

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 2

BEING RESPONSIBLE

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



EDUCATIONAL GOALS:

🍏 Children learn that being responsible makes them feel good about themselves, and makes others respect and appreciate them.

🍏 Children learn what responsibility is and what the attributes of a responsible person are.

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HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth service agencies, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

YOU CAN CHOOSE![®] is an entertaining and thought provoking video series designed to help children develop a range of important life skills and a healthy self-esteem. Each episode presents an imaginative skit in which one character makes a tough choice with the help of a group of real elementary school children. In this program, ***Being Responsible***, Rhonda Bird has to choose whether to have a good time or follow through on an important commitment.

In addition to learning the benefits of being a responsible person, viewers will see that everything they do involves choices and that they have the power within themselves to make the best choices.

You can greatly enhance the impact and usefulness of this video by following it up with discussions, writing assignments, learning activities, and by enlisting parental support. We have prepared this guide to help you in your efforts.

Before you show the tape, we recommend that you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some appropriate questions in the "Discussion Questions" section of this guide.

Since the program is divided into three segments, you have the option of stopping the tape after any segment to talk about it. Here is how the program breaks down:

1. **Skit, Act I:** Rhonda Bird falls into a dilemma and faces a difficult decision.
2. **Group Discussion:** School children explore the issues and decide what Rhonda should do.
3. **Skit, Act II:** Rhonda follows the children's advice and discovers the personal rewards that come from making a good choice.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this ***You Can Choose!***[®] video program.

THE STORY

Rhonda and her friends are dividing up tasks for a school science project which must be completed over the weekend. But Rhonda is so irresponsible that her friends don't trust her to do anything important, and this makes her feel very bad. When she begs them for a chance to redeem herself by taking on a key task, they reluctantly go along. But just when she's getting down to business, another friend invites Rhonda to go away and spend the weekend at Disneyland. This, of course, would mean shirking her responsibility and letting down her friends again. What a dilemma! In the end, though, she takes the good advice of a group of real children led by host Michael Pritchard, and makes the responsible choice. As a result, Rhonda wins the respect of her friends and feels very good about herself.

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON (AND FEEL GREAT!)

When you agree to do something, do it. If you let people down, they'll stop believing you. When you follow through on your commitments, people take you seriously.

Answer for your own actions. Don't make excuses or blame others for what you do. When you take responsibility for your actions you are saying "*I am the one who's in charge of my life.*"

Take care of your own matters. Don't rely on adults to remind you when you're supposed to be somewhere or what you're supposed to bring. You take the responsibility.

Be trustworthy. If somebody trusts you to borrow or take care of something, treat it like it's the most valuable thing on earth and return it on time.

Always use your head. Think things through and use good judgment. When you use your head you make better choices. That shows your parents they can trust you.

Don't put things off. When you have a job to do, do it. Doing things on time helps you take control of your life and shows that you can manage your own affairs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before showing the tape.

1. What does it mean when someone is described as a "responsible" person?
2. What are some of the responsibilities kids your age have?
3. Are there some reasons why you might want to be considered a "responsible" person?

Questions to ask after showing the tape.

4. Why did Rhonda beg her friends to let her work on the science project?
5. Why did Rhonda's friends hesitate to give her an important responsibility?
6. Rhonda's friends took a chance when they trusted her. Would you have done the same? Why, or why not?
7. Why do you think Rhonda decided to stay home and do her work instead of going to Disneyland?
8. How would the play have ended if Rhonda had decided to go to Disneyland?
9. What are the rewards for being a responsible person?
10. In what ways can being responsible or irresponsible affect a person's self-esteem?
11. Did the kids in the discussion part of the program say anything that you strongly agree with or disagree with?
12. What did you learn from this video program?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Dear Teacher or Discussion Leader: In discussing responsibility with your kids, please try to steer the conversation away from the issue of "chores." While chores may be important (to parents, anyway), they are relatively insignificant compared with nobler aspects of responsibility that have to do with character and integrity. We urge you to frame the conversation in this broader light.

