a chance to explore your own hopes and dreams. We will look at dream makers – things that will help you see your own dreams come true. We will also examine some dream breakers – things that might hold you back from achieving your dreams.

A very special part of this class is that throughout the course we will be reading a story. It is a story about three young people: Dima, Natasha, and Sasha, and a series of surprises their grandmothers had planned for them long ago. The story starts with a mysterious old box. Let’s listen carefully to how the tale begins.



## STORY

ABOUT 4 MINUTES

[Read the following story:]

“Please sit down.” An old box lay on the table in front of the speaker. She rubbed the top of the box with one thumb as she surveyed the three students who sat before her. None of the three looked particularly pleased to be there, summoned on the last day of the summer break to their teacher’s office. Perhaps she should have waited and asked them to stay after school instead of cutting their holiday short.

“Thank you for coming,” she continued. “As you know, I will be your teacher this year. A few weeks ago, I came into possession of something that concerns all three of you. It is not something I’ve ever had to deal with before and I’m a bit uncertain as to how we ought to proceed.”

The three looked at each other but said nothing. Keeping your mouth shut was usually the safest strategy when faced with the unknown, particularly when it came to teachers.

“Perhaps I should simply read you the introductory letter; it is fairly straightforward.” And with that she picked up an old, creased piece of paper and read the following:

*Dear Dima, Natasha, and Sasha,*

*It all began easily enough; we would be the exceptions to the rule. Our dreams would come true, and no one would ever come between us and the “happy ever after” we were sure was ours for the asking. My, how foolish we were back then!*

*We’ve been friends all of our lives. We went through school together, got in trouble together, were married within two years of each other, and saw each other’s children through the same seasons of life.*

*We faced the difficulties and disappointments of life and remained friends through it all. In fact, we were among the first to greet each of you when you entered this world. We are your grandmothers.*

*Dima, it was on the day of your birth that your grandmother, Olga, first thought of a way to reach beyond the unforgiving boundaries of time and space. We began to experiment that very night. Of course, our first attempts were clumsy and ill-planned.*

*Natasha, count yourself lucky that your grandmother, Yelena, gave up on the idea of involving the Mafia in our plan before it was too late! However, we needed a shrewd thinker like Yelena to get around our greatest obstacles — the three of you.*

*Sasha, it was your grandmother, Ludmilla, who finally convinced us that secrecy was the road to travel. That is why none of you has the slightest idea what's in the box that now sits before you.*

*My, the fun we've had and the tears we've shed. We had no idea how costly our experiment would be. Living outside the present time and space extracts a painful price. It is not for the timid or those who bruise easily. There were times when each of us would have given up our quest, if not for the comfort and encouragement of the other two, and the vision of what it could mean for you, our dear grandchildren.*

*Of course, you are not children anymore. In fact, that is why you have been summoned on this precise day to your teacher's office. At first, we thought to wait until you were older. But each year we delayed, the final phase of our secret experiment puts each of you at greater risk, with more to overcome and less time to learn to overcome it.*

*Ever heard of "rites of passage"? It is a concept as old as time. An example would be that telling moment or season when a boy becomes a man or a girl becomes a woman. There are tribes in Africa that still mark masculine maturity by the day on which a young man kills his first lion with a spear. Sounds barbaric, doesn't it? Not to mention dangerous and perhaps foolish. Of course, there are other rites of passage. Some are fairly harmless. Others can be fatal. We know. We three still carry the scars from foolishly participating in poorly chosen rites of passage.*

*Your teacher knows what lies inside the box. That she has summoned you here today is proof of the fact that she believes we have acted wisely on your behalf and is ready to commit herself to this endeavor.*

*Well, here we are. Time to choose. Say "yes" to the mystery. Open the box. Discover why we were willing to open our souls to such wonders and woundings in order to be your guides in this quest. Or, walk away.*

*With all our love,  
Your Grandmothers*

The teacher folded the piece of paper and placed it back into the box. It happened so quickly that none of the three had time to glimpse inside. It was like Christmas with a twist. Here was a present from their grandmothers colorfully wrapped in mystery and ribboned with promise. However, possession of this present was a two-way street. Open it and find out the mystery. Open it and the mystery finds you.



