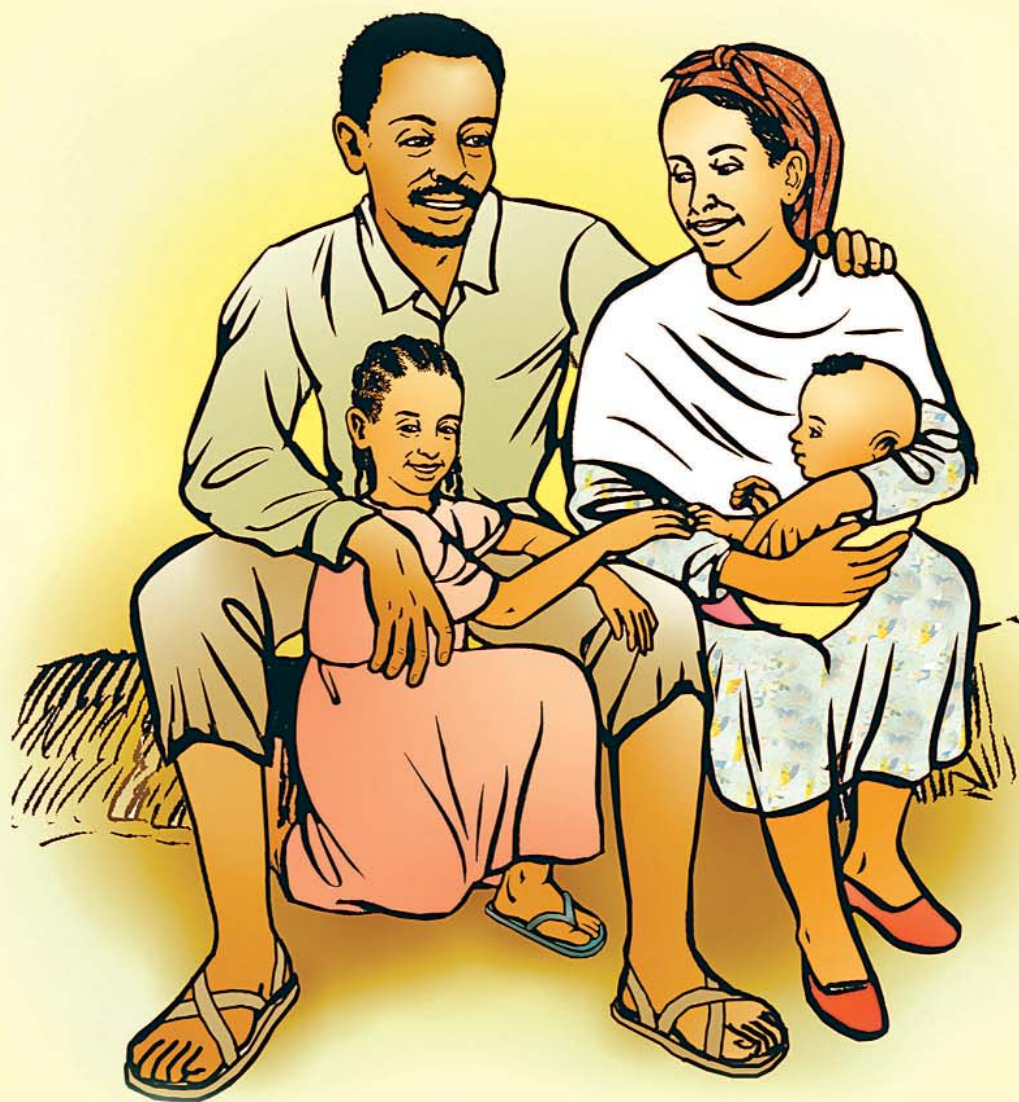




Journey of Life

Radio Serial Drama

Discussion Guide



USAID | ETHIOPIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG**
SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH
Center for Communication Programs



**HEALTH COMMUNICATION
PARTNERSHIP**

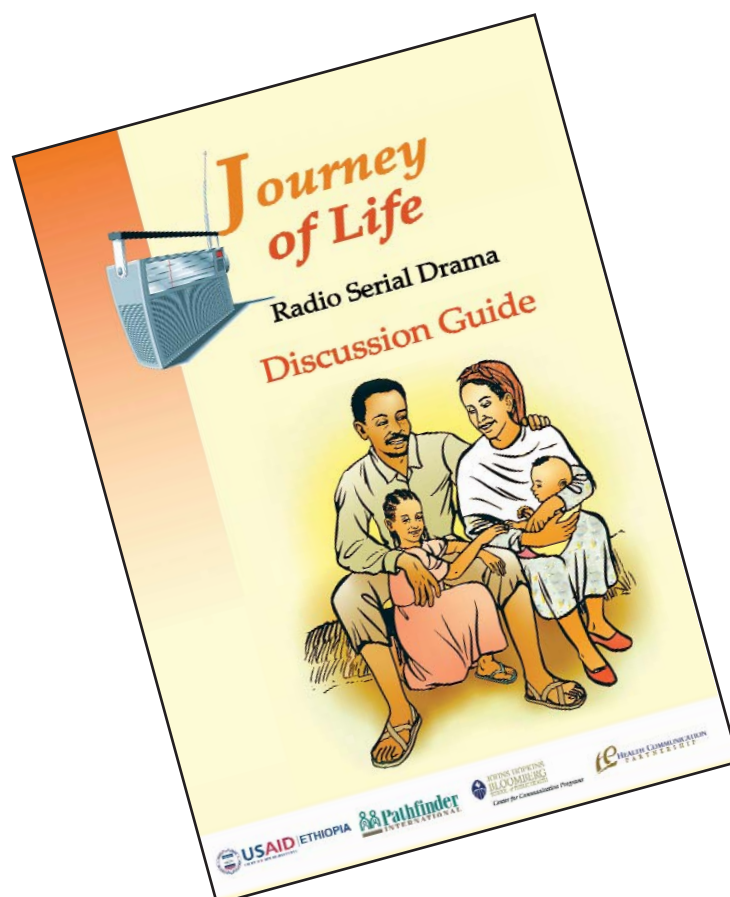
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Journey of Life*, a compelling, 26-episode radio drama that promotes modern contraceptive use and safer sex practices among couples ages 15 to 49. *Journey of Life* (JOL) is an innovative teaching tool that Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) can use to encourage couples to plan their families and protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. This Discussion Guide shows CBRHAs how to use JOL's riveting plot and captivating characters to facilitate groups that foster dialogue, increase knowledge, and prompt the desired attitudes and behaviors.

