

LESSON PLAN

ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

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Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Intern 2026

INTRODUCTION TO ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health is a matter of dignity, justice, and care for the whole person.

The United Methodist Church Social Principles remind us that every young person is created in the image of God and deserves access to accurate information, compassionate support, and protection from harm.

This lesson invites participants to reflect prayerfully on the realities facing adolescents in communities such as Mutare, Zimbabwe, where poverty, limited access to reproductive health education, and social stigma often combine to place young people at risk. It calls Christians to respond not with judgment, but with justice, compassion, and practical support.

The Social Principles address a wide range of social concerns, including health, human dignity, family life, and the well-being of children and youth. They encourage members of the Church to witness to their faith through both words and actions, standing alongside young people who face difficult and vulnerable circumstances.

As with all Social Principles study, this lesson is not a statement of Church law. It is an invitation to faithful reflection, honest conversation, and social engagement grounded in Scripture and Christian love.

Justice Issue:	Adolescent Pregnancy and Access to Reproductive Health Education in Mutare, Zimbabwe
Scripture Passage(s):	Primary Scripture: John 8:1–11 (NRSV/CEB) Supporting Scriptures: Psalm 139:13–16; Luke 15:11–24
Social Principles/Book of Resolutions References:	<p>The United Methodist Church Social Principles, Human Community: Family Life and Nurturing Community; Health and Wholeness.</p> <p>Book of Resolutions — Resolution on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Resolution on Ministries in Health and Wholeness.</p> <p>Contextual Note: These resolutions address the Church's responsibility to support the health, dignity, and education of children and youth. Although developed in varied contexts, their principles speak directly to the barriers adolescents face in accessing reproductive health information and services in communities such as Mutare, Zimbabwe.</p>
Objective	<p>Participants will explore John 8:1–11 to understand God's call to respond to human vulnerability with compassion rather than condemnation. They will connect the Christian faith with the realities of adolescent pregnancy and limited access to reproductive health education. Participants will also reflect on practical actions that churches, families, schools, and health institutions can take to protect the dignity of young people and support their futures.</p>

Supplies Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles • The United Methodist Church Social Principles • Photocopies of the case study: Adolescent Pregnancy and Reproductive Health in Mutare, Zimbabwe • Photocopied discussion question sheets • Paper and pens
Intended Audience:	Youth, young adults, parents, and caregivers in church communities.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say:

"Before we begin, let us take a moment to recognize that each person carries different struggles, hopes, and questions. Today we will reflect on how God calls us to respond to vulnerability with compassion rather than judgment."

Invite participants to share:

- One positive thing that happened during the week.
- One challenge they experienced.
- One prayer request.

(Remind participants that they may choose not to answer.)

Say:

"Thank you for sharing. God cares about our joys, our struggles, and our prayers. Let us pray and ask God to guide our hearts and our discussion today."

Invite a volunteer to pray or offer a brief opening prayer.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say:

"Today we will reflect on how God calls us to respond to young people facing difficult circumstances with grace, dignity, and support rather than shame."

Distribute Bibles and read John 8:1–11 together.

Biblical Background

In this passage, Jesus is presented with a woman accused of sin and facing public condemnation. Rather than joining the crowd in judgment, Jesus responds with compassion, challenges the community's readiness to condemn, and offers the woman dignity and a path forward. This story speaks powerfully to how communities often respond to young people, especially girls, who become pregnant outside of marriage — frequently with blame and shame rather than support.

Incorporating the Social Principles

Explain:

"The United Methodist Social Principles remind us that the health and well-being of children and youth are a shared responsibility of families, churches, and communities. They call Christians to support comprehensive health education, protect the dignity of young people, and respond to adolescent pregnancy with compassion and practical care rather than condemnation. Our faith is demonstrated not only through moral teaching but also through how we treat those who are vulnerable."

Dignity and Compassion

Identity: Recognizing the Dignity and Worth of Every Young Person
Read Psalm 139:13–16.

Say:

"The Bible teaches that every person is fearfully and wonderfully made by God, known and valued before birth. This means a young person's

worth does not diminish because of a mistake, a pregnancy, or difficult circumstances. Every adolescent has God-given dignity, gifts, and a future worth protecting."

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to say that Tariro's worth and dignity do not change because of her pregnancy?
- Why is it important for churches and families to see young people as valuable, even when they make difficult choices?
- How can recognizing the dignity of adolescents change the way communities respond to teenage pregnancy?

