

MAARIFA

The Armor of Positive Living for Youth

Maarifa, n. (2) a plan, means of getting over a difficulty

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Maarifa: The Armor of Positive Living for Youth, Facilitator's Manual

English Edition, August 2018

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Lucy Y. Steinitz with Eunice Karanja Kamaara (2010). *Called to Care No. 8: My Life Starting Now: Knowledge and Skills for Young Adolescents*. Parchment, Oxford, UK

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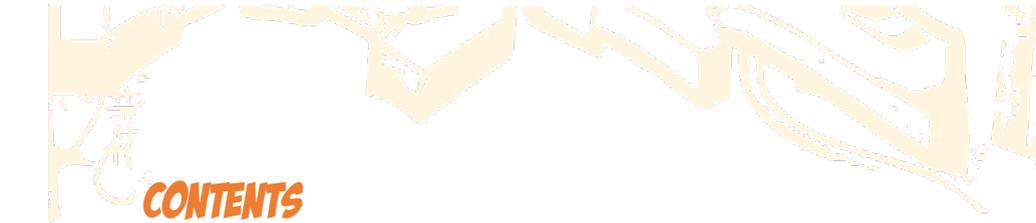
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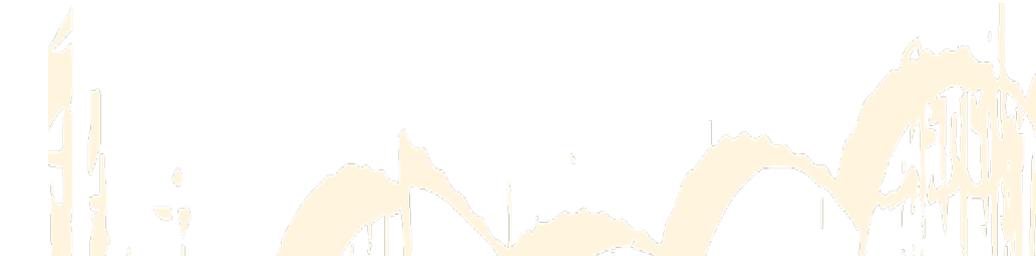
Many thanks and much love to my husband, Daniel Steyn, for believing in me and my role in God's plan for youth living with HIV.

The Maarifa curriculum came about as an ever-evolving vision from God about how to fill the gap in treatment of youth living with HIV in the area of psychosocial support. I am not an expert in this field and that is why some of the information herein comes from people who are experts. I would also like to thank them for their hard work in training educators of youth living with HIV. Hopefully all of us together can diminish the spread of this virus and produce a generation of youth who will live out their lives in a positive way.



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FORWARD

Having been involved in HIV education since 1985, I have seen major changes in the approaches being taken toward slowing the spread of the virus, motivating people to take their medication consistently, and overcoming stigma and the discrimination that results. Some of those changes have been very good, others, not so helpful.

One of the most important things to understanding for any who are involved is that HIV is not just about disease or medicine or facts or statistics or information. It's about people! If we lose sight of the people involved, we fail to be effective HIV educators, care givers, researchers, or in any other sense involved.

Maarifa is the product of a great deal of study and the heart of a woman who knows the importance of remembering people and, specifically, cares so deeply for young people that she is compelled to put her creativity and knowledge into a curriculum that will make a major difference in their lives.

Young people continue to be at the highest risk of infection. Jessica Steyn understands that the most important element in HIV education is not information, but motivation. If they are not motivated to apply what they learn about HIV, it will not have any impact on the choices they make. She also understands that fear alone is not an effective motivator.

Steyn incorporates positive, hope filled motivation into the lessons to help young people see that there are wonderful benefits that come with healthy choices, not just the risks of other choices. Having spent many years of her life living in Africa, she also understands that motivation that is effective comes from people within the local culture, not outsiders. She also understands that the people of Africa make up many, many cultures, not just one.

One of the most important obstacles to addressing HIV is stigma. It motivates people to avoid testing. If they test positive, stigma makes it harder to seek and stay on treatment. Stigma must be overcome! Steyn understands that this will not happen by just educating people about HIV or telling them it is not appropriate to stigmatize. She incorporates the understanding that stigma is a negative attitude toward those living with HIV.

As such, to overcome it, the attitude must be replaced with positive attitudes. These can include caring, friendship, compassion, and the understanding that people living with this virus are valuable. When people come to the point of realizing how much they have to gain from friendship with those with HIV, they are motivated to build relationships that make stigma a thing of the past.

Steyn believes in young people. She believes in their value as people and in their ability to make and carry out healthy choices. That includes saving sex for marriage and being faithful in marriage, undoubtedly the most effective way to stop the spread of HIV. She also understands that not everyone will make those choices.

As a result, she is committed to being sure young people understand the truth about other approaches to slowing the spread of HIV. That includes teaching the truth about the effectiveness and failures of condoms.

Young people's lives are worth saving and Maarifa is a tool that has the potential not only to save their lives, but also to make their lives more fulfilling, productive, and abundant.

- Duane Crumb, Founder and Director of HIV Hope International

Duane Crumb is the Founder and Director of HIV Hope International. In that role, he travels around the world speaking and facilitating seminars to equip and empower people to develop their own creative strategies, materials, and programs to effectively address the issues involved in HIV in their local cultures and meet the needs of those living with the disease. Through 2015 he has facilitated 76 seminars in 23 countries on 4 continents. Previous to this, he co-founded the American Institute for Teen AIDS Prevention and became its Executive Director. There he developed and distributed HIV education materials primarily targeting the public schools of the United States. He presented motivational HIV prevention assembly programs in middle and high schools and other settings in 38 states and many other countries, addressing more than 800,000 students.

