



Becoming

13

TEACHER'S GUIDE WRITTEN BY MAUREEN BARON, M.A.

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Target Audience: Middle school
Junior high
Teachers
Parents
High school administrators
Guidance counsellors
Social workers
Community youth workers

Curriculum Areas: Middle school and junior high school:
✿ Family Studies
✿ Media Literacy
✿ Wellness and Health

Post-secondary:
✿ Parenting classes
✿ Psychology
✿ Sociology
✿ Family Studies

Curriculum Topics:

Mother-daughter relationships
Parenting
Adolescence
Family values
Gender and teens in the media
Peer pressure
Time management

"Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers."

SOCRATES, GREEK PHILOSOPHER (469 BC - 399 BC)

How many times have you heard parents, grandparents, teachers, school principals or yourself begin a sentence like this?
When I was your age we:

- ✿ didn't speak to our parents like that.
- ✿ weren't allowed to...
- ✿ had to...
- ✿ would never think of...
- ✿ never behaved like...
- ✿ were expected to...
- ✿ didn't have...
- ✿ couldn't...



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Each generation of adults compares the youth with their own growing up. And because each generation is shaped by different technological, cultural, social and historical forces, there are almost inevitable conflicts between parents and children, especially during puberty. How do the two generations handle interactions and relationships during the daughter's emergence as an adolescent? These are the questions posed in **Becoming 13**. We watch three Canadian born 12-year-olds and their very different mothers during the crucial year the girls turn 13.

Activity #1: This activity allows the viewer to understand what each mother says, why she says it and what she values through her stated position. Use the chart below to analyze what each mother thinks is acceptable and appropriate for her daughter on each issue. Use the information in the chart for small and large group discussions on parenting styles and each daughter's reaction to her mother's position and rules.

For a middle school and junior high school audience: a discussion can deal with understanding and interpreting the mother's actions, values, rules, and both verbal and non-verbal communication.

For an adult audience: a discussion can deal with how the mother's handling of these issues and her reasons for her position affect the daughter's behaviour and her interaction with her peers, as well as the professionals' (e.g., teacher, principal, guidance counsellor) interaction with the family.

- A. Daughter's physical appearance: clothing, jewellery, hair style, make-up, tattoos, body piercing.
- B. Daughter's academic success: homework, marks, mother's and daughter's standards for academic success.
- C. Daughter's social activities: boyfriends, extra-curricular activities, amount and use of free time.
- D. Daughter's family relationships, responsibilities and acceptable interactions.

MOTHER OF	STATED POSITION	WHY SHE STATES THIS	IMPLIED VALUE IN WHAT SHE SAYS
AVI			
JANE			
JASMINE			

Activity #2: Time Management for homework and studying

Avi, Jane and Jasmine are moving away from complete parental control of their time. They want to spend more time with their peers, either through electronic communication, on the phone or face to face. But their mothers are still checking on them with questions like “Is your homework finished?” “Have you...?” How does each girl deal with these time constraints? How does each daughter want to manage her own time?

For a middle school and junior high school audience: The following questions can help students focus on improving their study habits and time management. Emphasize to the class that each one of them has various strengths and weaknesses and different learning styles.

Q: How can you become more effective and efficient in doing your homework? Think of these three factors:

- A. Your homework and study schedule
- B. Your study environment
- C. Your homework and study strategies

For an adult audience:

A. Parents: How can parents support their child's learning? These two Web pages for adults explore learning styles and multiple intelligences. It would be valuable for parents to visit these sites and answer the surveys to become more sensitive to the diversity of learning styles and the complex nature of intelligence.

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxb11/LSI/LSI.htm>.

http://www.jobsetc.ca/toolbox/quizzes/mi_quiz.do?lang=e

To access versions for students, please contact your school board's educational services department. Provide the results of their child's multiple intelligences and learning style inventory, explaining what each element means. With this information, establish with the parents that what worked for them may not work for their child. How does this affect their expectations regarding their child's study habits and time management? Should they change these expectations? How will they communicate this to their child?