**= 5 minutes**

## EXPLORING THE LESSON



### ESTABLISH CLASS PARTICIPATION IN THE QUEST ABOUT 5 MINUTES

*[Make a great show of producing your own mysterious box to build suspense. Peek inside, being careful not to let the students see. Then, ask if any in the class are curious as to what's inside. Don't be too eager to comply. Drum your fingers on the top of the box. You might take a second look into the box, cautiously moving things around inside it, and while still looking at the box say something along the lines of:]*

**Hmm, tricky. Ouch!**

*[Pull out hand and put finger in your mouth.]*

**This could get dangerous! Are you sure you want to know what's inside?**

*[Then pull out a small cloth bag tied with a string. Toss the bag to a student and ask him or her to open it. Have the students gather around as this is done. Inside are three items. A bottle cap (preferably with the logo of some kind of alcoholic beverage), a clothing label (preferably a popular one) and a used movie or pop concert ticket.*

**Ask:] What do you think these things mean?**

*[Entertain as many guesses and suggestions as the students are willing to offer. Hopefully, someone will offer that these things represent various rites of passage (i.e., drinking, wearing the right clothes, seeing the right movies). If no one does, make the observation yourself and ask the class to think of other things they associate with growing up or independence.]*

**Many think adulthood is somehow tied to forbidden things like sex, drugs, or alcohol, wearing certain clothes, or engaging in whatever the media or your peer group touts as the latest way to prove you're a man or a woman – that you are truly free. The list could also include graduation, marriage, childbirth, job, own apartment, baptism, travel, military service, etc. They may be positive or negative.**

*[Write the ideas about growing up on the board. Categorize them in two columns, positive and negative.]*



**= 10 minutes**



## CLASS-GENERATED LIST

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

If the students need help thinking of things, suggest a goal, friends, a mentor, and knowledge of hazards ahead.

If the students need help thinking of obstacles, suggest drug use, alcohol abuse, being forced to leave home, dropping out of school.

In the unit we are beginning today, we will be exploring rites of passage, and how they may help or hinder each of us. In this class, I hope you will begin to think of your own life as a journey toward freedom.

Before anyone begins a long trip, a person usually spends some time thinking about what he or she will need to take.

In the journey of your life, you will need to take many things with you to make your journey successful. In packing your bag for the journey, what “things” will you need to take along to navigate successfully?

Let’s pretend for a minute you are packing an invisible bag to take on the journey of the rest of your life. What kinds of things might you want to “pack” to take along?

*[Write on the board as the students suggest things to “pack in their bags.” If they have trouble starting, you may want to make some suggestions such as: “Do you think you may need some money?” “Would intelligence, or being smart, help you on your life journey?” etc.]*

Most people on long trips run into some problems or obstacles. Let’s try to guess what might be some obstacles that each of you might encounter on your journey toward freedom. What kinds of things might trip you up or prevent you from reaching your goals?

*[Make a list of the students’ responses on the board. Have a student write them on cards or slips of paper, one obstacle per card. Again, if they have trouble thinking of obstacles, make some suggestions such as: “Might other people oppose what you want to do?” “Might certain habits or lack of skills be obstacles?”]*

Next, we are going to play a game that may show that a journey can have pitfalls, but they can be dealt with.



= 20 minutes



## OBSTACLE COURSE GAME

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

### OPTION A OR OPTION B OR C

**Option A** (*simpler, easier, shorter option*)

To begin the game, everyone stand up and form a circle around the outside edge of the room. I need a volunteer.