MAARIFA IS:

- A faith-based psychosocial support program for adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV)
- An open source document that allows those using it to add their cultural context to the narrative and program design
- Designed to be a community-based program, held within the surrounds of a health care facility that allows trained community volunteers and health care professionals to work hand-in-hand to insure the health and well-being of ALHIV
- A safe place for ALHIV to share experiences; to ease fears, anxiety and doubts
- A place to learn more about body changes
- A means to acquire life skills and psychosocial competencies that will help them cope effectively with the challenges of living with HIV
- A means to identify personal goals
- A process of self-awareness, which is the ability to understand who they are as well as their strengths and weaknesses. This enables the youth to work on their weakness and build on their strengths
- A means to learn to appreciate the role of critical thinking in their lives. Enabling youth to analyze a situation, make decisions and give their own opinion even if it differs from others
- A means of building their self-esteem. Enabling youth to feel confident about themselves and their decisions

FRAMEWORK OF MAARIFA:

Maarifa aims to fill a gap in psychosocial support offered to youth living with HIV, by using the following framework called *The Armor of Positive Living*.

The Armor of Positive Living is a lifestyle. Putting on this armor means making certain sacrifices. When David went to fight Goliath, he was given body armor, but he did not feel comfortable in it and he knew God would protect him. David put on the armor of God. We must take off our worldly body armor, in order to live positively. What types of worldly armor do we put on? Denial, anger, aggression, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual immorality, etc. – any of these things will leave us open to attack. When we talk about the armor of positive living, we are talking about appropriate attitudes and actions that will give us courage to face obstacles with the knowledge that we have the tools to make good decisions.

The Armor of Positive Living

Armor		Description
Breast Plate	S	Self- Acceptance – accept your status
Shield	A	Adherence to ARVs and clinic instructions
Helmet	C	Choices – make good Choices
Foundation	R	Relationship – have a personal relationship with God
Sword	I	Information – get the correct information
Heart	F	Faithfulness wait for sex until marriage
Army	I	Identify - family and friends to support you
Glove	C	C.A.R.E (Condoms, Abstinence, Responsibility, Excuses)
Belt	E	Empowered to be responsible. I am not alone. I can speak out and help others.

Acrostic created by Jessica Hasslen, August 2013

PARTS OF THE ARMOR:

BREASTPLATE = SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Our breastplate absorbs the shock of finding out our status and gives us time to learn to accept ourselves, our God given abilities and our limitations, so we can have positive interactions with others in this life. Topics in this section include: I am special, I am valuable to God and my community, and God has a purpose for my life.

SHIELD = ADHERENCE

Following guidelines for taking medication and direction from doctors or the clinic is like putting up a shield. Adherence to ARVs strengthens the immune system so that one is not at risk for other illnesses. Just like a shield protects the warrior in battle, adherence to medication will protect our health. Topics in this section include: Nutrition is important, Consistently take medication on time, and the Importance of ARVs.

HELMET = MAKE GOOD CHOICES

When we have accepted our status, we see the importance of adherence and are physically healthy. The helmet signifies our ability to think through and make good choices. Our choices will impact how we live our life and how we interact with others. Topics in this section include: Mixed Messages – Whom do we believe, Good Company, Don't be idle, Accountability and Responsibility, Do no harm, and Say NO in a sandwich.

FOUNDATION = RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A house without a foundation will eventually be demolished. A life without a relationship with God is like a house without a foundation. Our relationship with God gives our lives purpose. We are his children and he is our father. Topics in this section include: Who is God?, Why am I here?, and What does a relationship with God look like?

SWORD = INFORMATION

Information is power. When we are armed with the sword of information, we will not fall prey to rumors or lies about HIV. It is important to know all we can about the virus so that we can protect our partners and ourselves and educate others. Topics include: Facts about HIV/AIDS, How to educate others, How to respond to Rumors, and Is HIV a judgment from God?

HEART = FAITHFULNESS/WAIT UNTIL MARRIAGE

Faithfulness to God will keep us pure. When we have God in our hearts we don't need others to validate us. Our body is God's temple. Taking drugs and having sex before marriage are ways that we corrupt our bodies and God's image. Being faithful to the right friends will help us learn how to build right relationships in the future. If you practice faithfulness now, it will come naturally in married life. Topics in this section include: Why wait? My Body, God's Temple, and Consequences of Not Being Faithful, and the reproductive system.

ARMY = IDENTIFY FRIENDS & FAMILY

We often feel like we are the only one with HIV. When we feel alone and isolated it is important to know whom we can trust and talk to. Our army is a support system of family and friends who we can trust and who know our status. Topics in this chapter include: Disclosure, How do you know whom you can trust, How do you deal with stigma and discrimination, and Importance of your army.

GLOVE = C.A.R.E (CONDOMS, ABSTINENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, EXCUSES)

We know the best way to maintain our health and purity is to say no. Sex should be saved for marriage. But what happens when you're married. You still have to protect yourself and the one you love. We put on gloves to protect our hands from the cold of winter and the hot of the fire. We put on a condom to protect ourselves and our spouse from bodily fluids that could spread the virus. Condoms are not foolproof, but it is a safeguard and one to which responsible people living with HIV adhere. Topics in this section include: Abstinence is best, Responsible relationships, Consequences of sex before marriage, Benefits of waiting until marriage, and No Excuses.

BELT = EMPOWERED TO BE RESPONSIBLE

HIV does not discriminate. We need to educate others to protect themselves and get tested if they are engaged in risky behaviors. Topics in this section include: How do I show God's love to my friends, and How do I influence friends who are engaging in risky behavior.

1

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARMOR OF POSITIVE LIVING WELCOME TO MAARIFA

Objective: Explain what Maarifa is, introduce the Maarifa Play and read the first act.

Opener: As you arrive there will be an activity that you can join or an art project you can work on. On the first day you will create your Maarifa name and nametag. What is a Maarifa name? It is what you would like to be known as. It can be anything you like! You will use this name throughout your time in Maarifa.

Before we can start this new thing, we must know more about Maarifa and how it will benefit us.

What is Maarifa? _____

Who is it for? _____

Why is it important? _____

What will I gain from it? _____

The format of each Maarifa meeting will be the same, but the topic discussed will be different every time.

Ground Rules:

- Let's make up some **ground rules** for our meetings! Let's make a list. Who wants to start?
- What is the **Question Box**? This is a box where you can write down questions that you don't want to ask out loud. There is no such thing as a stupid question.
- What are your **expectations**? What would you like to get out of this meeting, learn new things, make new friends, learn about HIV, etc.?

