

who's gonna pay for dat baby?

STRAIGHT UP: The hardships ahead of the teen parent. When faced with an unplanned pregnancy, many poor and low-income teens are likely to view early childbearing as a positive, desirable choice, becoming pregnant with the misguided hope of improving their lives. Common comments from female teens include "I want someone who would always love me," or "If I have his baby, he will always be in my life." Meanwhile, young men might view bringing a child into the world as a sign of manhood. Once faced with the responsibility of raising a child, teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school, making it even harder to get on their feet financially. According to Child Trends, more than 75 percent of all unmarried teen mothers went on welfare within 5 years of the birth of their first child. Ouch!

Remind teens that having a baby isn't an easy way to get love or keep a man around. It's a big responsibility, both financially and emotionally. But, for those teens who do end up parents, they will discover there will always be someone there to love them and help them out. God.

Source: Ann Casey Foundation/Allan Guttmacher Institute

WORD! *He supports the fatherless and the widow* *Psalm 146:9*

KICK OFF ACTIVITY: OH BABY! (QUIZ)

HERE'S HOW IT GOES: Share this quiz to find out how much your teens are willing to give up to take care of a new baby. Correct answers are in bold

1. Your baby needs a crib, which happens to be the same price as a new pair of shoes you've been eyeing at the mall. Which do you buy?
2. The father of your baby gives you \$100 a month to help out with your baby. That will be... More than enough, **Not nearly enough, only covering the cost of formula (\$116)**
3. How many diapers do you think you will go through a month? a. 100 b. 275 **c. 320** d. 600. Those diapers will cost you how much each month? \$25, **\$96**, \$210, \$50
4. Your baby needs baby formula, and gulps down about 8 cans a week. How much can you plan to spend on it per month? a. \$35, b. \$68, **c. \$116**, d. \$135
5. Your baby is growing - you now need a toddler car seat. It will cost you about the same as:
a. A pair of new Nikes (\$150) b. A set of acrylic nails (**\$55**) c. An airline ticket to Disneyworld (over \$200)
6. Your baby is growing, and after about six months, you start feeding him... a. **Baby food for about 50 cents a jar** b. Trick question! You will still feed your baby Formula for another 8 months c. Fritos for about 25 cents a bag

CONTINUED....



who's gonna pay

7. A typical box of Baby Wipes cost more, less or about the same as a Big Mac? **2.97 a box**
8. You want to go to the mall, so you buy your baby a stroller. But that leaves no money for you to shop because that stroller cost you...
a. \$25 b. **\$48** c. \$75 d. \$200
9. Your baby is developing diaper rash. What do you do?
a. You buy baby rash ointment for \$3.50, leaving you nothing for lunch b. go to the health clinic and wait four hours for an appointment so you can score some free supplies
10. You still haven't been able to buy yourself those new shoes, and now your baby needs new clothes. Do you:
a. Buy something for yourself? b. Buy something for your baby? c. Nothing. You're too exhausted to shop.

Prices are based on average prices from three discount chain stores.

YA KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN? STORY

Share this story with your teens. Use it to kick start a discussion. What do they think? Would they act the same?

"Of course I'll stick around to help you." Those were Omar's last words two years ago when Crystal was pregnant with his baby. Crystal was fifteen at the time, in love with Omar as well as in love with the idea of having a baby. Four of Crystal's friends had babies and she only knew one person who waited to get married to have a baby. And that was the wife of her old-fashion-old-aged youth leader. She was 28, or "as old as a dinosaur", according to Crystal.

Omar, the father of Crystal's baby, was a nice guy and had a good job as assistant manager at a music store at the mall. Omar had good intentions of being around for Crystal, but things happened. First, the music store he worked at closed down so Omar was transferred to a new location. That's where Omar met the store manager, Maritsa. They became close, really close. Before long, Maritsa was pregnant with her own "Lil' Omar". Now Omar couldn't afford to take care of one these babies, let alone both. Before long, Uncle Sam started taking money from Omar's paychecks. That's when Omar decided to go back to Mexico, with the new love of his life, Lupe.

Now Crystal struggled at school and had to turn down a scholarship to take care of her baby. While the government aid did help with some of the bills, Crystal never had enough money to buy things for herself. "A box of diapers equals a lot of lip gloss." Crystal didn't have much of a social life either. Most guys didn't want to touch her because she had a kid, or only wanted one thing from her.

Crystal decided to start going to church and became good friends with the youth pastor's "dinosaur" wife. "Dino", as Crystal affectionately called her, tutored Crystal, and even watched Lil' Omar during finals week. Dino showed Crystal different stories in the Bible about single Moms and how God would always be there to help them. Crystal asked, "If God is there to help me, why do I need to get married?" Dino answered, "because God won't help you change diapers the way a husband can."

Before long, Crystal gave her heart to Jesus and learned the true meaning of love. She knows that while it's not easy being a single mom, it's a lot easier with God's help than without it.

GET REAL WITH IT AND DEAL WITH IT (LEADER'S INPUT)

Even if you are not Crystal, you can relate to the straight up issue. Think of a personal story or real life instance when you were let down by someone big time and could only rely on God. Be willing to share this situation with your teens. Think of how your relationship with God helped you deal with your real deal. When teens see how Scripture and Christ relate to your situation, they will begin to understand how it can help with theirs. Ask yourself the following questions when preparing to talk about your "real deal."

1. My "real deal" is this:

for dat baby?

2. Having Hope in Christ was critical to my "real deal" because:

3. Tonight's verse helped (or still helps) me deal with this situation because:

WHAD'YA FEEL ABOUT IT?

Get teens to open up with these open ended questions.

1. Four hundred thousand children under age 18 give birth every year in the United States, reflecting a birth rate twice as high as that in any other advanced country. Do you think these "children" make good parents?
2. Tonight's verse assures you that God will help the fatherless. Is that an excuse to have a baby without getting married? Or, for young men, is that a reason to avoid responsibility?
3. Studies indicate only about 22% of fathers are in frequent contact by the time a child of unwed parents reaches age 7. What's your definition of a good father? How is God a good father to you? What are your thoughts and feelings about your earthly father?

CHALLENGES

Based on this lesson, what are two challenges that you can leave with the teens? Take 15 minutes to let the teens do the talking and discuss the night's lesson and challenges.

- 1.
- 2.

Forgot to plan? Use these 911 challenges

1. Mall Watch. Have your teens go to their favorite shopping area and count how many young *men* they see pushing a baby stroller. What does this teach them about "*who's gonna take care of that baby?*"

2. Missing Fathers. Have your teens take time this week to pray for their fathers, especially if they are deadbeats. Take time to pray for the pain these situations have caused your teens.

