



Discussion Guide for

GANGS: THE TOUGH DECISION TO STAY OUT

OBJECTIVES

- To define what gangs are and how a person can become involved without realizing it.
- To discuss the serious criminal activities in which gangs are typically involved.
- To show that in reality gangs are not glamorous and exciting; they are dangerous and deadly.
- To show how once in a gang, a member might find it impossible to get out.
- To discuss healthy alternatives which provide a true sense of belonging and achievement.

SYNOPSIS

Current gang members can give young people some pretty convincing arguments as to why they should join a gang: "You get the girls, you get the money, you get to belong." *Gangs: The Tough Decision to Stay Out* seeks to convince teens to see through the fantasy to the reality of joining a gang-criminal activity, drive-by shootings, drug abuse and often an early death.

The program explores gang-related issues such as the definition of a gang, the lies gang members disseminate to recruit new members, the real dangers of gangs, and how hard it is to get out once you have joined. Alternatives to gangs are also covered, proving that protection, popularity, friendship and power can all be achieved through legitimate activities such as organized sports, school clubs and volunteer groups.

Viewers are encouraged to find positive adult role models and most of all, to think for themselves instead of throwing their lives away on self-destructive gangs.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE VIEWING

1. What reasons might a current gang member give to get someone to join their gang?
2. Why do you think people join gangs?
3. What kinds of things do you think gangs do?
4. How do gang members leave gangs?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER VIEWING

1. What reasons might a current gang member give to get someone to join their gang? (You get the girls, you get the money, you get to belong, you get protection.)
2. What is the definition of a gang? (A group of people who are together for one or more reasons.)
3. Name the three reasons people form a gang. (Social reasons: to make and keep friends; criminal reasons: to engage in illegal activities; turf control: to make a member feel more secure and powerful in their gang's turf)
4. Why might a clique of friends gravitate toward becoming involved in illegal activities? (Often the members feel that they don't have much going for them in life except their acceptance in the group. They don't have anything to lose.)
5. What change in the behavior of a group indicates a potential for danger? (When the group starts to think and act as a whole, especially when they don't feel the need for self-control.)

6. Who usually controls organized gangs? (Older members or even adults.)

7. Usually, what is their purpose? (Their purpose may be to sell drugs, run illegal crime rings, extort money from people, etc.)

8. Why do some gangs get together strictly for violent goals? (They gain the sense of power from weapons, violence, and hatred, letting out aggression from their troubled neighborhoods, poverty, or the violence in which they live.)

9. What might happen to young people who live within the domain of a turf-oriented gang? (Often they are pressured to either join the gang or pay proper respect to them.)

10. What are some lies about gangs? (Younger members are less likely to get in serious trouble with the law; gang members get respect, money, popularity, and the good life.)

11. Why might you be in danger even if your group is doing something harmless? (If you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, your group may be seen as a threat by other gangs. Suddenly you might find yourself involved in serious violence.)



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12. How do you get out of a gang once you are in? (Death or a disabling injury will get you out. Otherwise you have to be "jumped" out of the gang, which may involve a severe beating.)

13. Once you are jumped out, what other danger do you still face? (You still face the day-to-day danger of attack from rival gang members who assume you are still in.)

14. What can you do if you are involved in a gang and want to get out? (The best thing to do is get the advice of an adult who can help. Find someone who is experienced, practical, and smart.)

15. Who can help you achieve the protection, popularity, friendship, and power you need without joining a gang? (Find one or more adults with whom you can talk about your feelings—a parent, teacher, school counselor, coach, religious leader, even a neighbor you trust and respect.)

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