Thank you for your input. We hope we can meet and exceed your expectations.



 **Devotion:** We will start every meeting with a 5-minute devotion. Each devotion will have a Bible verse that goes along with it. The devotion will be connected to the topic of the day. After a few lessons you will begin to see that God is present in every aspect of our lives.

There will be two questions or more about every devotion and space to write your answers. We will answer them as a group, but please write the answers in your booklet.

Today's Bible verse is: Ephesians 6:13 (NLT) Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

How do we keep ourselves safe?

Prayer: Dear God, help us to keep an open mind as we learn how to arm ourselves with the armor of positive living, so that we can always feel safe in your love. Amen.

 **MAARIFA PLAY:** *In every Act of the play you will see how Promise and her cousin Truth deal with the same issues and experiences that you face.*

ACT ONE

The Armor of Positive Living

PROMISE, a 13-year-old girl, and TRUTH, a 19-year-old boy, are cousins. Promise lives with NANA FLORENCE, her grandmother in the village. Truth has come to visit before going back to college. Promise and Truth sit under a tree, drinking chai and eating chapati, and talking about what has been happening since they last saw one another a year ago.

TRUTH

And then the guy on the motorcycle shouted "TURN THE OTHER WAY" before flying through the air and landing in the mud (*laughs*) you should have seen it Promise. It was like an action film.

TRUTH

Promise?

Promise recovers and tries to seem interested.

PROMISE

Sorry, what were you saying about the motorcycle falling?

TRUTH

(Jokingly) Stop pretending you were listening. Am I boring you? If I didn't know any better, I would think you weren't happy I was visiting.

PROMISE

No, I'm very happy. I missed you! I'm just thinking about so many things.

TRUTH

School, or what?

PROMISE

No. But let me not spoil the fun. Tell me more stories about your exciting life.

TRUTH

I'm more interested in listening to what's disturbing you. You know you can always talk to me. We are not just cousins; I'm also your friend.

PROMISE

(Tries to speak) It's just...I think...I don't know...Ah, I don't even know where to start. It's too much. I can't...

TRUTH

Maybe you'll feel more comfortable to share if I also share something I've been struggling to tell you. I meant it when I said that we are friends. So, I really wanted to tell my friend that nine months ago I found out I was HIV positive.

PROMISE

What? Are you sure?

TRUTH

Positive *(laughs)* Get it?

PROMISE

I understand, but that is not funny Truth. That's what has killed so many people I love. I do not want to die like my mum and dad. Why is this happening?

As she speaks she gets more hysterical and starts to cry. Nana Florence has finished making tea and carries it to the pair as Promise speaks.

NANA FLORENCE

You told her?

Truth nods

PROMISE

Nana Florence, you knew he was dying and you didn't tell me?



TRUTH

Honestly Promise, it's not that bad. I feel really good. I take my medication and eat healthy food. I am not sick, and I plan to stay healthy for a long time.

PROMISE

But I thought everyone with HIV dies just like mum and dad...The same way I'm going to die one day soon.

NANA FLORENCE

Promise, I loved your parents dearly, and I really wish they had followed doctor's orders because they might have still been here with us today. But your father refused to take medication and your mother only took medicine for a short time and then decided to see a witch doctor. That does not mean you must go through the same thing they did. You can make different choices.

TRUTH

Exactly Nana Florence, you know when I first found out, I felt very bad. I was afraid of dying. I could not tell anybody how I was feeling. I didn't know what to do.

PROMISE

What changed?

TRUTH

One day I went to the clinic to pick my medicine and there was a counselor there. I decided to talk to him about how I was feeling. He told me I was special, and I just could not believe him. But he insisted that I'm special because God only made one Truth and He knew me, and the plan for my life, even before I was born. The counselor told me that God knows that I have HIV and He knows how to take care of me.

PROMISE

And you believed him? Do you really think God takes care of us even if we have HIV?

TRUTH

One hundred percent! But he needs you to do your part too and that's the hard part, but you can do it. Here's what you have to do, it's called putting on the armor of positive living.

1. Accept your HIV status.
2. Adhere to medication.
3. Make good choices.
4. Ask God for help.
5. Get the correct information.
6. Be abstinent before marriage and faithful after marriage.
7. Identify people you can trust.
8. C.A.R.E. for yourself (That stands for condoms, abstinence, responsibility and excuses.)
9. Be empowered to be responsible.

PROMISE

I've never heard that before. Please, Tell me more!

Small Group Discussion:

After every chapter of Promise and Truth's story there will be questions for discussion. It is important that we all take part and listen to one another. There will be space provided to write the answers to the questions below.

1. Do you have any of the same concerns about HIV that Promise and Truth had? If not, what are your concerns?

2. Truth went to see a counselor and received some advice. What do you think about the information he received?

3. Was it safe for Truth to tell Promise about his HIV status? Why or Why not?

4. How can counseling help Promise deal with the death of her parents?

5. Why does Promise think she will die soon?

 **Express Yourself:** Tell your story with words or pictures. Draw or write your story.

Closing and Take Away: Recap what happened during the session and collect your Take Away sheet to bring home to your parent or guardian.

Eat before you leave! We will try to provide a meal or a snack or foodstuffs to take away.

2 BREASTPLATE = SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Objective: To understand one's value to God. To understand the benefits of accepting one's status.

Opener: Mirror exercise – write down three things about yourself that you like (that are unique, special or interesting). Don't tell anyone what you have written and give your answers to the facilitator. You will be given the name of another person; describe that person by what is unique about that person. See how others see you versus how you see yourself.

Devotion: Psalm 139:13-14 (The Voice) - *For You shaped me, inside and out. You knitted me together in my mother's womb long before I took my first breath. I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe. You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful; I carry this knowledge deep within my soul.*

What are the benefits of accepting your HIV status?

What are the consequences of failing to accept your HIV status?

Prayer: Dear God, please help us to always remember how valuable we are to you and respect and love ourselves and others as you love us. Amen.

