

Children's Connection Curriculum

Session Topic: Incarceration (Parental Incarceration)

Developmental Level: Middle School

Purpose: To discuss their experiences about their relative's incarceration and how it affects them.

Materials Needed: "When a Parent Goes to Prison" handout, copy of "Susan's Story" to read aloud, "The Media and Prison" handout

Description of Session:

1. Share statistics with the students, that about 1.5 million kids in this country have a parent in prison. About 50% of kids in detention centers have had a parent in prison. Mention that they are among the first number, but don't have to be a part of the second statistic.
2. Read through the handout "When a Parent Goes to Prison". Take turns reading, and have the students put marks by the ones that they feel apply to them.
3. Ask, "What feelings did you have when you first found out that this person was going to jail or prison?" "Did you witness the arrest?" "Did you 'feel like something might happen'?" "How did your family deal with this person going to jail?" "What message has your parent (or other person sent you about what he or she did?"
4. Read Susan's Story. Ask if any of them have a similar story they would like to share. How they feel when parents break their promises, how they feel about the lost time, and the stigmas/shame the children feel, etc..
5. Even though they might have a relative in prison, many of our ideas about what prison is really like comes from TV or the movies. Pass out "Media and Prison" handout and go over questions.
 - Name some movies or TV shows that are about prison or prison life
 - Which ones seem realistic?
 - What are some of the prison problems that movies and TV shows deal with?
 - If you could make a movie about prison life, what would you include?
 - Have you talked to your parent or family member about what their real prison experience is like?
- 6.

Discussion Questions:

****Refer to the "How I See Prison Exercise" handout and the "Parent/Kid-Good/Tough" handout**

1. On a scale of 1-10, how much control do you have over whether you will spend time in prison?
2. What are some dangerous thoughts that could lead to prison (it won't happen to me, I'm probably going to go to jail anyway, I won't get caught)
3. List five things that could help keep you out of prison. Be specific.
4. If I got to jail, what are some things you would miss out on?
5. How would your life change if you go to jail?

Reference: Casarjian, B and Casarjian R. (2003). *The Power Source Facilitator's Manual*. Boston, MA: The Lionheart Foundation