*[Have the student volunteer wait outside the room, if possible, so that he or she cannot see how the room will be arranged.]*

*[Next, arrange chairs as obstacles. You may also choose to use students to represent obstacles.]*

*Make sure that there are enough obstacles and that they are placed in such a way that a student walking in a straight path would be unable to walk across the room without bumping into something.*

*[If labels were made earlier when naming obstacles, place them on the obstacles now.]*

**Now, two students please take a blindfold and blindfold the volunteer and then lead him or her into the room.**

*[Teacher speaking to the blindfolded student:]*

**You must walk across the room blindfolded. The room has been rearranged, and there are many obstacles to your journey. It is very important that you do not bump into or even touch any of the obstacles with any part of your body. Also, you must keep your hands behind your back.**

**All right, you may begin your journey.**

*[As soon as the student touches something, instruct him or her to stop. Say:]*

**I'm sorry \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name). You have just crashed into \_\_\_\_\_ (obstacle's name).**

*[Read the label or name one of the obstacles the students brainstormed earlier; e.g., forced to leave home, fired from job, etc.]*

**You may continue your journey.**

*[When the student touches another object, repeat your comments as above. Now ask the blindfolded student:]*

**What would help you complete your journey without encountering obstacles?**

*[Teacher: The blindfold cannot be taken off. If the student does not suggest it, ask whether it would be helpful if someone else guided him.]*

**I need another volunteer to help guide \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name).**

*[Whisper in the student guide's ear that he or she should intentionally, but gently, lead the blindfolded student into an obstacle, such as drug experimentation or alcohol abuse.]*

**All right \_\_\_\_\_ (name the blindfolded student), you may continue your journey.**

*[As soon as the student touches something, instruct them to stop.]*

I'm sorry \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name). You have just crashed into \_\_\_\_\_ (obstacle's name).

*[Read the label or name one of the obstacles.]*

I now need a **faithful** guide for \_\_\_\_\_ (name blindfolded student). We will let \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name) start his or her journey over again with a faithful friend to guide him or her.

*[Name the obstacles as the faithful guide leads the student around them. Example: "Your faithful guide is leading you away from drug use, or dropping out of school, etc."]*

Now that you have completed your journey, you may remove your blindfold.

Whenever anyone completes a significant stage in their life journey, it is appropriate to celebrate. To symbolize (his or her) achievement, let's applaud \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name) for completing (his or her) successful "journey" across the room.

*[Lead the class in clapping or other brief celebration for the student.]*

Now skip over "OPTION B" and "OPTION C" sections and proceed to the "CLASS DISCUSSION" section.



**= 30 minutes (If you chose Option A, go to CLASS DISCUSSION)**



## OBSTACLE COURSE GAME

20 MINUTES

### OPTION B OR OPTION A OR C

You will need to divide your students into at least four groups with at least four students in each group. If you have fewer than 16 students, you should consider using Option A game as the activity.

**Option B** (*more complex, more involving, more time-consuming*)

To begin the game, we're going to form several (four to seven) groups. Please go stand quietly with your group. You will need to choose two students from your group, one boy and one girl, who during the game will be trying to get through an obstacle course while wearing a blindfold. The remaining members of your group will be designing an obstacle course for members of other teams to try to get through.

*[Have the boy and girl from each group wait outside or in another room where they cannot see or hear what is going on in the classroom. You may want to place tape on the floor to divide the obstacle course lanes for each group. Or, you can draw lines with chalk.]*

**When I finish this explanation, you will have just five minutes to**



Depending on how evenly your class divides and whether you wish to share the “judging” activities with some of your students, you may appoint two to five students to act as judges. They will monitor the game to make sure it is played fairly and will also assign points to each group. The group with the most points will be the winning group.

If labels were made when naming obstacles, place them on the obstacles now.

**design each of your obstacles. You are to make four obstacles between the beginning and the end of your lane. You may use the following objects to design your obstacles: chairs, books, other objects, and students. The only requirement is that any unblindfolded student could easily avoid touching all the obstacles without walking outside of the lane.**

*[Make sure that there are enough obstacles, and that they are placed in such a way that a student walking in a straight path would be unable to walk across the room without bumping into something.]*

**Now, two of the students from each team go outside and blindfold each of the girls and then lead them into the room.**

*[Or you may start with all of the boys. Station each blindfolded student at the beginning of an obstacle course away from his or her own team so that no student is trying to navigate a course designed by his or her team members.]*

*Teacher speaking to the blindfolded students:]*

**You must walk across the room blindfolded. The room has been rearranged, and there are some obstacles to each of your journeys. It is very important that you do not bump into or even touch any of the obstacles with any part of your body. Also, you must keep your hands behind your back. If you start to step outside the lane, the students in that lane will gently help you back inside the lane. Your team will receive one point for each obstacle you pass without touching it. Once you touch an obstacle, you must take off your blindfold and stop.**