MAARIFA PLAY ACT TWO

Breastplate = Self-acceptance

Nana Florence, Promise and Truth are eating a meal together



PROMISE

Sometimes I feel so alone Truth. I'm scared that no one will want to be my friend if they know I'm sick. I don't know why I'm alive. I hear my friends talk about their dreams for the future and I don't even know if I have a future.

TRUTH

I understand how you feel. When I found out I had HIV, I felt very scared of dying and was afraid of telling anyone. But the doctor taught me the difference between HIV and AIDS. HIV is a virus, which you can get through blood, sex or can be transmitted from mother-to-child; while AIDS is the final stage of HIV and happens when your immune system is not working properly, and you get another disease that your body can't fight. Do you understand?]

PROMISE

Yes

TRUTH

The doctor told me that if I take my medication correctly at the same time every day, and I eat healthy, balanced meals, I can live for many years without having AIDS even if I'm HIV positive.

PROMISE

But it's not fair that we have to live like this for the rest of our lives. Why did God give us HIV?

TRUTH

Oh Promise, God did not give me HIV. God created me, just like He created you. He loves me and will protect and care for me always even though I have HIV.

NANA FLORENCE

Truth is right. Promise, God loves you very much and He does not give us diseases. He allows us to struggle and suffer and go through hard times so that we will remember that we need Him.

PROMISE

But I feel like God has forgotten me. He took my parents away and now even Truth and I have it.



NANA FLORENCE

Oh baby, don't cry. I love you. God loves you and will never forget you. Whenever you feel scared or alone, pray to God to give you courage. He will hear and answer your prayers.

Truth comforts Promise as well

TRUTH

Promise, God has a plan for our lives. We are young and strong and smart. HIV is not who we are, it is just a virus that we have, and we can fight it. Do you know what a breastplate is?

Promise shakes her head to show that she does not.

TRUTH

Well like soldiers used to wear to war in Rome to protect themselves. They also had a sword or a spear, but they covered themselves in armor to protect themselves from attack and injury. An important part of that armor was the breastplate, which covered their chest to protect their heart among other parts.

PROMISE

Are you saying I have to wear a breastplate to protect myself from HIV?

TRUTH

Yes, but not physically. In the Bible we read about putting on the armor of God, but it does not mean you walk around every day dressed in heavy metal.

PROMISE

(Laughs) That would be funny.

TRUTH

(Laughs) Yes, it would, and people would think you had gone crazy. But in the same way, you have to have armor to fight HIV. To live positively Promise, you need to learn to accept and love yourself the way you are now, even with HIV. Self-Acceptance is the breastplate of positive living. Accepting your HIV status is like putting God's protective armor over your heart. No one can make you feel bad about yourself, if you know you are a child of God and He is protecting and guiding you.

PROMISE

So, you are saying I need to accept my status, just accept that I am going to die?

NANA FLORENCE

No. I think Truth is saying you need to start being kind to yourself and stop using your HIV status to beat yourself up. When I look at you I see my lovely granddaughter who has so much to live for and that is why I work hard to take care of you. You also need to start seeing yourself positively and loving yourself so that you can take proper care of you.

TRUTH

Exactly, Promise. Self-acceptance is the first step you need to take to live a healthy life with HIV.

NANA FLORENCE

Now you two need to go to bed. I think Promise has enough to think about for tonight.

Promise and Truth exit as Nana Florence clears the table and exits as well.



Small Group Discussion:

1. What makes you special and valuable? Who are you valuable to?

2. Who is God?

3. How do you think God sees you?

4. How has Truth's HIV status changed who he is? How has your HIV status changed who you are?

5. What does "accepting your status" mean for your health, your relationships and your education?



Express Yourself: What does self-acceptance look like? Can you draw it or describe it in words?

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.

Eat! Eating nutritious meals is an important part of living positively!

3

SHIELD = ADHERENCE

Objective: To understand the importance of adhering to treatment, hygiene, nutrition and exercise.

 **Opener:** Sort & Mingle – find out the likes and dislikes of others in the group. Listen to instructions from the facilitator.

 **Devotion:** Psalm 28:7 (NLT) - *The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.*

Why do we follow instructions?

What happens when we don't follow instructions?

What currently serves as your shield? What do you hide behind when life becomes overwhelming?

 **Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for giving us the Bible, your instruction booklet. May we use it to guide our lives in ways that are good and pleasing to You. Amen.

MAARIFA PLAY ACT THREE

Shield = Adherence

Promise and Truth are walking together carrying buckets to fetch water. They stop at the river and start collecting water as they talk.



TRUTH

Why were you angry today when Nana reminded you to take your medication?

PROMISE

Ah, I'm tired of this medicine. I don't want to take medicine every day and what about next year when I'm in boarding school? All the students will know that I'm sick if I take medicine every day! They will ask me questions. What am I going to tell them?

TRUTH

Promise calm down. First, you must take your medicine every day because it protects you from getting sick. Would you rather be sick and unable to go to school?

PROMISE

(Looks down/away upset) No.

TRUTH

Look, I didn't say that to upset you. I'm sorry Promise; I understand what you feel...do you remember the armor I told you about yesterday?

PROMISE

Yes.

TRUTH

Well another important part of the armor is the shield. The shield represents adherence. Did your doctor tell you what adherence means?

PROMISE

(Sheepishly) Maybe, I didn't understand everything he said. I didn't understand but Nana Florence understood so I stopped paying attention.

TRUTH

Adherence is like obedience. At home you have to obey Nana Florence. In school you have to obey your teachers. Because we are children of God, we obey God. When you live with HIV, you have to obey the rules of the treatment, or you will get sick. So, adherence is just following the rules.



PROMISE

What are the rules? Does everybody with HIV have to follow them?

TRUTH

The rules are simple, take your medicine every day at the same time, eat healthy food, and exercise. And yes, everyone with HIV has to follow these rules.

PROMISE

What kind of medicine do I have to take? I take some now. Nana gives me medicine every morning after breakfast, but I really don't know what I'm taking. Are they important?

TRUTH

The medication is called ARVs, which is short for anti-retroviral medicine. The name is not important. You can just remember ARV but yes, they are important.

