

Start Your Engines: Self-Awareness for Preteen Boys

Leader's Guide

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Welcome to Start Your Engines!

Start Your Engines is a six-week support-group curriculum designed to increase the self-awareness of boys in fourth through seventh grades.

The curriculum uses a car as a metaphor. Each week, the students learn the function of one part of a car. Then they relate the car part to an aspect of human development.

The lessons focus on good choices, thinking before acting, and physical health. Each lesson includes a role-play scene to reinforce the concept for the week. Participants will find the topics interesting, enjoy the activities, and learn a lot about themselves and each other. Furthermore, as self-awareness increases and positive choices are highlighted and encouraged, the boys' self-esteem will grow.

The lesson plan for each group session is laid out for you, followed by the necessary role plays and handouts.

The PowerPoint® presentations that come with the program are intended for use with larger groups. The parent presentation is designed to help parents understand this stage in boys' development and gives an overview of the group curriculum. It also includes suggestions for what parents can do at home to support their sons. When small-group sessions are not possible, the student PowerPoints® can be used for classroom presentations, with the six-week workshop material condensed into two sessions.

Enjoy the curriculum and the young men you interact with. I am grateful for the work that you do and the far-reaching impact it has.

Victoria McGee

Start Your Engines

Self-Awareness for Preteen Boys



Parent Presentation

Preteen Boys



- Ages 10 to 13
- Physical and emotional changes

Between the ages of 10 and 13, boys are in the preteen phase. They start to experience some of the changes that adolescence brings—both physical and emotional. You begin to see glimpses of the teenager he will become.

Identity Formation

- Standing between home and school, parents and peers
- Answering the question, “Who am I?”



Boys at this age still very much need their families, but their need for peer relationships and input increases greatly. They stand in between home and school, parents and peers, and actively work at answering the question, “Who am I?” As they form their identities, they look to both parents and peers for help.

Self-Awareness



Figuring out:

- Who they are
- What they stand for
- Their place in the world

This is a time of growing self-awareness, as boys work to figure out who they are, what they stand for, and how they hope to impact the world around them. They profess and question values and ideas that, previously, they might have never given much thought to.

Changes at School

- Becoming more competitive
- Needing challenges to prove themselves
- Questioning authority



You will see changes at school and at home. In school, boys may become more competitive—if not academically, then socially. Boys this age need to be challenged and will usually rise to meet expectations. Challenges give them the opportunity to prove their worth and abilities. You may also notice that they question authority more often. This is a healthy way of organizing their world in terms of fairness and justice—very important principles for boys.

Changes at School



- Desire for choices
- The need to belong transfers from home to school

Preteen boys desire more choices and benefit from having options at school. For example, instead of cut-and-dried assignments, students can be allowed to choose from several options which way they will demonstrate what they have learned. This is empowering and helps them discover what they do best. During this time, their need to belong starts to transfer from home to school as they seek to be accepted and be a part of what is going on at school and with peers.