Family planning and HIV/AIDS are of critical concern in Ethiopia, and thus are priority issues for CBRHAs. Ethiopia's estimated population of 74 million is growing at a rate of 3% annually, and the nation's HIV prevalence rate is estimated at 4.4%.

Gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) are additional areas of concern explored in the Guide as they have been shown to impact whether couples take protective measures against unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.



PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

By creating a forum to discuss *JOL*'s important messages, CBRHAs can facilitate learning and encourage participants to practice family planning and safer sex. Learning occurs more readily when listeners are able to interact with other participants and express their thoughts, opinions and questions. Discussion helps listeners digest and analyze the drama's lessons and talk about those lessons in terms of their own experiences. Opportunities to relate and compare characters and events to their own lives, families and communities can encourage listeners to adopt the desired attitudes and behaviors.

The Discussion Guide equips CBRHAs with the information they need to:

- ❖ set up a *JOL* discussion group or introduce the drama to an existing group,
- ❖ get ready for a discussion session, and
- ❖ facilitate a successful discussion.

Included are 26 episode guides based on the topics covered in each 20-minute segment of *JOL*. Each provides:

- ❖ the **episode number and title**,
- ❖ a **synopsis** that describes what is about to unfold and that CBRHAs should reveal at the beginning of the session,
- ❖ a summary of the episode's **key messages** that CBRHAs should read at the beginning and end of the session,
- ❖ **discussion questions** that CBRHAs should use to generate dialogue,
- ❖ **talking points** that CBRHAs should state as written, and
- ❖ **clarifications** that correct or explain specific points presented in the drama.

SETTING UP A *JOL* DISCUSSION GROUP

These steps can help you establish a discussion group specifically for *JOL*:

1. Find and establish a regular place to hold your discussion group each week. This could be a marketplace, school or other suitable venue where 10 to 15 people can listen and dialogue together.
2. Decide on a convenient time that best suits your target audience (e.g., housewives, workers).
3. Be sure to select participants who can commit to attend a weekly group and who can engage in productive dialogue.
4. Know your group so that you can tailor the suggested questions to your audience.

INTRODUCING *JOL* TO AN EXISTING GROUP

You may already use coffee ceremonies and *idirs* to educate community members about family planning and related health issues. *JOL* is a creative resource that can keep current members engaged and attract new ones. Get group members excited about *JOL* by giving them an overview of the story and characters.

GETTING READY FOR A DISCUSSION GROUP SESSION

Before each session, it is important that facilitators obtain the necessary materials and prepare themselves adequately.

Attend to Important Details

1. Be sure your tape recorder works well and everyone is able to hear. If using batteries, have an extra set in case you need to replace the existing ones.
2. Bring a pen or pencil and paper to take notes that you can summarize for the group. Write down questions you are unable to answer and record any interesting observations (e.g., one man seemed uncomfortable when the subject of wife-beating came up).
3. Ask group members to come to the meeting place 15 minutes early so you can prepare them for what they are going to hear.

Prepare Yourself

1. Before holding the first session, read the entire Discussion Guide so as to familiarize yourself with the process and content.
2. Before each group meeting, listen to all the episodes you are going to play that day and read the corresponding episode guides. This will help you become familiar with the topics to be presented and the suggested questions. Such preparation will also give you time to find needed resources should you have any questions about the topics being discussed.
3. Have helpful resources about family planning, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence and other issues on hand in case participants need additional information.

FACILITATING A SUCCESSFUL DISCUSSION

Skilled discussion group facilitators are expected to direct participants to the important issues in *JOL* and motivate them to learn and practice the drama's messages. Facilitators should remain neutral and help move along the discussion without imposing their views. This role is different from that of a teacher whose job is to convey specific information. The facilitator's job is to make participants feel comfortable enough to express their opinions.



HELPFUL FACILITATION TIPS

These suggestions can help ensure your discussion group is informative and productive:

- ❖ Remind participants to listen respectfully, give everyone a chance to speak, and avoid interrupting others. Make sure participants understand that the goal is not to be right but to try to understand one another's views.
- ❖ Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard and that no one person dominates the discussion. Encourage people to keep their comments brief and to the point. Be clear about how people should indicate when they want to speak. Equalize participation by asking for input from specific people in addition to waiting for responses.
- ❖ Engage those who are reluctant to speak but do not force anyone to contribute.
- ❖ Pay close attention to the person speaking and encourage others to do likewise. Avoid side conversations so that everyone can hear the person talking.
- ❖ Keep track of important points and summarize periodically.
- ❖ Point out when the group reaches a consensus or several people raise a similar issue.
- ❖ If a participant asks for assistance, be supportive and offer to help him/her find appropriate services (e.g., see above recommendations for assisting survivors/victims of gender-based violence). If someone asks a question you cannot answer, tell them you will discuss the issue with your supervisor and get back to them as soon as possible.

Opening a Session

1. Greet everyone, thank them for coming and have participants introduce themselves. Tell them that you expect the session to last one hour.
2. Check that the meeting place is comfortable and quiet enough for participants to hear.
3. Clearly explain the purpose of the discussion group and what it entails.
4. If it is the group's first meeting, introduce the drama's theme, storyline and characters. Do not reveal the entire story to the group in advance.
5. At subsequent meetings, ask participants to summarize the previous episode and mention any key points that may have been missed.
6. Read or paraphrase the synopsis and key messages.
7. Ask participants to be attentive and listen for points that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. Invite them to take notes if they wish.
8. Have group members set ground rules for the discussion. These could include an agreement that participants strive to listen more than they talk.

Some Suggested Ground Rules

- ❖ Attend all sessions and do not delegate others (e.g., child, relative or neighbor, etc.) to go in your place.
- ❖ Arrive early so you do not miss any of the session.
- ❖ Respect the opinions of others.
- ❖ Pay attention when others are speaking and do not engage in "side talk."