PROMISE

Sometimes when I take ARVs, I don't feel good.

TRUTH

That only happens at the beginning when you start taking them, it usually goes away when your body gets used to the medicine. But sometimes, when you don't eat balanced, nutritious meals while taking ARVs you also don't feel well.

PROMISE

What is a balanced, nutritious meal?

TRUTH

You have to make sure you eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and eat enough food every day. So, if you take your medicine correctly and eat nutritious food then you will stay healthy and won't get opportunistic infections.

PROMISE

Say what? Opportun...those are big words.

TRUTH

Oh sorry, I keep forgetting you're still a baby!

PROMISE

(Playfully punches him) I'm not a baby! I just hadn't heard that before, so please explain and stop calling me a baby!

TRUTH

Okay, you're not a baby! So, let me explain. Opportunistic infections are illnesses that other people can also get but people with HIV whose immune systems don't work as well are not able to fight them off easily.

PROMISE

Like what? A cold?

TRUTH

(Nods) TB, pneumonia, really any illness can harm you when your immune system is low.

PROMISE

I understand. Fruits, vegetables and medicine are my shield. But what do I tell the kids in boarding school about why I take medicine every day?

TRUTH

(Pauses to think) I know that's a hard one. You know what, I promise I'll tell you, but I think we should talk about the full armor piece by piece and I think the next piece we'll talk about is the helmet. Now how about we head back before Nana Florence thinks crocodiles have eaten us.



Small Group Discussion:

1. Do you remember to take your medicine on time? If yes, how do you remember?

2. What does “having a balanced diet” mean?

3. Why is hygiene important? What are some ways you can prevent illness through hygiene?

4. Why is a shield used to represent adherence?

 **Express Yourself:** Pretend you are making a shield to keep out opportunistic infections. What would your shield be made of? What would you decorate it with? Or describe your sword with spoken word or poetry.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.

4

HELMET = CHOICES

Objective: To understand how to make good choices, choose friends and say no.

Opener: Never Have I Ever: In groups of no more than 10, each participant holds up 10 fingers. The first person starts by saying, “Never Have I Ever”...and saying something they have never done. If the other participants have done that thing they put a finger down, if they have not they keep their finger raised. The winner of the game is the one who still has finger(s) raised when everyone else does not. Try to think of things you have never done that the others probably have done.

Devotion: Philippians 4:8-9 (NLT) And now dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. *Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.*

What are the choices that we make every day? Some choices we make, and other choices are made for us. What are some of the choices that were decided for us? Things we have no control over?

What are some of the consequences for the choices we make?

If our thoughts are of things which are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and admirable, how will this affect the choices we make?

Having a positive attitude is essential to every aspect of our lives. God says in verse 9 that we are to put into practice all the positive things we have learned from Him. If we have a positive attitude and our choices and actions reflect our attitude, then we can't help but live positively and have God's peace within us.

 **Prayer:** Dear God, help us to focus on things that are excellent and praiseworthy; to have a positive attitude and show it through our actions. Amen.

 **MAARIFA PLAY**

ACT FOUR

Helmet = Choices

Truth and Promise arrive in the compound and Nana Florence greets them. She looks like she is about to leave.



NANA FLORENCE

You've come back. Put the water there. Promise, will you please wash your red dress. You will wear it to the wedding. Truth, after it dries please see that she gets dressed.

TRUTH

Okay.

NANA FLORENCE

Thank you. I'm going to the market, I'll be back this evening.

Promise has been silent but works up the courage to speak before Nana Florence walks out.

PROMISE

Nana Florence.

NANA FLORENCE

Mmmm?

PROMISE

You said I could get a new dress to wear to the wedding.

NANA FLORENCE

Sorry Sweetie, but this month I just don't have the money. But you look very pretty in your red dress. You'll be stylish wearing the red dress.

Nana Florence exits. Truth notices Promise looks sad.

TRUTH

You look disappointed Promise. What's wrong?



PROMISE

I just really wanted a new dress for the wedding. All the other girls have been talking about their new dresses and I'll be going with an old one. There is someone else who wants to buy me clothes but...No, it's okay.

TRUTH

What's wrong? Please tell me.

PROMISE

Well...one of the men who hang out at the kiosks said he would buy one for me, but I had to do something for him.

TRUTH

What does he want you to do?

PROMISE

You know, be nice to him, kiss him and stuff like that.

TRUTH

Promise, did he ask you to have sex with him?

PROMISE

(Shyly) Yes.

TRUTH

Promise, that kind of favor is not a good choice and when living with HIV it's very important to make good choices. I think we need to talk about the helmet now.

PROMISE

Let me guess, helmet has to do with protecting your mind, right?

TRUTH

Very good. Now your making me feel like a teacher. Anyway, we make choices with our minds. The helmet of positive living is God's way of protecting our thoughts. In order to make good choices we need the right information.

PROMISE

But where do I get the right information?

TRUTH

You can always ask questions about HIV to your doctor or nurse at the clinic or to a counselor. Nana Florence and I can also help you. There are lots of people who don't really understand about HIV and might give you the wrong information. So, it's important to always make sure that what you're being told is the truth.

PROMISE

But what does this have to do with the Mr. Kiosk?

TRUTH

Who?

PROMISE

The guy who wants to buy me the dress.

TRUTH

When you know the correct information about HIV, then you can make good choices based on that information, like how to choose your friends and what are good and bad favors. Some kids will do things that are not good like drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and getting sugar daddies. Those things are harmful to your body and your mind, especially if you have HIV.

PROMISE

But how do I tell Mr. Kiosk no? He is always asking me.

TRUTH

When someone asks you to do something you don't want to do, you say two positive things and sandwich them the no between them. You say NO in a sandwich.

PROMISE

(Laughs) A sandwich? What does that mean?

TRUTH

Let me give you an example. Your friend offers you a beer. You first say, "I'm glad we've been friends for so long." (This is a positive statement – a yes.) Then you say, "I don't drink alcohol." (The no.) Then you say, "But maybe we can have a mango juice at the kiosk instead." (Another positive statement – a yes.) So, it's like the positive stuff is the bread and the no, is the butter, but because it is covered in bread it still looks delicious. So, what would you say to Mr. Kiosk?

