

Student Handout A

Topic: AIDS and the African-American Church

Guiding Questions

Aids and the African-American Church in the South (January 11, 2002) <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week519/cover.html>

This video describes different responses to the AIDS epidemic from black churches in the Southern U.S.

1. Why does counseling young people about sex, other than abstinence, pose a problem to African-American clergy?
2. When Easha Rodney tested positive for HIV, she thought, "How could somebody not tell me what was going on with them?" How would you answer her?
3. Do you think teaching about safer sex practices is likely to cause young people to become more sexually active?
4. "The outside help Dr. Brimah wants is to combat such contributors to the problem as poverty, hopelessness, and misinformation." Comment on this quotation. How would poverty, hopelessness, and information contribute to a rise in HIV infection?

The Black Church and AIDS (March 17, 2000)

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week329/cover.html>

This transcript describes how the Black church has tried to deal with the AIDS crisis.

1. Dr. David Satcher says, "Some people feel that AIDS is a punishment, that people get AIDS because it's a punishment for their sins." Discuss this point of view.
2. The program states: "For black men between the ages of 25 and 44, AIDS is the leading cause of death." Also: "although African Americans make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 57 percent of new AIDS infections." Were you aware of these statistics? Why do you think they are not widely known?
3. Reverend Williams says of the church: "I believe that the root of the problem stems with the church unwillingness to deal with sexuality and all of the ramifications that deal with that, to talk about sex, to educate their children about safe sex..." Do you think this is true of other institutions and individuals as well? Discuss.
4. The program mentions myths about HIV/AIDS. Do you know of any myths?

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