

Contents

Preface	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Introduction	vii
Curriculum Overview	ix
Section One: Creating a Vision for Life	1
Lesson 1 A Vision for Life	4
Lesson 2 One of a Kind.....	10
Lesson 3 Who Do You Want to Be?.....	20
Lesson 4 Growing in Character	32
Section Two: Building Healthy Relationships	43
Lesson 5 Healthy Relationships	46
Lesson 6 Communicating Effectively.....	54
Lesson 7 Detecting Counterfeits.....	68
Lesson 8 The Power of Forgiveness	80
Section Three: Making Wise Decisions	91
Lesson 9 Reaching a Wise Decision.....	94
Lesson 10 Choices and Consequences.....	102
Lesson 11 The Choice to Abstain and Be Faithful	110
Lesson 12 Handling Peer Pressure	118
Section Four: Putting It All Together	129
Lesson 13 Understanding and Preventing HIV/AIDS	132
Lesson 14 Living with HIV/AIDS.....	144
Lesson 15 Caring Communities.....	156
Lesson 16 There Is Hope!.....	164



Preface

For the past decade, we have been privileged to travel throughout Africa, meeting with educators, physicians, church leaders, and other health and human service professionals—people who love extravagantly and refuse to give up on their youth. We have visited in many of the homes, schools, churches, and offices of those who work tirelessly each day to improve the lives of adolescents and young adults—often in very difficult places with little or no assistance. We treasure the professional insights they have shared and their honest perspectives concerning effective HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in their cultural context. We are thankful for these dear friends and pray that their input into our lives and work will be reflected as the pages in this curriculum come to life in churches, schools and youth groups throughout the continent.

Helping youth to choose a vision for their lives, rooted in becoming a person of character and in using their unique talents and interests, is a primary focus of the *It Takes Courage! Youth Curriculum*. Through discussions and activities, young people will have an opportunity to gain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to chart a course for their lives, build healthy relationships, and make wise decisions. They will discover that they can truly make a difference in their community, and that they have a responsibility to do so.

Our desire is that this curriculum will be used to permeate the world of youth with messages full of hope and optimism; to convey the importance of investing in their lives by being courageous enough to make wise choices; and to encourage and strengthen youth who are struggling and wish for a chance to make a new beginning. This curriculum is designed as a tool to inspire and equip youth to choose well and to experience the joy of healthy, meaningful, and productive lives.

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