PROMISE

I would say that it's nice of him to offer. Then I would say that I'll wait until my grandmother can buy me a dress. Then I would invite him to church, which is a positive activity because asking for sex from a young girl is not behaving the way God wants him to!

TRUTH

That's good Promise.

PROMISE

So now I know about the breastplate, the shield and the helmet, so what else do I need?

TRUTH

I will tell you tomorrow. It's the perfect day for it.



Small Group Discussion:

1. How do you say no to things that can harm you?

2. How do you choose friends?

3. What choices do you make every day?

4. What really important choices have you had to make? How did they impact your life?



Express Yourself: Draw a silhouette of each student's head profile. Then have them write their thoughts, choices, decisions, ideas inside the profile. They can use words, poetry, Bible verses, quotes, etc., whatever best describes what goes on in their head.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.

Eat: Food is Fuel!

5

FOUNDATION = RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Objective: To understand who God is, the importance of a relationship with Him and how to build it.

 **Opener:** Blind Crossing: Find a partner; you will take turns being blindfolded while your partner leads you with his or her voice. God leads us down the right path if we listen to his voice.

 **Devotion:** Psalm 34:17-18 (NIV) - *“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

Footprints in the Sand Poem

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints; other times there was one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints.

So, I said to the Lord, ‘You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand.

Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?’

The Lord replied, ‘The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand, is when I carried you.’

-Mary Stevenson

1. Has God carried you in the low points in your life?

2. Why does it sometimes feel like you are alone during those times?

Prayer: God, thank you for walking alongside us always. Please help us to realize that you are there in the bad times and well as the good, and when there is only one set of footprints in the sand, that we are safely being held in your arms. Amen.



MAARIFA PLAY
ACT FIVE

Foundation = Relationship with God

Promise, Nana Florence and Truth are eating breakfast. Promise breaks the silence.

PROMISE

I've decided I'm not going to church.

NANA FLORENCE

Why not?

PROMISE

There's no point in going to church to worship a God who doesn't care about me. Who is God really? And why did He make me? I'm now accepting myself and learning to love myself with HIV like you

taught me Truth, but that doesn't mean I have to accept a God who ignores me.

NANA FLORENCE

But we told you sweetie, God is the creator of the whole world. He made us. We are created in His image. You are a child of God.

PROMISE

If I am His daughter, how can he allow me to have HIV?

TRUTH

God created us to worship and praise Him. You are here because He specifically wanted to make you the way you are. You are special to Him. He will provide and care for you as long as you believe in Him and pray for his support and care. This relationship between you and God is the foundation of your life and your identity. Your identity is who you are. HIV is only a virus that you have, it is not who you are.

PROMISE

But I can't see God. How can I have a relationship with Him?

TRUTH

Open your soul. Allow the Holy Spirit to rule over you. You choose to love Him and pray to Him. He is not only your heavenly Father, He is your friend. Treat Him like you would treat your best friend, even better because he is always there for you!

PROMISE

God is my friend?

NANA FLORENCE

Yes, and he will never leave you. Now let's get ready to go to church and talk to our Friend.



Small Group Discussion:

1. Who do you think God is?

2. Do you believe God cares for you, if so why?

3. How do you talk to God?

4. Why is it important to have God as our foundation?

 **Express Yourself:** What does a relationship with God look like? Is it a solid foundation or is the sand shifting beneath your feet? If you could build your foundation with God out of anything what material would you use? Draw or write about your foundation.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.



6 SWORD = INFORMATION

Objective: To understand where to get information about HIV and how to inform others.

Opener: Who Am I? – Try to guess who you represent by the way others treat you. A type of person will be taped on your back by the facilitator when you walk in the room. Your job is to treat others as you would any pastor, nurse, beggar or hawker (as examples). After a few minutes we will sit down and guess out loud who you think you were depending on how people treated you.

Devotion: Isaiah 41:10 (NLT) - *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

What do you fear? Why do you fear it?

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for being with us and strengthening us. Help us not to fear HIV, but to know that you have a plan for our lives and will be with us every step of the way through it. Amen.





MAARIFA PLAY ACT SIX

Sword = Information

Promise and Truth are playing football. Promise runs after the ball and falls. She hurts her knee. Truth rushes to help her but Promise's first reaction is to pull away. She then relaxes and allows him to help her up.

TRUTH

Are you all right?

PROMISE

Eh, Yes, I'm okay. I was just remembering something I wanted to ask you.

TRUTH

What? About football?

PROMISE

No. I heard my friends talking about how you get HIV. They said you can get it from sharing food, playing with or living with someone with HIV.

TRUTH

Wow. Your friends are wrong! You can't get HIV from doing any of those things. The only way to get HIV is through blood, sex or from mother to child during childbirth. So, you can't get HIV from tears, saliva, feces, urine or vomit. You must have all the facts about HIV to be able to live positively and educate others.

PROMISE

So where do I start?

TRUTH

You must find out the truth. If you know the truth about HIV there is nothing and no one to be afraid of. The truth is your sword. You use it to cut through the lies and clear the path for truth.

PROMISE

How do I do that?

TRUTH

You teach others. Educating others about HIV is a matter of telling people the truth. Sometimes you will hear people saying that it is a

judgment from God. This is not true. God doesn't give people HIV. HIV is a natural consequence of someone's sin, whether yours or someone else's.

PROMISE

So what truth is this?

TRUTH

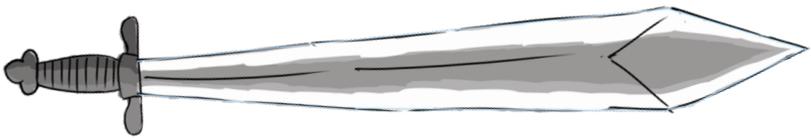
I've told you how you get HIV and how you don't get it. When you hear someone saying something about HIV that is not true you can tell them the truth. If they say ask you how you know, just tell them you asked a doctor because you wanted to know the truth. If people spread rumors about you saying you have HIV, you can respond by asking them how they would feel if someone spread rumors about them. Tell them it is not their place to talk about other people's medical status. Basically, if you do not have something good to say about someone, it's best not to say anything at all.