*[If you have student judges, explain that they will tell the students when they must stop.]*

**All right, you may each begin your journey.**

*[As soon as the student touches something, instruct him or her to stop. Say:]*

**I’m sorry \_\_\_\_\_ (student’s name). You have just crashed into \_\_\_\_\_ (obstacle’s name).**

*[Read the label or name one of the obstacles the students brainstormed earlier; e.g., forced to leave home, fired from job, etc.]*

**This has hindered your journey, so you must stop and take off your blindfold.**

*[When all the students are stopped, announce the points for each team (one for each obstacle successfully passed). Then explain the following to the students standing by each obstacle:]*

**In a moment, we are going to bring in the rest of the students. You are to stay by your obstacle and you cannot move at all.**

*[If any made it past all obstacles, he or she may choose which obstacle he or she wishes to stand by.]*

- **You must keep your hands clasped behind your backs. But as the students try to come through the course, it is your job to try to get them to run into an obstacle as soon as possible.**
- **You may plead with them, give them wrong advice, make fun of them, and make them laugh.**
- **You can do anything, as long as it is just using your voice, to try to make them fail.**
- **You may not speak to any of the students on other obstacle courses and you may not touch the student on your team unless someone happens to run into you.**
- **If someone does run into you, he or she is finished because you are now one of the obstacles.**
- **No other student may talk or make any noises at all. If anyone off the course speaks, makes noise, or in any way interferes, a point will be deducted from his or her team's score.**

*[Have the remaining students come in blindfolded as before. Rotate the students over one more lane so no blindfolded student is in a lane with any of the others from his or her team. Repeat the instructions and comments as above. When the students are stuck and have their blindfolds off, announce points as before.]*

*Now ask the students who have had blindfolds:]*

**Besides having no blindfold, what might have helped you complete your journey without encountering obstacles?**

*[If nobody suggests having a guide, suggest it yourself as a helpful idea.]*

*Have each team now select two others (either both boys or both girls) and have one of them put on a blindfold. (You may have two teams with pairs of girls and three teams with pairs of boys.) Put them at the beginning of another course not in their team's lane.]*

**Now you will walk through the obstacle course and the tempters will try to deceive or confuse you. But your guide will walk behind you with his or her hand on your shoulders. Your guide will help you avoid the obstacles by silently pushing or pulling on your shoulders to steer you. Your guide may not speak.**

Now skip over the “OPTION C” section and proceed to the “CLASS DISCUSSION” section.

*[When each pair has gotten stuck or made it through, announce points as before and tally which group has won. If you think it is appropriate, give a small piece of candy or other reward to each member of the winning team. Then put the classroom back in order.]*

 = 40 minutes (If you chose Option B, go to CLASS DISCUSSION)



## LIFE HURDLE GAME

ABOUT 20 MINUTES

### OPTION C OR OPTION A OR B

#### Option C

*[Tell your students you want them to work in pairs with a student adjacent to them.*

*Once they have paired up, have them decide who will be Person A and who will be Person B. Then ask each Person A to write in his or her notebook a goal or ambition he or she wants to accomplish within a week. Give them a minute to write.*

*Ask Person A to show his or her goal or ambition to Person B.*

*Ask Person B to write in his or her notebook an obstacle he or she thinks would prohibit Person A from achieving his or her goal or ambition.*

*In turn, ask Person A to read aloud his or her goal or ambition, then Person B to read aloud the obstacle he or she wrote. Then ask the class to suggest how Person A might overcome the obstacle Person B wrote.*

*Follow the same process with each A/B pair.]*

Proceed to the ENDING THE LESSON section at the “40 MINUTES” mark.

 = 40 minutes (If you chose Option C, go to ENDING THE LESSON)



## CLASS DISCUSSION

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

### FOR OPTIONS A & B

Skip this activity if you have chosen Option C.