9. Turn the audiocassette player on.

After Playing an Episode

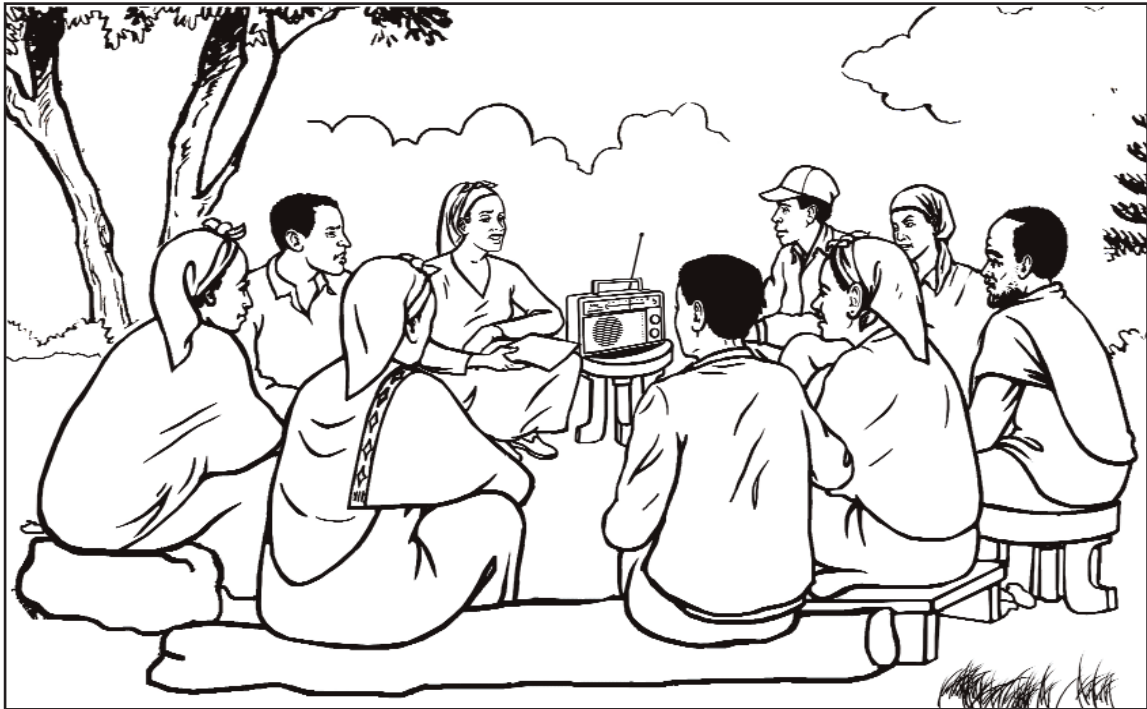
1. Turn the audiocassette player off.
2. Have participants re-state the ground rules and make sure there is consensus on the rules before the discussion begins.
3. Ask group members to demonstrate respect for others at all times during the discussion.
4. Invite participants to open the discussion by commenting on any part of the program that interested them. Bring the group back to the key messages if the discussion goes off course.
5. Use the discussion questions to initiate dialogue if participants are reluctant to talk.

Closing a Session

1. Repeat the key messages.
2. Set the date and time of the next discussion group.
3. Thank participants for coming, listening attentively, and being willing to share their views.
4. If requested, refer participants for more information or assistance.
5. Clean the meeting space and pack up any materials.

SUSTAINING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Depending on how often you meet and the number of episodes played at each session, it could take your group as long as six months to hear the entire serial. You will need to develop creative ways to keep group members interested over time. One idea is to reward participation with incentives that make a difference in people's lives (e.g., painting a member's house or buying their child's schoolbooks).



OVERVIEW of *Journey of Life*

JOL's main message is *yichalal* (it is possible), meaning that it is possible for Ethiopians to improve their quality of life by planning their families, and that it is possible to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic by taking appropriate measures. *JOL* also is designed to generate feelings of hope and confidence that determining one's family size and protecting oneself from HIV/AIDS can be achieved.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Askale, a female police investigator, and Bahiru, her husband, are an affectionate, married couple who educate their family members and friends about family planning and HIV/AIDS. The couple eventually succeeds in convincing Bahiru's mother, the interfering and vocal Amelwork, that planning is essential for a healthy and economically-stable family.

Saba is Askale's carefree sister who drinks and socializes with lots of men. Saba doesn't heed her sister's warnings to either abstain from sex or use protection, and eventually learns she is HIV positive after she has infected others. Teje, Askale's and Bahiru's housekeeper, frequently asks questions about family planning and HIV/AIDS, and takes steps to protect herself against unwanted pregnancy and the HIV virus. Elias, a judge, and his wife, Azeb, live next door to Askale and Bahiru. Elias and Azeb are initially very happy in their marriage but conflict develops as Azeb fears that Elias will reject her because of a terrible secret from her past. Azeb is hiding the fact that she had to give up her son for adoption. This happened after she was raped and impregnated by her employer, kicked out of his house, and unable to find work because she was an unmarried mother. Azeb gave her son to a couple named Zeleke and Fikerte who agreed to find him an adoptive family but later decided to raise the boy themselves.

Azeb tells Askale that she desperately wants to find her son, and they plot to investigate the child's whereabouts. Elias does not know what to make of Azeb's secretive behavior and soon suspects that she is having an affair.

While Askale and Bahiru love and respect one another, treat each other as equals, and communicate well, Zeleke and Fikerte are the opposite. Zeleke abuses Fikerte by repeatedly hitting and threatening to kill her. Zeleke plans to give Azeb's son to the shady character, Alemu, who blinds children, forces them to beg on the streets, and takes their money. Fikerte catches wind of the plan and in her quest to protect Azeb's son, reports Zeleke's activities to Askale; he and Alemu later go to prison.

As Azeb and Elias' marriage suffers, Elias has an affair with Saba, contracts HIV and infects his wife. After learning she is HIV positive, Saba becomes more responsible and begins teaching others how to avoid her mistakes.

Intermingled in these various plots are discussions of such health and social topics as overpopulation, unwanted pregnancy, family planning methods, transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and crimes against children. Dr. Hailu, a medical doctor, provides expert advice on many of these topics.

CHARACTERS

- Askale:** The female role model with regard to family planning and HIV/AIDS, and the person who is most helpful to Azeb.
- Bahiru:** The male role model and Askale's husband. Askale and Bahiru represent the couple who decided early in their relationship to practice family planning and are now reaping the benefits.
- Amelwork:** Bahiru's mother, the "doubter" who initially is unwilling to accept new ideas about modern contraceptives but eventually learns that family planning is beneficial. W/ro Amelwork represents the large number of older listeners who distrust family planning.
- Saba:** The young woman who is easily "led astray" for the wrong reasons. Saba enables the audience to see the consequences of risky behavior and also that one can learn from one's mistakes.
- Teje:** The housekeeper for Askale and Bahiru who counters Saba's irresponsibility by protecting herself against unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.
- Azeb:** The heroine who suffers the most - rape, unwanted pregnancy, and forced adoption - and from whom the audience learns the most.
- Elias:** A good yet impulsive man whose infidelity cost his and Azeb's lives. He represents people who, out of anger or hurt, engage in risky behaviors.

Azeb's mother: The devoted mother who has supported Azeb through multiple hardships and is raising Azeb's first child.