PROMISE

I'm feeling stronger already! I have a breastplate, a shield, a helmet, a firm foundation and now a sword. I feel ready for whatever comes my way.

TRUTH

Yes, you do, but there is more to the armor. Let's go get a drink of water.



Small Group Discussion:

1. What is HIV? What is AIDS?

2. How is HIV spread?

3. What did you know about HIV before you came to this class? What have you learned in Maarifa that you didn't know before?

4. How do you learn more about HIV? Who or what is the best source of information?

5. Is HIV a punishment from God?

 **Express Yourself:** You are making a sword that can slay any misinformation, lies, rumors or myths about HIV. It can cure people who stigmatize others of their bad behavior. What is your sword made of? Draw a picture or describe it in words.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Share it with your guardian. Talk about it.

7A HEART = FAITHFULNESS/WAIT UNTIL MARRIAGE

For use with adolescents ages 10-14

Objective: To understand our bodies and that our bodies are God's temple. To understand what it means to be faithful and why that is important.

 **Opener:** Autograph Game! This game is a real eye opener!

 **Devotion:** Proverbs 3:3-4 (NIV) - *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.*

What other voices distract you from following God?

What are some benefits of being faithful and only having sex in marriage?

What are some consequences of being unfaithful to God before marriage?

 **Prayer:** Dear God, we confess that we often listen to the voices that are trying to distract us. Please help us to be faithful to you and to follow you above all. Help us save ourselves and our purity for the marriage partner you have for us in the future. Amen.

MAARIFA PLAY ACT SEVEN A

Heart = Faithfulness

Wait Until Marriage (Part 1)

Promise and Truth are sitting next to each other reading. Promise keeps looking up to see what Truth is doing. Truth stops reading to gaze at the sky. He notices Promise peeping at him from the corner of his eye.



TRUTH

Hmm...I can see you have a story for me.

PROMISE

Not a story...a question.

TRUTH

Ah...ask me.

PROMISE

Well...there is a boy in class 7 who said he likes me. He asked me to be his friend.

TRUTH

Well there's nothing wrong with having friends. Have as many friends as you like.

PROMISE

Truth! Stop pretending! You know I don't mean just a friend. You know what I mean.

TRUTH

(Smiling) I'm not sure. Tell me again.

PROMISE

He wants me to be his *(whispers)* girlfriend.

TRUTH

Oh! And what do you think about this?

PROMISE

I don't know. Nana Florence says I'm too young to have a boyfriend.

TRUTH

Well Nana Florence is very wise, and you should listen to her. Trust me, there will be plenty of time for a boyfriend when you are old enough. Don't be in a hurry.

Promise looks disappointed.

TRUTH

That's not the answer you wanted?



PROMISE

Well...I know other girls my age who have boyfriends. Some of them are also...having sex.

TRUTH

Well as I said, having a boyfriend is not a bad thing but it's good when you are older and more mature. Do you understand? Also, having a boyfriend does not mean you must have sex. There is a verse in the Bible that talks about your body being a temple of God.

PROMISE

What does that mean?

Nana Florence walks in but stands still when she hears what the pair is talking about. She listens carefully without them noticing she has arrived.

TRUTH

It means that God made you in his image, God designed sex for marriage, so if you have sex before you get married, you are sinning against God and damaging your temple, your body. Being faithful and being pure of heart, mind and body is the best gift you can give each other on your wedding day.

PROMISE

That sounds like a nice gift.

TRUTH

It is. But being faithful is also a good way to avoid the consequences of sex before marriage. Consequences are the results of doing something, and you can have good or bad results. Have you learned about reproductive systems in school?

PROMISE

We have learnt a bit, but I still have so many questions. We have not been taught about the conse...(Truth assists her to pronounce the word) consequences of having sex before you get married.

TRUTH

You can get pregnant, or get an STD, that's a sexually transmitted disease, some of which are very painful and never go away or you can get HIV and for someone like you or me, we can give someone HIV.

PROMISE

Yuck, I would never want to get anyone sick or to get other sicknesses. What can I do for those bad things not to happen to me?

TRUTH

You can decide not to have sex before you get married.

PROMISE

That's it? That's all I have to do? That doesn't sound too hard.

TRUTH

It's not hard if you ask God for His help.

NANA FLORENCE

Not having sex before you get married also protects your heart. It's all part of the armor. Being faithful is one way you can show your love for God.

Both Truth and Promise are startled, as they hadn't noticed Nana Florence was in the room.

PROMISE

(Smiling) I feel so much better knowing I have you and Truth to talk to. I don't know what I do without you!

TRUTH

Actually, I was about to tell you about building your army.

PROMISE

(Laughs) Why? Am I going to war?

TRUTH

No, your army is the people who support you. Who will stay by your side, but before we do that I want to share my story about how I got HIV.

NANA FLORENCE

Truth, she is still a child. You will tell her later.

TRUTH

But she has begun to ask these questions. She should know so she knows the things we tell her are the truth. She shouldn't make the same mistakes I did.

NANA FLORENCE

That is true. That is why we tell our stories.

 **Small Group Discussion:**

1. What does it mean to be faithful?

2. Does sex before marriage have any good outcome?

3. Is having sex the only way to show you love someone?

4. What do you know about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

 **Express Yourself:** What does it mean to be faithful? What are the characteristics of a faithful person? Describe the person in your life who has been most faithful to you with a drawing or in writing.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.



7B HEART = FAITHFULNESS / WAIT UNTIL MARRIAGE

Use with adolescents ages 15-19

Objective: To understand our bodies and that our bodies are God's temple. To understand what it means to be faithful and why that is important. To understand the responsibility of having sex when infected with HIV. To understand the dynamics of a sexual relationship.