Read Luke 15:11–24 (The Parable of the Prodigal Son).

Say:

"Jesus teaches that when someone returns in vulnerability, the appropriate response is welcome, restoration, and celebration — not rejection. Compassion restores dignity; condemnation deepens isolation."

Discussion Question

- How can supporting a young person like Tariro, rather than condemning her, reflect the welcome shown in this parable?

Understanding Different Realities

Read John 8:1–11 again, focusing on verses 7 and 11.

Say:

"This passage teaches that judgment often falls unevenly, and that everyone stands in need of grace."

Young people navigating poverty, limited access to information, and social stigma face circumstances that are often misunderstood or oversimplified by their communities."

Discussion Questions

- What does this passage teach us about how God responds to human vulnerability and mistakes?
- What social pressures or gaps in information contributed to Tariro's situation?
- Why is it important to understand the different realities and pressures facing adolescents in communities like Mutare?

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Case Study: Adolescent Pregnancy and Reproductive Health in Mutare, Zimbabwe
Distribute Appendix 1: Adolescent Pregnancy and Reproductive Health in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Instructions

Participants work in pairs to read the case study and answer the discussion questions.

Together they should:

- Identify the challenges faced by Tariro and her family.
- Discuss the root causes of those challenges.
- Suggest practical solutions and actions.

Discussion Questions

Justice

- Is it fair for a young person to lose access to education and support simply because of an unintended pregnancy? Why or why not?

- Why do many adolescents lack access to accurate reproductive health information and youth friendly health services?
- What economic, social, or cultural barriers make young people, especially girls, more vulnerable to unintended pregnancy?
- How can poverty and limited access to information affect a young person's future opportunities?

Action

- What practical actions can churches begin this month to support young people like Tariro?
- What can families, schools, healthcare institutions, and faith-based organizations do to provide comprehensive reproductive health education without stigma?
- How can our community actively promote compassionate, non-judgmental support for adolescents facing unintended pregnancy?

CLOSING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say:

"God calls us to recognize the dignity of every young person and to respond to vulnerability with compassion rather than condemnation. Every adolescent has gifts, dreams, and potential that deserve to be nurtured and protected."

"Our faith calls us not only to feel compassion but also to take action. We are invited to become instruments of grace, education, and support, so that every young person — including those who face unintended pregnancy — has the opportunity to heal, grow, and fulfill their God-given potential."

Close with prayer.

APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDY

Adolescent Pregnancy and Reproductive Health in Mutare, Zimbabwe

Tariro is a sixteen-year-old girl living in Sakubva, Mutare, with her widowed mother and three younger siblings. Her mother earns a living through informal vending, and the family often struggles to meet its basic needs. Tariro is a Form Four student who dreams of becoming a nurse.

Like many young people in her community, Tariro received very little comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education. Conversations about sexuality were often treated as taboo at home, and she felt uncomfortable seeking information from adults. Although local healthcare facilities offered some reproductive health services, she feared being judged by community members if she visited them.

During a relationship with an older boyfriend who occasionally provided financial support, Tariro became pregnant. When she discovered the pregnancy, she was afraid to tell her family and stopped attending school. Some community members criticized her and labelled her as irresponsible, while others blamed her mother for failing to supervise her.

As the pregnancy progressed, Tariro experienced emotional distress, anxiety, and social isolation. She worried that her education and career aspirations had come to an end. Her mother also faced economic pressure as she struggled to provide for a growing family. Although some church members offered emotional support, others responded with condemnation rather than compassion.

The local clinic reported that adolescent pregnancy remains a significant challenge in the area. Health workers noted that many young people lack access to accurate

information about reproductive health, contraception, and healthy relationships. Poverty, gender inequality, peer pressure, and limited youth friendly services continue to increase the vulnerability of adolescents.

Community leaders, educators, healthcare workers, parents, and faith-based organizations continue to debate how best to respond. Some advocate for comprehensive reproductive health education and improved access to healthcare services, while others emphasize parental guidance, moral formation, and community accountability.

Questions remain about the role of families, schools, churches, healthcare institutions, and government agencies in protecting young people and supporting those who experience unintended pregnancies —questions this lesson invites participants to explore together, in the light of Scripture and Christian compassion.



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