Fikerte: Zeleke's wife and the victim of his repeated violence and threats. She suffers from Zeleke's actions despite her innocence.

Zeleke: An abusive villain who at first fools his wife, Fikerte, into thinking he is a good man. He stands as a warning that people are not always what they seem.

Alemu: A villain who blinds children so they can work as street beggars for his gain.

Hailu: The medical doctor who provides expert advice on family planning and HIV/AIDS.



GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) can be defined as any act that results in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women. Ethiopian women experience high rates of violence, as indicated by findings of the *Women's Health and Life Events Study in Rural Ethiopia* that show 59% of women suffered from sexual violence and 49% from physical violence by a partner at some point in their lives. As in all countries, connections can be made between the violence Ethiopian women experience and their social and economic position. The United Nations Development Programme has ranked Ethiopia 139 out of 144 countries in terms of the status, treatment and participation of women.

Achieving gender equality and eradicating GBV have direct implications for women's and men's reproductive health. Couples who communicate well are more likely to practice family planning and negotiate safer sex. However, when one partner dominates the other, couples are less likely to communicate. Therefore, couples who treat one another as equals are more likely to practice family planning.

Discussion of the sexual and intimate partner violence depicted in *JOL* could prompt disclosures of past or current violence and abuse from participants. CBRHAs who facilitate discussion groups must be prepared to respond to such disclosures with sensitivity, compassion and, if requested, referrals for assistance. To do this successfully, group facilitators should be trained on the causes and consequences of GBV, and how to provide support to its survivors/victims. Facilitators also should obtain information on legal, medical, law enforcement and support services that may be available, and be prepared to share this with women who ask for such help. One important resource is the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), which provides legal assistance to survivors/victims of GBV. The materials included in this packet include contact information for EWLA's regional offices and a description of the organization's services.

At the very minimum, facilitators who encounter GBV survivors/victims should:

- ❖ let the survivor/victim know that they are concerned about her safety and well-being;
- ❖ never blame the survivor/victim for the violence and let her know she is not at fault;
- ❖ tell the survivor/victim that violence is unacceptable at all times and under any circumstances;
- ❖ determine if the survivor/victim is in danger and if so, help her make a safety plan; and
- ❖ help the survivor/victim obtain legal, medical, law enforcement and support services.

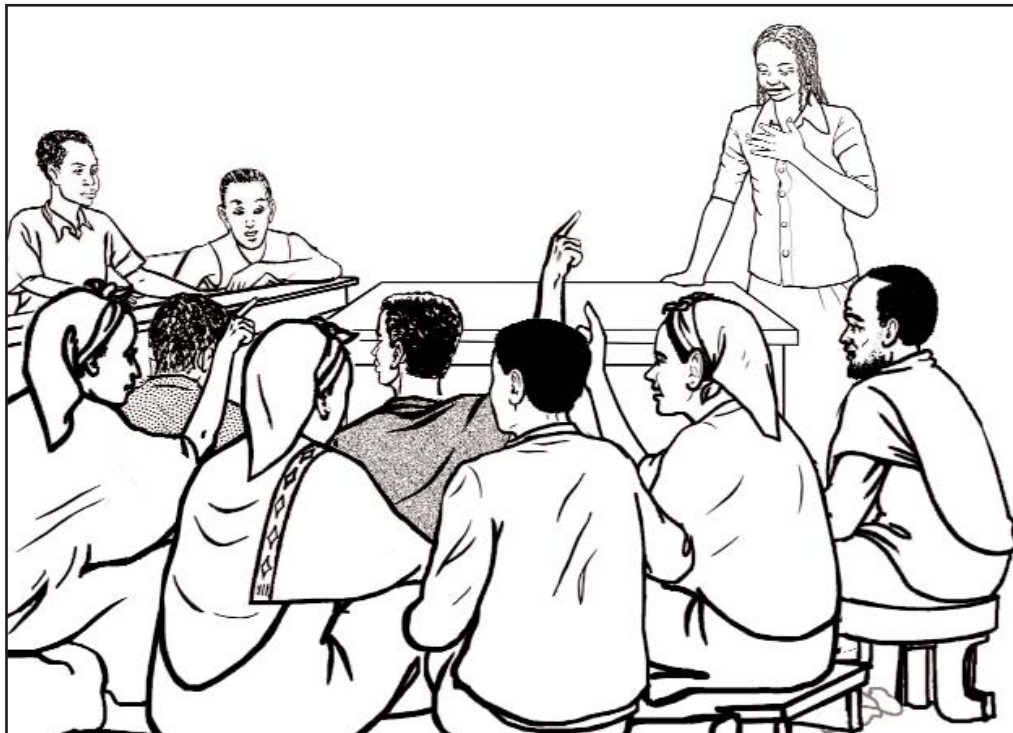
Episode 1

General Story Introduction

This episode introduces listeners to the main characters in the various plots of *Journey of Life*, and arouses their interest in how the story will unfold.

Discussion Questions

1. Who are the characters that have been introduced so far?
2. Which characters do you identify with?
3. How are any of the characters similar to people in your family or community?



Overpopulation and its Consequences

Synopsis

When Askale returns from work, her husband, Bahiru, is talking with his mother, W/ro Amelwork, about how many children a family ought to have. Askale lists the benefits of family planning and tells her mother-in-law the problems Ethiopia faces due to rapid population growth.

Fikerte tells her husband, Zeleke, that she knows he takes in children not to give them to adoptive families, but to turn the children into blind street beggars from whom he and his partner, Alemu, profit.

Key Messages

- ❖ Overpopulation is a serious problem in Ethiopia that has negative consequences for individual families and the country.
- ❖ Modern contraceptive use can reduce overpopulation and improve families' quality of life.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of marriage helped Askale and Bahiru decide how many children they wanted to have?
2. How does limiting their family size benefit couples?
3. How does overpopulation negatively impact families and the country as a whole?

Let's now talk about two of the couples in the drama.

4. What kind of relationship do Askale and Bahiru have?
5. What kind of relationship do Fikerte and Zeleke have?
6. What do you think about Zeleke's treatment of Fikerte?

Talking Point:

Zeleke's threat to stab his wife is a criminal act for which he can be prosecuted and sent to prison.

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.



What is Family Planning and Why is it Important?

Synopsis

Askale invites Azeb to her home to ask Azeb why she is depressed and offer her support. When Azeb questions Askale about her own happiness and why she has only two children, Askale explains the advantages of family planning.

Key Messages

- ❖ Family planning is when a couple decides when and how many children to have.
- ❖ Family planning is among the most important decisions a couple can make.
- ❖ Family planning brings happiness and security to families.

