



Mind, Soul, and Comics Lesson Plan



Temple Terrace Teen Instructional Session XIV (Virtual)

Focus: "Relationships"

Participants will be able to:

- Identify ways to support relationships in different situations by creating "Open When" letters
- Identify ways that virtual environments and real-world environments interrelate by engaging in a group discussion on the topic.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing instruments- pens, pencils, crayons
- An envelope or box to store your letters in
- *In Real Life* by Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang

Procedures:

A. Intro to Topic: Begin session with a brief introduction on the background and purpose of the session as well as the expected conduct of those involved, reminding participants that every feeling is valid and to be respectful of those with differing opinions and beliefs. Encourage everyone to participate in whatever way makes them feel comfortable. Ask participants to have their materials available. Provide a brief recap of the previous reading group that discussed the main title being utilized for this session.

Recap: In Real Life follows Anda, who has recently joined an online role-playing community called Coarsegold where she can be a leader, a fighter, and a hero. As Anda becomes more involved in the game, the lines between the virtual world and reality begin to blur along with what's right and wrong.

Theme: This month our theme is relationships. All relationships can have good times and bad times and we need to remember to support the important people in our lives through both. This month's activity is one way to do this.

- B. Session Activity: *Open When Letters:*** Today we will be making "Open when" letters. These letters are designed to be opened by the recipient when certain things are happening in their lives. To make the letters, first choose a recipient. This can be anyone- even yourself! Fold your paper and choose one of the topics from the below list. (Facilitators- post the list in the chat box or provide copies for attendees).

You need to hear a friendly voice

You need a pep talk

You get a bad grade

You have a fight with someone important in your life

You get great news

You need a laugh

It's your birthday

You make a friend

You're mad at Mom or Dad

You want to make a wish

Write on the outside of the letter "Open when" and the topic you chose. Inside each letter write a message to the recipient that addresses the topic you chose. The message can be any length and you may wish to put a small item in the letter. One idea might be to put a piece of bubble wrap into a letter for "when you are mad at Mom or Dad". Today we are going to make 4 letters, but you can use the links provided for additional ideas to make more letters at home. (Links can be put into chat box or on a handout. Please see links under Resources below).

- C. Session Activity: *Poll:*** Using the chat box, please provide your answers to the following questions about teen friendships. (Source: Pew Research)
- a. One survey of teens found that 60% spent time with peers online every day, while only 24% spent time with peers in person. What is the main

reason teens give for spending more time with friends on line than in person? Answer: Too many obligations

b. True or false? 98% of teens say they have one or more close friends?

Answer: True

c. What is the most common place identified by teens for making friends?

Answer: School (87% have a close friend from school).

d. When spending time with friends online, what activity do teens say they interact in the most? Answer: Gaming

D. Session Activity: Group Discussion: While participants are working on their letters, ask the following questions related to the main title- *In Real Life*.

1. Online forums have made it easier for teens to connect to people all over the country and the world. *In Real Life* show this experience as Anda, an American teen, develops an online friendship with Raymond, a Chinese teen, and learns how different their lives are. Have you ever started an online friendship with someone who is very different from you? What did you learn from each other?

2. Anda is able to successfully bridge the divide between the guild members and the gold farmers in the Coarsegold game. This experience leads her to try the same thing in real life at her school. After Steph, a board gamer, is dismissed by the boys in the gamer club, Anda reaches out to her and joins Steph's new board game club. Do you think life skills can be learned in both the virtual and real world? Why or why not? What life skills are useful in both the virtual and real world?

3. *In Real Life* show us how Anda and the gold farmers both earned money through playing in the virtual world. The gold farmers especially depended on this money for their real-life existence. Do you find that there is a separation between your virtual and real world or do you see some overlaps between them? Why or why not?

If comfortable, invite participants to share their letters.

Conclusion:

Thank participants for attending the session. Encourage everyone to complete a program evaluation survey. Remind them of next month's reading group and provide a brief overview of the theme and titles that will be discussed for that session.

Resources:

Open when letter video: <https://youtu.be/sVeX2XGTx7c>

Open when letter ideas: <https://www.berries.com/blog/open-when-letters>

What to write or put inside open when letters:

<https://www.joincake.com/blog/what-to-put-inside-open-when-letters/>

Pew Research Teen Friendship Poll:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/11/28/teens-friendships-and-online-groups/>