B. Professionals: Role-play the following scenarios to develop a win-win situation for each mother and daughter.

- ✿ Avi has become very anxious in class when test results are given out. She seems concerned with perfection and has extreme reactions when her marks are less than 98%. As a teacher, you are concerned that she is too fixated on her mark rather than her learning. You invite her mother in to discuss the situation.
- ✿ Jane is excelling in her fine arts classes but has begun to show disdain in her other classes. She has the ability to perform well in her other courses but is not interested in even trying to do more than just pass. You invite her mother in to discuss the situation.
- ✿ Jazmine worries so much about her school performance that in the past she has refused to go to

Activity #3: Girls, developing sexuality, pop culture and media

For a middle school and junior high school audience:

- A. Ask both the boys and girls in the class to think of their pop culture/media icons and answer the following questions. Collate and graph the information in a math class.
- Who is the prettiest woman?
 - Who is the coolest man?
 - What was last year's fashion must-have for girls?
 - Who is the sexiest woman?
 - Who is the sexiest man?
- B. Discuss the data with the class, asking them to describe what characteristics and, or, attributes are present in the people under each category. Collate and graph the information in math class.
- C. Survey the students to find out where they saw, learned about, heard or discovered the people listed in section A of this activity. Collate and graph the information.
- D. According to the students' icons, what does it mean to be a hot girl or a boy?
- E. Looking at all the data, what conclusions can the students draw about their pop culture icons and the reasons for their popularity in terms of appearance, accomplishments, attitude, deeds, talents, social responsibility, sexuality, morality and product endorsements?
- F. What elements of the pop culture icons are the students trying to emulate and why?

For an adult audience:

- A. Parents:
- When shopping for clothing for their daughters - what issues/ fashions/styles provoke agreement or disagreement between mothers and daughters?
 - What language/ reasons do the mothers use to describe their objections to certain fashions for their daughters?
 - What language/reasons do the daughters use to try to convince the mothers to buy the clothes they want?
 - What role do fathers play in these discussions between mothers and daughters?
 - Many parents blame the fashion and retail industries for forcing them to buy clothing that they feel is "too old" or "too sexualized" for their daughters. What can parents do to bring about changes in the children's fashion and retail industries?

- B. Professionals: What elements of pop culture icons are the students trying to emulate, where and why?
- How is this evident in school and in general social behaviour?
 - How is this evident in the changing needs of the students for information on sexuality, relationship building, health and well-being?
 - Present a panel discussion on marketing to children as little adults rather than as pre-teen children. Invite a representative from the provincial Media Literacy Association, a local adolescent health unit, an advertising agency or a large retail outlet that caters to the pre-teens and teens. These representatives could discuss any of the following:
 - ✿ perception of the target market
 - ✿ strategies for reaching that market
 - ✿ effects of the marketing strategies on the development of the target market in order to create consumer loyalty
 - ✿ rationale for the choice of products advertised and marketed to this group

Activity #4: Career Choice

For a middle school and junior high school audience:

Avi, Jane and Jazmine are beginning to consider their career goals. Orthodontist, teacher and artist are all mentioned, however, none of the girls is committed to a choice at this time. Ask the students to research a traditional career or profession (doctor, construction worker, teacher, sales representative lawyer, plumber, police officer, nurse, etc.) and an unusual one. Here are some links to unusual careers:

http://www.arkanimals.com/ark/uac_index.html

<http://www.handbag.com/careers/careerprogression/offbeatcareers/>

<http://becta.org.uk/careersict/lessonideas/unusual.html>

<http://www.culinaryed.com/article/culinary-creativity-six-unusual-ways-to-use-a-culinary-degree.htm>

Work with the school guidance counsellor and the school board's adult and vocational department to provide information on careers, links to other Web sites and places to call for speakers to come into the classroom for a Q&A with the students.

Post the students' choices in the classroom so that several students are not researching the same career or profession. As a finale, host a career fair for other classes in the school and for parents, where the students display information, and speak, about the training, education and variations of the career.

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For an adult audience:

Professionals:

Twelve-year-old girls normally begin making career path decisions in the middle of their high school years when they choose courses to study. Do they take the pure and applied sciences (Chemistry, Biology and Physics)? Do they take the fine arts (Dance, Drama and Drawing)? Do they take languages and literature? These high school choices will have a direct link to the courses they will be eligible to take after high school. As well, the girls are making choices for a time, place and world that may be very different from the present. As a professional, guiding and mentoring these 12-year-old girls for life in a world that cannot as yet be fully envisioned, what career planning advice would you give?