Discussion Questions

1. What can couples do to have a happy and healthy family?
2. Where can husbands and wives go for family planning counseling and contraceptives?

Talking Point:

CBRHAs also provide counseling and certain contraceptives.

3. What are the four things women should not do with regard to childbearing?

Clarification:

Askale fails to mention that women shouldn't have too many children.

4. What happened to Azeb when she worked for the unmarried man?

Talking Point:

Like Azeb, many Ethiopian women and girls are survivors/victims of sexual violence. Few services exist to help rape survivors/victims recover from the trauma, and few rapists are prosecuted. However, under Ethiopia's newly-revised penal code, convicted rapists can be imprisoned from five to fifteen years.

5. What could Azeb have done to prevent herself from becoming pregnant?

Talking Point:

Azeb was a victim of sexual violence. Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Sexual violence puts women at risk for unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

6. Do you know a woman or girl who was raped?
7. Did the survivor/victim get any legal or medical help?
8. What happened to the rapist?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode **4**

Transmission of HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

Saba returns home and Askale, who is concerned about Saba's sexual activity, tells her how important it is for people to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS.

When Azeb's mother arrives at Azeb and Elias' home from the province, she recounts the people, especially youth, who have died from HIV/AIDS and speculates that the problem is more severe in the city. Azeb and Elias explain that anyone can contract HIV/AIDS no matter where they live and outline how the virus is transmitted.

Key Messages

- ❖ HIV is passed from one person to another through specific routes of transmission.
- ❖ Anyone can contract the HIV virus.
- ❖ Everyone has a responsibility to protect him/herself against HIV/AIDS.

Discussion Questions

1. How is HIV/AIDS transmitted?
2. Who does HIV/AIDS affect?
3. What are the three most reliable ways to protect oneself from HIV/AIDS?
4. What are some situations in which a woman is unable to protect herself against HIV/AIDS?

Talking Point:

If no responses, remind group members about rape incidents.

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Who is Vulnerable to HIV/AIDS?

Synopsis

Askale advises Saba to stop going out at night and having sex with different men. Askale says she is ashamed of Saba, whose behavior could degrade them both in the eyes of Bahiru and his mother. Most importantly, Askale says, Saba's dangerous behavior exposes her to HIV/AIDS.

Key Messages

- ❖ Anyone who fails to protect him/herself against HIV/AIDS can contract the disease.
- ❖ Everyone is responsible for understanding how HIV/AIDS is spread and taking proper precautions.

Discussion Questions

1. Which sectors of society are affected by HIV/AIDS?
2. Is there a cure for AIDS?

Talking Point:

As we know from Azeb's situation, sexual violence can help spread HIV/AIDS by making it impossible for women to protect themselves against the disease.

3. What should be done to ensure women are safe from sexual violence and therefore less at risk for HIV/AIDS?
4. How can your community take the steps you have suggested?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Impact of Not Using Family Planning

Synopsis

As Bahiru discusses family planning with W/ro Amelwork, she contends that having lots of children makes one rich. Bahiru replies that the opposite is true, using his mother's own experience as an example. W/ro Amelwork gave birth to nine children but raised only Bahiru as the others died due to malnutrition and lack of medical care.

Key Messages

- ❖ Failure to use modern contraceptives creates negative outcomes for families.
- ❖ Practicing family planning enables couples to properly care for their children.

Discussion Questions

1. What problems can arise if couples have lots of children?
2. Why are women advised not to have children before age 18?
3. If a woman doesn't want to be pregnant before she is married, what should she do?

Talking Point:

We have learned that women shouldn't have children before age 18. Yet in many parts of Ethiopia, such cultural practices as "abduction" and "early marriage" force girls and young women to marry and have children while still young. Abduction usually leads to early marriage and often involves rape. Both these practices are considered to be Harmful Traditional Practices by the Government of Ethiopia and women's advocates.

4. In your community, is it common for girls to be abducted or forced to marry at a young age?
5. Do you know anyone who has experienced this? How has it affected her?
6. What problems are associated with abduction and early marriage?
7. What do you think should be done to stop these practices?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.



Cultural Barriers to Using Family Planning

Synopsis

Bahiru's mother comes back from church and criticizes Askale for wanting only two children. When Askale explains how costly it is to properly care for children, W/ro Amelwork tells her that "children grow upon their luck."

Key Messages

- ❖ Modern contraceptive use is essential to reducing Ethiopia's rapid population growth.
- ❖ Cultural beliefs and attitudes can deter family planning.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some cultural beliefs and attitudes that make it difficult for couples to limit the number of children they want to have?
2. How did Askale and Bahiru withstand pressure from W/ro Amelwork to have lots of children?
3. How can we develop a culture that recognizes women and men are equal?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Technical Explanation of HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

When Bahiru comes home, he tells Askale that he participated in a symposium on HIV/AIDS. He then describes how the disease affects the body, how a person becomes HIV positive, and how people can protect themselves.

Key Messages

- ❖ HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, attacks the human immune system and leaves the body defenseless against opportunistic infections.
- ❖ HIV/AIDS is a deadly disease that can be transmitted to anyone who fails to protect him/herself.

Discussion Questions

1. What is HIV? What is AIDS? How are the two related?
2. What happens to the body of a person infected with HIV?
3. How can people protect themselves from HIV/AIDS before marriage?
4. How about after marriage?
5. How can a person protect him/herself against HIV/AIDS if s/he has more than one sexual partner?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Need for Expert Advice and Where to Find it

Synopsis

Dr. Hailu arrives at the house to meet with Bahiru about family planning methods. The doctor stresses the importance of professional advice when couples are initiating or changing birth control methods.

Key Message

- ❖ Couples who want to begin contraceptive use should go to a health center for expert counseling and advice.

Talking Point:

CBRHAs also provide counseling and certain contraceptives.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should couples consult trained health professionals before using contraceptives?
2. If a girl/woman has complications when using contraceptives, what should she do?

Talking Point::

Couples like Askale and Bahiru who communicate well with one another are more likely to practice family planning. In relationships where one partner dominates the other, couples communicate less and, therefore, are less likely to practice family planning.

3. Given this information, do you think Fikerte and Zeleke will make a joint decision to practice family planning?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 10

Contraceptives - Condoms

Synopsis

As Saba discusses the virtues of her new boyfriend, Askale urges her sister to use condoms to protect herself against HIV/AIDS, STIs and unwanted pregnancy.