1. Write the six responsible behaviors from page 3 on the board (or make copies of the page and hand them out). Have the children think of a few examples for each behavior. Then, for each example, have them brainstorm ways of handling irresponsible people. List the best ideas on the board.
2. Take the examples from activity #1, above, and turn them into role-playing situations using two kids at a time. First, have them role-play the irresponsible behavior, and then, the responsible behavior. Have the group critique each of the role-plays.
3. Design a "Being Responsible" poster illustrating the six behaviors on the opposite page. Put it up on your classroom wall.
4. Have a discussion about classroom responsibility. What are the kids' responsibilities, and what are the teacher's responsibilities? Make a chart of these responsibilities on the board. What are the consequences of being irresponsible? What are the rewards of being responsible?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. How responsible are you? For each of the six responsible behaviors listed on page 3, rate yourself on a scale of one to five (1=awful, and 5=terrific). For each of these behaviors give an example of how you are either responsible or irresponsible, and what you could do to improve.
2. Write about a time when you did something really responsible. Describe it. What was the outcome? How did it make you feel about yourself? Describe a time you did something really irresponsible. What was the outcome? How did it make you feel about yourself?
3. This assignment will encourage young people to play a responsible role in society. Have everybody in the class write a letter to the President or to your senator or congressman about an environmental issue that is currently in the news. Let the kids know that you are going to put all their letters into a large envelope and mail it. Then, do it. Share any response with the kids.
4. Write about the kinds of responsibilities you feel for (or to):
 - a) yourself
 - b) your family
 - c) your friends
 - d) your community
 - e) the whole country
 - f) all people throughout the world
 - g) our planet and our environment
5. Write about the differences between adult responsibilities and children's responsibilities. What does responsibility have to do with growing up? What responsibilities do you look forward to?

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

To enlist the involvement of parents, make copies of the Parents' Page (see next page) and send them home with the children. Tell the children to discuss the video with their parents, and to perform the following activities.

1. Have a discussion about responsibility in the family. What are your responsibilities (other than chores), and what are your parents' responsibilities? Make a chart of these responsibilities and put it up on your bedroom wall (or, perhaps, the refrigerator door). What happens if you are irresponsible? What if your parents are irresponsible? What are the rewards for being responsible?
2. Ask your parents or another adult in your family to tell you about some of the things you do (other than chores) that demonstrate responsibility. What does it mean to them when you show that you are responsible? In what ways would they like you to take more responsibility?
3. Talk with your family about what things you can do together to take responsibility for the environment (recycling, using less water and energy, buying non-polluting products, etc.). Make a plan and do it. Report on your plan in class.
4. For one week keep a daily record of all your responsibilities. Include social commitments, homework, household chores, everything. At the end of the week give yourself a grade on how well you did in carrying out your responsibilities.

Note to the teacher or group leader: You might want to think of some way for the children to share the outcomes of these activities with each other. Perhaps they could give written or oral reports or discuss their experiences in small groups.

(Copy this page and send it home to the parents.)

PARENTS' PAGE

Dear Parent,

Your child is involved in learning-activities designed to enhance self-esteem, develop positive life skills, and empower young people to make good choices for themselves.

He or she may be asked to complete several tasks at home. Your cooperation with these activities will support our overall program.

The current lesson is about responsibility. We have shown a video entitled ***Being Responsible***, which presents a skit and discussion about the personal benefits of making responsible choices. Please ask your child to tell you about this video program and what he or she learned from it.

Here are some things you can do to support the idea that being a responsible person makes us feel good about ourselves and makes other people respect and appreciate us.

- Talk with your children about responsibility. Tell them that responsibility isn't just doing chores, it's following through on commitments, answering for their own actions, being reliable, using good judgment, taking care of their own affairs. Let them know that these are signs they are growing up and can be trusted with greater freedom.
- "Catch" your children making a responsible choice or behaving in a responsible manner. Tell them how much that means to you.
- Try to "forget" past failures at being responsible.

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is a good laugh."

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