#### What did the blindfolds represent?

*[Youthful immaturity, lack of life experience.]*

#### What was the significance of the obstacles?

*[Foolish rites of passage.]*

*To the blindfolded student(s):]*

How did it feel to be led by the first guide? *[or in Option B]* . . . go through with no guide?

Did you feel betrayed, uncomfortable, did not know where they might take you?

How did it feel to be led by the second guide? *[or in Option B]* . . . the silent guide?

Was it comforting to know that they were leading you around obstacles, instead of into them?

*[To the faithful guide:]*

How did it feel to be the faithful guide?

*[Felt useful, good to be able to help someone avoid the obstacles.]*

What might be one of the most significant obstacles you could encounter, and how might those obstacles change your life?

*[Listen for such responses as less freedom, destroyed opportunities, shortened life span.]*

Avoiding obstacles allows you to achieve goals, such as a graduation. Receiving a degree is recognition of accomplishments over a period of time. With every degree comes rights, which give us more opportunities and freedom in future stages of life. In this class, when we make progress in overcoming pitfalls and obstacles, we will celebrate what we've accomplished.

 = 40 minutes (If you chose Option A)

 = 50 minutes (If you chose Option B)

## ENDING THE LESSON



### NOTEBOOK AND PERSONAL JOURNAL

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

**Assignment:** Purchase a notebook for this class. Before the next session, write down in your notebook the names of people who might serve as faithful guides along your journey toward freedom.

**Assignment:** Bring a small notebook of at least 20 pages to use as your Personal Journal.

The things we're going to hear from the grandmothers in our story throughout this course may take us to places we could not have imagined before today.

As we said today, there are many obstacles that we must avoid if we are to move forward in our journeys.

Drugs, alcohol, and problems at school, or with friends, or at home are just a few examples. Probably, none of us will complete our journey without assistance and advice from others.

During this class, each of us is going to keep a notebook. We will be writing in the notebook in most of these sessions. Your notebook assignment to complete before the next session is to begin writing down the names of people who might serve as faithful guides along your journey toward freedom. If you do not already have a notebook for this class, please get one and bring it with you next time.

There is another tool we will use to help us understand some of the concepts and principles we will encounter in these lessons.

*[Display a blank Personal Journal. This can be a small writing pad, booklet style.]*

Please tell me what you know about Personal Journals. How are they used? Who needs them? What benefits are derived from having a Personal Journal?

*[Allow for responses.]*

Most of you know about Personal Journals. They contain the personal thoughts, feelings, desires, and decisions of the people who own them. They are private. If you find someone else's Personal Journal, it is rude and intrusive to open and read it. Personal Journals are a place to record what you want to remember and to refer to later. Over time, they can become mirrors of soul growth.

Before our next session, each of you must get a small notebook of at least 20 pages to use as your Personal Journal. Along the way, there will be significant events that I will ask you to record in your journal. Periodically throughout the course, you will be asked to show this page to an "accountability partner" of your choice who will sign that page but only see what he or she is signing.

Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate the Parent-Teacher questions to them.

The idea of this Personal Journal is that it will be an account of your journey to your dreams and goals. We will talk more about it from week to week.

When we get together next time, each of you will have a chance to begin thinking about your own personal dreams and goals for your life.

 = 45 minutes (If you chose Option A or C)

 = 55 minutes (If you chose Option B)

## RESOURCES

### GOING DEEPER

#### NOTE TO TEACHER

*[These GOING DEEPER sections are resources you may choose to use in one of several possible ways:*

1. *In many private schools and some public schools, there will be freedom to teach all of these biblically based segments.*
2. *Some of the GOING DEEPER segments, particularly most of those based on Proverbs, do not mention God or Christianity and would be appropriate in any school setting.*
3. *Many of the GOING DEEPER learning activities can be used with or without the accompanying verses from the Bible.*
4. *In some lessons, you may decide the learning activity in the GOING DEEPER segment is more appropriate for your students than one of the activities in the main lesson. It will often be fairly easy to substitute one for the other.*
5. *Even if you decide not to teach a particular GOING DEEPER segment, you may find it valuable to expand your own background understanding of that particular topic.*
6. *For more on how to use these GOING DEEPER segments, see the discussion in the INTRODUCTION of this curriculum.]*