Key Messages

- ❖ If used correctly and consistently, condoms are a reliable birth control method that also protect against HIV/AIDS and STIs.
- ❖ Condoms should be used if one cannot abstain from sex or be faithful to one partner.

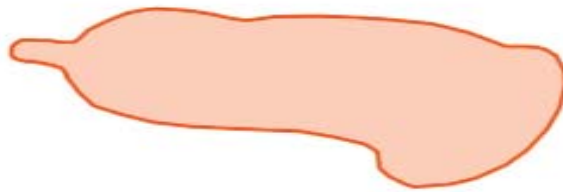
Discussion Questions

1. If used properly and correctly, which birth control method can prevent unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS?
2. Where can one obtain instructions on how to use condoms?

Talking Point:

Saba has multiple sexual partners and is unwilling to use condoms because she thinks they decrease sexual pleasure. In reality, it is men who are more likely to have multiple sexual partners yet refuse to use condoms. Since men usually control the sexual aspects of relationships, refusing to use condoms leaves their wives and girlfriends vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

3. Does using condoms reduce sexual pleasure?
4. How can women get their husbands to use condoms and protect themselves against HIV/AIDS?



Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Review of Episodes One to Ten

This episode does not contain any key messages so use it as an opportunity to review the messages in the 10 previous installments.

Discussion Questions

1. Who are your favorite characters? Why?
2. Who are your least favorite characters? Why?
3. From which characters are you learning the most? What have they taught you?
4. What new information have you learned about HIV/AIDS?
5. What new information have you learned about family planning?
6. Has this new information changed the way you think or what you do? If so, how?

Fear and Shame of HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

Askale and Bahiru discuss with W/ro Amelwork the necessity and benefits of knowing one's HIV status.

Key Messages

- ❖ It is better to get tested and know for certain one's HIV status than to live with fear and doubt.
- ❖ People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) should not feel ashamed but instead take care of their health and avoid transmitting the disease to others.
- ❖ PLWHA should be treated with kindness and respect.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the benefits of having a blood test to determine one's HIV status?
2. How should communities treat PLWHA?
3. How are PLWHA treated in your community?
4. Does your community openly discuss HIV/AIDS? How?
5. Are PLWHA in your community comfortable revealing their status? Why or why not?

Talking Point:

As we see in the drama, marriage does not guarantee a woman protection from HIV/AIDS. Zeleke is having sex with Saba and it is not known whether the two are practicing safer sex. This means Fikerte is at risk of contracting HIV from her unfaithful husband.

6. Is it possible for women in Fikerte's position to shield themselves against HIV/AIDS? If so, how?
7. How can husbands protect their wives from HIV/AIDS?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.



Preventing HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

After attending a meeting on HIV/AIDS control and prevention at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Hailu stops by Bahiru and Askale's home to invite Bahiru to lunch. While discussing the meeting's importance, he explains to Saba, Askale and Teje how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how to protect themselves against the disease.

Key Messages

- ❖ It is possible to prevent HIV/AIDS and control its spread.
- ❖ Everyone must learn how to protect him/herself against HIV/AIDS and share this information with others.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the ways other than unsafe sex that HIV/AIDS can be transmitted from one person to another?
2. If a PLWHA decides not to have children, what should s/he do?
3. What problems arise if one shares toilets, shakes hands, or eats with a PLWHA?
4. What can a PLWHA do to stay healthy and extend his/her life?

Talking Point:

Women infected with HIV are at significant risk of transmitting the disease during pregnancy, labor, delivery and breastfeeding. Without any intervention (e.g., anti-retroviral drugs), 35% of mothers transmit the disease to their children - 10% during pregnancy, 15% during labor and delivery, and 10% during breastfeeding. Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS sites across Ethiopia offer services to keep HIV+ pregnant women and their babies healthy.

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 14

Contraceptives - Oral Pills

Synopsis

Fikerte's friend, Tsehai, visits Fikerte for coffee and asks her advice on birth control methods. Fikerte, who secretly takes contraceptive pills, tells Tsehai the advantages they offer.

Key Messages

- ❖ Contraceptive pills are a safe and reliable birth control method.
- ❖ Contraceptive pills offer several important advantages.

Discussion Questions

1. If a couple wants to use contraceptive pills to plan their family, what should they do?
2. What are the risks of taking contraceptives without consulting health professionals?
3. What are the benefits of taking contraceptive pills?
4. What kind of relationship should couples have to discuss about family planning?

Talking Point:

Ideally, a husband or wife who wants to practice family planning will discuss the topic with his/her partner. In the drama, Zeleke's abuse of children and of Fikerte compels Fikerte to secretly use contraceptive pills.

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 15

Contraceptives - Injectables

Synopsis

After learning that Fikerte is taking birth control pills, an angry Zeleke slaps Fikerte, demands that she give him the pills, and throws them away. Determined not to have more children with Zeleke, Fikirte goes to the clinic to obtain the injectable contraceptive, which is better suited to her difficult situation.

Key Messages

- ❖ Injectable contraceptives offer long-term birth control.
- ❖ Couples should get expert advice and counseling before selecting any birth control method.

Discussion Questions

1. How long are injectables effective?
2. How effective are injectable contraceptives?

Let's again turn our attention to the story of Zeleke and Fikerte.

3. How does their relationship compare to the kind of relationship we have discussed as being necessary to foster communication about family planning?



Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 16

Need for Counseling and Informed Choice

Synopsis

W/ro Amelwork begins to see the importance of family planning after Bahiru is seriously injured in a car accident. She realizes that if Bahiru died, the fact that he and Askale chose to have only two children means Askale would have the resources to raise them properly. When W/ro Amelwork asks Dr. Hailu how unwanted pregnancy can be prevented, he describes the different methods and urges couples who want to plan their families to first seek professional advice.

Key Messages

- ❖ Professional counseling is essential for couples to select the contraceptive best suited to their needs.
- ❖ Husbands and wives should get family planning counseling as a couple.

Discussion Questions

1. Where should husbands and wives go to learn about family planning?

Talking Point:

CBRHAs also provide counseling and certain contraceptives.

2. Which contraceptive methods should be administered or performed only by trained health professionals?

Let's turn our attention to the part of the story where Azeb tells Elias that she was raped, became pregnant and gave up the baby for adoption.

3. How did Elias respond to the news?
4. What do you think about his response?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Contraceptives - I.U.C.D.

Synopsis

While visiting Bahiru's hospital room, Dr. Hailu discusses I.U.C.D., a long-term birth control method. He explains how it works and the benefits it offers.

Key Message

- ❖ I.U.C.D. (Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Device) offers long-term protection against unwanted pregnancy.

