



PYRAMID

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DON'T START!

*Three Short Films
About Not Smoking*

**Discussion
Guide**



Distributed by
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DON'T START!

Three Short Films About Not Smoking

A Guide by Harrison Engle

Subjects: Health, Guidance

Grade Levels: 2-6

CONTENT:

Three short animated public service programs send a powerful message—don't start smoking; it's going to be dangerous to your lungs and very hard to stop. This is humorously illustrated in the first film in which a smoker decides he will throw away his cigarette if just the right combination of people and events takes place on the street in front of him. And when they do, he adds even more improbable requirements. By the time he is out of excuses, he has also smoked the entire cigarette and is still no closer to breaking the habit. In the second film, Uncle Jim is not only unable to blow out the 31 candles on his cake, he is also unable to put down the cigarette in his hand. It's a lot harder to stop than it is to start! The third film spotlights two children in the center ring of the circus, whose courage and will power are more astounding than that of even the lion tamer and trapeze artists. They won't smoke despite peer pressure, and that's worth applauding!

OBJECTIVES:

After viewing, the audience should be able to:

- consider why people start smoking
- discuss how difficult it is to stop smoking
- characterize "will power" and its relation to making firm decisions
- role play refusal skills
- make a personal commitment not to smoke

Note to the Group Leader:

These films address three important issues about smoking. The first humorously illustrates how difficult it is to stop once someone has started, the second hints at the damage smoking does to lungs, and the third applauds the courage it takes not to start. Use all three as an introduction to a health unit on smoking. Use the first and third to promote decision making and refusal skills. Use the second as a discussion starter to introduce a lesson on the physiology of the lungs and how they are affected by smoking. Each program is one minute long. This makes them ideal for discussion starters. You may choose to show all three to introduce a lesson, or show them individually within the lesson to introduce a new topic. They will focus the students' attention, and give viewers a fresh jumping-off point for each discussion topic.

Before viewing:

Ask the audience for some opinions about why people start smoking and if they think it's a hard habit to break.

After viewing:

Program One:

PURPLE HAT

- Ask the class what the man has promised himself (I'll stop smoking if a lady in a purple hat with a feather comes by; if she's wearing a leopard skin coat; and red high heels; and if she is walking a lion, etc.) Why does he keep adding requirements? What is he really doing? (giving himself an excuse to continue smoking)
- Ask what kind of "game" this man is playing (If this happens, I'll do that...) But playing games doesn't get things done. Ask if anyone knows what it will really take for the man to stop smoking. (commitment and will power)

- What is will power? (the power to arrive at a decision and act on it) How will it help the man to stop smoking?
- It's a lot easier to play games than to make decisions that one actually follows. Lead the class in a similar game. Announce that there will be an extra ten minute recess today if another teacher comes into the room. Arrange for this to happen, then add the following conditions: that the teacher must be wearing a jacket; teach the fourth grade; be accompanied by the principal, etc. Or choose some improbable combination which can take place completely within the room. Chances are students will not get their extra recess. At the end of the day, ask how they feel about that. What would have been easier and more definite? (simply announce that there will be an extra recess, then do it) How can this lesson translate into breaking the smoking habit?

Program Two:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- Ask why Uncle Jim can't blow out all the candles on his cake. Many children might know that smoking reduces the lung power needed to blow out candles. Now ask how and why that happened. Use this to introduce a lesson on the physiology of lungs and cilia.
- Ask what secondhand smoke is. Is Uncle Jim's nephew in danger from this?
- What does the young nephew think Uncle Jim might have wished? (that he had never started smoking) Ask for other guesses at what his wish could be (that he stop smoking, live in a smoke-free environment, breathe easier, etc.)

Program Three:

CENTER RING

- The center ring of the circus is where the most exciting and daring acts take place. Ask why the two children are in the center ring. What makes their actions more courageous than that of the lion tamer or trapeze artists?
- Have the class identify what is happening to the children. (they are being pressured to smoke) Is it hard to refuse something friends or adults offer? Ask what kinds of pressure are exerted (name calling, taunting, daring, isolating, etc.)
- It's not unusual for children to be pressured to smoke, and it's easier to resist if they have already considered their answers. Brainstorm reasons kids can give for refusing cigarettes, and write them on the board. Then role play several situations in which the teacher takes the part of a peer and pressures a child to smoke. Have several children practice what they would say (a simple "no" works well) and do. (walk away, change the topic, find a new set of friends, etc.) If a student takes the part of the person pressuring a friend, be sure the confrontation doesn't get personal and out of hand.

After all three programs:

- Ask again for the audience's personal thoughts on smoking. Does anyone think it's a good idea?
- As these films demonstrate, the best decision is not to start smoking at all. Have each student write an end to this sentence: "If someone asks me to smoke, I will..." The ending should utilize two refusal skills.

- Invite an ex-smoker to tell the class how he or she started, what it did to the person physically, how and why he or she stopped, specifically if it was easy or difficult.
- Initiate a class art project in which small groups draw anti-smoking signs. (a cigarette in a red circle with a slash over it; a slash over a hand offering a cigarette; a stop sign with a pack of cigarettes below the word; or have the group create their own anti-smoking signs) Put these signs up all around the school – including the teacher's lounge.
- These films were created as public service announcements (PSA), which are short programs shown to increase public awareness. Have small groups write and produce their own PSAs about smoking. Each group should target a different audience (young children, teens, adults) and word their scripts for that age group. If you have access to a video camera, shoot the PSAs to show to other classes. If you do not have a camera, perform them as live skits in class.

*Directed, written, designed and animated
by Lynn Smith
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada*

More Smoking Education/Prevention titles from Pyramid Media:

Confessions Of A Simple Surgeon (ages 12-Adult)
Death in the West (ages 12-Adult)
Dying For A Smoke (ages 13-Adult)
The Feminine Mistake: The Next Generation
 (ages 12-Adult)
I Am Joe's Heart: New Version (ages 10-Adult)
 Also available on Interactive Laserdisc with
 HyperCard™
I Am Joe's Lung: New Version (ages 12-Adult)
Mouseology (ages 8-Adult)
*Poisoning Your Children: The Perils of Secondhand
 Smoke* (ages 17-Adult)
The Quitter (ages 14-Adult)
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