**This is the first of several segments we will be doing together based on verses from the Bible. But before we look at today's passage, we're going to have a brief contest.**

#### TWO PUZZLES ACTIVITY

*[Divide the class into two or more groups. For each group you'll need to have a jigsaw puzzle. The type of puzzle (number of pieces, difficulty, etc.) needs to be simple enough that a group could finish it in the time you have available, but advanced enough to be a challenge.*

*At least one of the puzzles should be brought in its original box with a picture of the completed puzzle on the cover. You should bring another of the puzzles without the box. (Just put the pieces in a bag where none of the pieces can get lost or damaged.) Give each group the same amount of time to work on the puzzles.*

*When time is up and preferably one of the groups has completed its puzzle, lead a class discussion including the following questions:*

*To the group without a box:]*

How did you feel trying to do the puzzle without a picture to guide you? Do you think you could have done it more quickly if you'd had the picture?

Now let's look at a statement from the Bible. Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT) says, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Does anyone have any idea how that statement might be connected to the puzzle contest we just had?

*[Let several answer. Then, if no one has stated the following idea, share the following:]*

This passage states, and many people believe, that God has a wonderful, special purpose for each of our lives. He plans good things for us, things that should help us to look toward the future with great hope.

But as we try to piece together the puzzle of our lives, it would be so much easier if we had a picture of what we were supposed to become. Christians believe that much of the picture of God's plan for us can be found in the Bible. They believe that the Bible is God's way of telling us His plans.

The Bible has much to say about our future welfare (dream makers) and also contains crucial warnings about possible calamities we need to avoid (dream breakers).

That is why, from time to time in this class, we'll be looking at various things the Bible has to say about the subjects we'll be studying.

## FOCUS POINT

Be sure to leave time for discussion at the end of the learning activity so your students can discuss the connection between the learning activity and the lesson. Listen to see whether they seemed to understand the key points listed. If you sense that one or more of these points may have been lost, be sure to guide the discussion to make sure they get these main ideas.

1. Christians (also Muslims and Jews) believe God has good plans for each of our lives.
2. They also believe the Bible contains much wisdom that can help us move toward welfare and avoid calamity.



## PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

### Introductory Note to Teacher:

This curriculum attempts to help you positively influence your students' character. Research in education systems around the world has shown that when teachers and parents work together, the students learn more. So it is even more important to elicit parents' help. In this session, we ask you to write a letter to your students' parents. In each of the following lessons, we simply ask you to dictate two or three questions to your students to take home that will help to start discussions.

We know that many students will not follow through with their parents and engage them in the dialogue we would like them to have. But our experience with previous curricula shows that some students will. Those who do so find it is meaningful, and their parents find it meaningful as well. Students, even if they don't engage their parent or parents in discussion, will be challenged to think further about the lesson material. Please copy or write the following letter to each of your students' parent(s):

*Dear Parents,*

*In order for a student to be successful in overcoming the pressure to be involved in alcohol and drug abuse or to be involved in premarital sex, a team must be formed that will be supportive and encouraging to him or her. Overwhelming statistics tell us that hundreds of thousands of adolescents ruin their lives and shatter their dreams by being involved in drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex. This year may be the key to equipping your son or daughter to become the kind of person that lives a life that fulfills the dreams he or she has and that you have for him or her.*

*The journey is beginning – but may not be completed by the student if he or she is left to himself or herself. Hopefully, this team (parent-teacher-adolescent) will stand together to establish dreams for successful lives and avoid the dream-breakers that lurk, awaiting the opportunity to shatter another life. If you are willing, it would be important for you to tell your adolescent that you are committed to helping him or her on the journey that he or she will be making in this class. You will need to read and discuss the Parent-Teacher Connection after each class session.*

*Sincerely,  
Your son's (or daughter's) teacher*

### For Family Discussion:

1. This first lesson explored the people in your adolescent's life who are trustworthy guides and others who are more likely to give them bad advice or set a bad example. Share with your adolescent from your years of experience how you can tell good trustworthy guides from untrustworthy ones.
2. Share with your adolescent your desire to discuss the Parent-Teacher questions after each session.