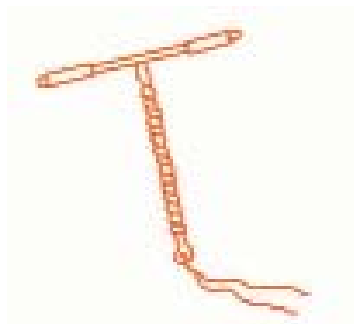
Discussion Questions

1. How long does I.U.C.D. prevent pregnancy?
2. How reliable is I.U.C.D.?
3. Where can an I.U.C.D. be obtained?

Talking Point:

In the story, Zeleke has again hit Fikerte and even Azeb senses his violent nature. Too often, the family members and friends of a couple like Zeleke and Fikerte fail to intervene.

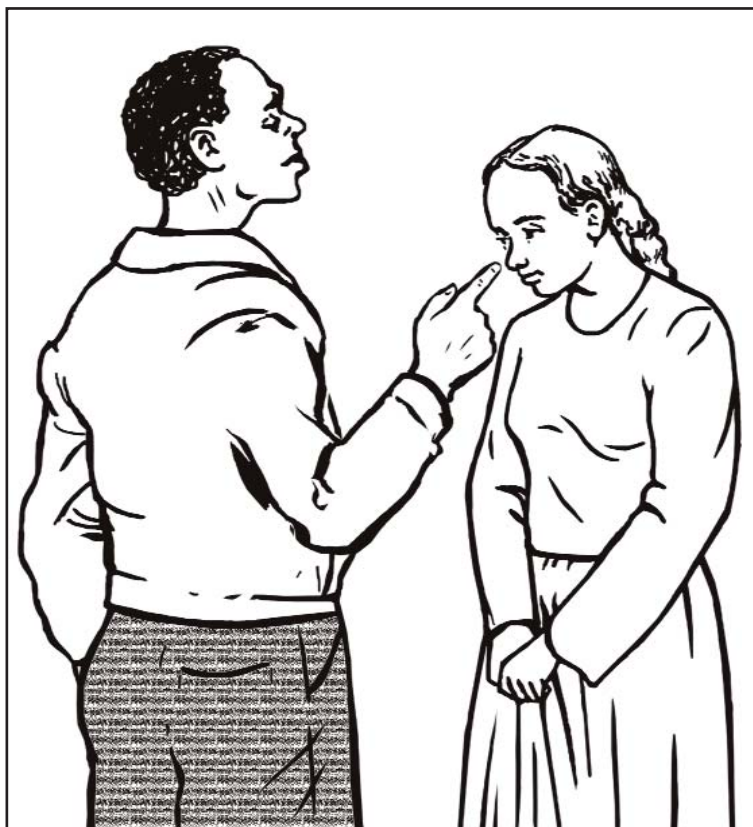
4. Why do people remain silent when they know a husband is being violent toward his wife?



5. How can Zeleke's male relatives, friends and neighbors get him to stop being violent?
6. How can the couple's family members, friends and neighbors help Fikerte protect herself?
7. Do you know about the revised penal code that makes domestic violence a crime punishable by law?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.



Contraceptives - Norplant

Synopsis

During Dr. Hailu's hospital visit with Bahiru, Teje wants to know more about the contraceptive that is inserted under the skin. Dr. Hailu describes how Norplant is administered, how it works, and why it is best for some couples.

Key Message

- ❖ Norplant is a long-term family planning method with several advantages.

Discussion Questions

1. How long does Norplant remain effective?
2. How is Norplant administered?
3. What health conditions make it unsafe for a woman to use Norplant?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 19

HIV/AIDS, Adultery and Multiple Partners

Synopsis

Saba tells Askale that her new boyfriend wants to get married but insists that they first get tested for HIV. Seeing that Saba is distraught, Askale asks her sister why she is afraid and whether she has had sex without condoms.

Key Messages

- ❖ Having multiple sex partners and committing adultery can fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- ❖ Getting tested for HIV/AIDS before marriage can reduce disease transmission.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the main problems that can be caused by having sex before marriage, having multiple partners or engaging in adultery?
2. How can a person protect him/herself from HIV/AIDS?
3. How can pre-marital HIV testing help curb the spread of the disease?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Care and Support for People Living with HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

While on her way to see Bahiru, Saba visits a friend who is hospitalized due to HIV/AIDS. Saba tells Askale that her friend quit her job because her co-workers were mean to her, and that her father abuses her. Saba and Askale lament such behavior and agree that if PLWHA are treated with kindness and compassion, they can stay healthy longer.

Key Messages

- ❖ PLWHA need kindness, respect, love and support from their families and communities.
- ❖ PLWHA can lead normal lives by taking care of themselves and avoiding risky behaviors.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some reasons PLWHA are discriminated against?
2. How do PLWHA feel when they are mistreated by their families and communities?
3. What do PLWHA need from their families and communities?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Socio-economic Problems of HIV/AIDS

Synopsis

Saba goes to visit Bahiru following his surgery and has just learned that a friend died of HIV/AIDS. Dr. Hailu explains how the HIV/AIDS epidemic is adversely affecting Ethiopia's social and economic progress.

Key Message

- ❖ HIV/AIDS is hindering Ethiopia's social and economic development.

Discussion Questions

1. What age range is most affected by HIV/AIDS?
2. How is HIV/AIDS affecting your community?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Family Planning Myths and Rumors

Synopsis

When W/ro Amelwork asks Saba if she looks ill because she is using contraceptive pills, a conversation ensues about the myths and rumors surrounding the various birth control methods. Dr. Hailu refutes these myths and says couples considering family planning should contact health professionals for accurate information.

Key Message

- ❖ It is better to learn the facts about family planning rather than listen to myths and rumors.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you heard any of the myths about contraceptive methods given in the story?
2. What other myths or rumors have you heard in your community about family planning?
3. Where should couples go to get accurate information about modern contraceptives?

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 23

Contraceptives - Vasectomy

Synopsis

As Bahiru recovers from his long illness and he and Askale think about the future, they decide to switch to a permanent method of birth control. The couple tells Dr. Hailu that Bahiru wants to have a vasectomy. Dr. Hailu explains how vasectomy works, clarifies misinformation about its side effects, and outlines its advantages.

Key Messages

- ❖ Vasectomy is a permanent birth control method for men.
- ❖ Couples should choose vasectomy only after deciding not to have more children at any time in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. Which contraceptive method allows men to assume responsibility for permanent family planning?
2. What are the benefits of having a vasectomy?
3. What must couples be certain about before choosing vasectomy as their contraceptive method?



Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Contraceptives - Tubal Ligation

Synopsis

After learning that permanent birth control methods exist, W/ro Amelwork wants to know what is available for women. Dr. Hailu is visiting Bahiru, who has just returned home from the hospital, and tells W/ro Amelwork about tubal ligation. The doctor explains how the procedure is done and its side effects.

Key Messages

- ❖ Tubal ligation is a permanent birth control method for women.
- ❖ Couples should choose tubal ligation only after deciding not to have more children at any time in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the permanent contraceptive method for women?
2. What must a woman who is considering tubal ligation be certain about?
3. What are the advantages of tubal ligation?



Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Benefits of Family Planning

Synopsis

While recounting the hardships they and those close to them have endured recently, Askale and Bahiru express relief that they have only two children. Askale and Bahiru discuss the benefits of family planning for individual families and the country as a whole.

Key Messages

- ❖ Family planning is good for individual families and the country as a whole.
- ❖ Couples who desire happiness, good health and prosperity should seek information about and practice family planning.

Talking Point:

Despite pressure from cultural beliefs and W/ro Amelwork, Askale and Bahiru never waver in their decision to have only two children.

Discussion Question

1. What can be learned from Askale and Bahiru's marriage?

Talking Point:

CBRHAs can also provide counseling and certain contraceptives.

Reminder:

Before closing the discussion, repeat the key messages to the group.

Episode 26

Story Conclusion

This episode concludes the drama.

Discussion Questions

1. What have you learned about family planning, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence over the past few months?
2. Have you discussed what you have learned with your family members and friends? If so, how have they responded?
3. Do you plan to make any changes in your personal life?
4. What changes do you expect to make?



Answer Guide

On the following pages, answers to the *Journey of Life* discussion questions are listed episode by episode. Questions that are designed to provoke dialogue are left unanswered.



Episode 1

1. Askale, Bahiru, Saba, Teje, W/ro Amelwork, Elias and Azeb.
2. Open for discussion.
3. Open for discussion.

Episode 2

1. A marriage with love, respect and open communication.
2. Limiting their family size will help them fulfill their children's needs for a healthy and promising future.
3. Families won't be able to properly feed, clothe and educate their children. The country may encounter a shortage of schools and health facilities and have high unemployment.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.

Episode 3

1. Practice family planning.
2. Visit a health center or CBRHA.
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.
7. Open for discussion.

Episode 4

1. Unsafe sex.
Contact with infected blood through transfusion or by sharing sharp objects (e.g., razors, knives and needles) with an HIV infected person.
From infected mothers to their children during pregnancy, labor, delivery and breastfeeding.
2. Anyone who fails to protect him/herself against the disease.
3. Abstain from sex.
Be faithful to one partner.
Use condoms correctly and consistently.
4. Open for discussion.

Episode 5

1. HIV/AIDS affects all sectors regardless of age, sex, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language or culture.
2. No.
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.

Episode 6

1. It will be hard for the couple to clothe, feed and educate their children.
2. Because they are not fully physically developed and are more likely to have pregnancy-related complications.
3. Use a contraceptive.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.
7. Open for discussion.

Episode 7

1. Having lots of children is seen as an asset and a blessing. Since boys are more valued than girls, parents of girls are encouraged to continue having children until they have a boy.
2. They are aware of the advantages of family planning.
3. Open for discussion.

Episode 8

1. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.
2. The virus attacks the infected person's immune system and leaves him/her defenseless against opportunistic infections.
3. Abstain from sex or use a condom with their sexual partner.
4. Be faithful to their husband/wife.
5. Use condoms correctly and consistently every time s/he has sex.

Episode 9

1. So they can make the right decision about which method is best suited to their needs.
2. Consult a doctor or other health professional.
3. **Open for discussion.**

Episode 10

1. Condoms.
2. On a packet containing condoms and from a health professional.
3. No, it does not.
4. **Open for discussion.**
5. **Open for discussion.**

Episode 11

1. Open for discussion.
2. Open for discussion.
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.

Episode 12

1. To know one's accurate HIV status.
Getting counseling and advice helps people take care of themselves and their families.
2. Communities have a sacred duty to provide PLWHA with care and support.
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.
7. Open for discussion.

Episode 13

1. Contact with infected blood through transfusion or by sharing sharp objects (e.g., razors, knives and needles) with an infected person. From infected mothers to their children during pregnancy, labor, delivery and breastfeeding.
2. Use contraceptives and especially condoms, which can prevent HIV transmission and unwanted pregnancy.
3. Nothing will happen as the disease is not transmitted through casual contact.
4. Take care of themselves.
Eat a balanced diet.
Get medical treatment.

Episode 14

1. Go to a health center or talk to a CBRHA.
2. Without professional advice, women may take the pills incorrectly and reduce their effectiveness.
3. Contraceptive pills are safe and reliable.
Only one pill is taken each day.
4. **Open for discussion.**

Episode 15

1. Depending on the type, for three or six months.
2. 99%.
3. Open for discussion.

Episode 16

1. To the health center
2. Injectables
Norplant
I.U.C.D.
Vasectomy
Tubal ligation
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.

Episode 17

1. Six to ten years.
2. 97% to 99%.
3. At a health center or hospital.
4. Open for discussion.
5. Open for discussion.
6. Open for discussion.
7. Open for discussion.

Episode 18

1. Five years.
2. A doctor inserts six small tablets under the skin of a woman's arm.
3. Pregnancy
Liver problems
Leg pain and blood clotting
Heart problems
High blood pressure
Excess weight

Episode 19

1. These behaviors can help spread HIV/AIDS.
Children born from these relationships may be neglected or not cared for properly.
2. Use condoms correctly and consistently.
3. By finding out their HIV status, couples can avoid transmitting the virus to others and carefully plan their future.

Episode 20

1. Fear of contracting the disease.
Ignorance about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and what people can do to protect themselves.
2. Their physical and psychological health can suffer.
3. Kindness, respect, love and support.

Episode 21

1. The disease mostly affects those ages 15 to 49.
2. Open for discussion.

Episode 22

1. Open for discussion.
2. Open for discussion.
3. To a health center.

Episode 23

1. Vasectomy.
2. A vasectomy provides permanent protection against unwanted pregnancy.
The surgery is minor and has no side effects.
3. That they do not want to have more children at any time in the future.

Episode 24

1. Tubal ligation.
2. She has to be sure that she does not want to have more children at any time in the future.
3. Couples who choose it never again have to worry about unwanted pregnancy.

Episode 25

1. Open for discussion.

Episode 26

1. Open for discussion.
2. Open for discussion.
3. Open for discussion.
4. Open for discussion.