 **Opener:** Autograph game!

 **Devotion:** Proverbs 3:3-4 (NIV) - *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.*

When God created us, He had a plan for each one of us because He loves us and knows us by name. The ultimate plan of God in our lives is to glorify Him in all we do in this life. To achieve this, we must follow His word and teachings. There are other voices that will try to distract us, but we must remain focused on God's Word.

Marriage and sex were created by God and should be honored by all people. Sex has its place in marriage and therefore anyone engaging in sex before or outside of marriage will face the consequences because God is not happy with those who are unfaithful.

What are some advantages to remaining pure before marriage?

What are some consequences to having sex before marriage?

The Bible says if we confess our sins that God is faithful and just to forgive us. He can forgive your past sexual sin and make you whole. He can give you a second chance because He is a God full of mercy and compassion.

 **Prayer:** Dear God, we confess that we often listen to the voices that are trying to distract us. Please help us to be faithful to you and to follow you above all. Help us save ourselves and our purity for the marriage partner you have for us in the future. Amen.



MAARIFA PLAY
ACT SEVEN A
Heart = Faithfulness
Wait Until Marriage (Part 1)

Promise and Truth are sitting next to each other reading. Promise keeps looking up to see what Truth is doing. Truth stops reading to gaze at the sky. He notices Promise peeping at him from the corner of his eye.

TRUTH

Hmm...I can see you have a story for me.

PROMISE

Not a story...a question.

TRUTH

Ah...ask me.

PROMISE

Well...there is a boy in class 7 who said he likes me. He asked me to be his friend.

TRUTH

Well there's nothing wrong with having friends. Have as many friends as you like.

PROMISE

Truth! Stop pretending! You know I don't mean just a friend. You know what I mean.

TRUTH

(Smiling) I'm not sure. Tell me again.

PROMISE

He wants me to be his *(whispers)* girlfriend.

TRUTH

Oh! And what do you think about this?

PROMISE

I don't know. Nana Florence says I'm too young to have a boyfriend.

TRUTH

Well Nana Florence is very wise, and you should listen to her. Trust me, there will be plenty of time for a boyfriend when you are old enough. Don't be in a hurry.

Promise looks disappointed.

TRUTH

That's not the answer you wanted?

PROMISE

Well...I know other girls my age who have boyfriends. Some of them are also...having sex.

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Well as I said, having a boyfriend is not a bad thing but it's good when you are older and more mature. Do you understand? Also, having a boyfriend does not mean you must have sex. There is a verse in the Bible that talks about your body being a temple of God.

PROMISE

What does that mean?

Nana Florence walks in but stands still when she hears what the pair is talking about. She listens carefully without them noticing she has arrived.

TRUTH

It means that God made you in his image, God designed sex for marriage, so if you have sex before you get married, you are sinning against God and damaging your temple, your body. Being faithful and being pure of heart, mind and body is the best gift you can give each other on your wedding day.

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TRUTH

It is. But being faithful is also a good way to avoid the consequences of sex before marriage. Consequences are the results of doing something, and you can have good or bad results. Have you learned about reproductive systems in school?

PROMISE

We have learnt a bit, but I still have so many questions. We have not been taught about the conse...(*Truth assists her to pronounce the word*) consequences of having sex before you get married.

TRUTH

You can get pregnant, or get an STD, that's a sexually transmitted disease, some of which are very painful and never go away or you can get HIV and for someone like you or me, we can give someone HIV.

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TRUTH

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PROMISE

That's it? That's all I have to do? That doesn't sound too hard.

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Both Truth and Promise are startled, as they hadn't noticed Nana Florence was in the room.

PROMISE

(Smiling) I feel so much better knowing I have you and Truth to talk to. I don't know what I do without you!

TRUTH

Actually, I was about to tell you about building your army.

PROMISE

(Laughs) Why? Am I going to war?

TRUTH

No, your army is the people who support you. Who will stay by your side, but before we do that I want to share my story about how I got HIV.

NANA FLORENCE

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TRUTH

But she has begun to ask these questions. She should know so she knows the things we tell her are the truth. She shouldn't make the same mistakes I did.

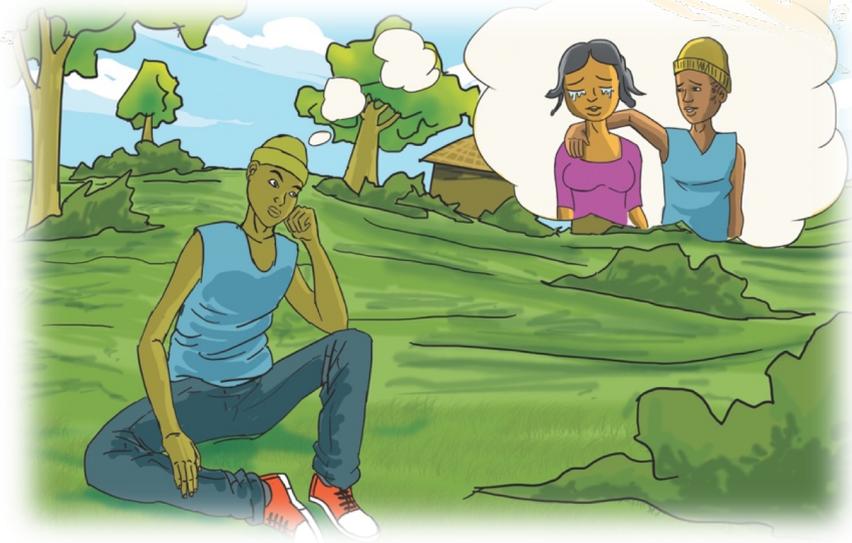
NANA FLORENCE

That is true. That is why we tell our stories.

MAARIFA PLAY ACT SEVEN B

The Flashback - Wait Until Marriage (Part 2)

Truth narrates the story of how he got HIV while also taking part in the action. The role of the Sugar Daddy is played by Nana Florence in a jacket and hat with her back to the audience most of the time. The part of Lily is played by Grace, in a wig and high heels, back also to the audience.



TRUTH

It was the first day of new student orientation at college when I first saw her. Her name was Lily. She was a second year and was assigned to show our group around campus. She was so smart and beautiful that I didn't see much of the campus. I was concentrating on Lily.

Lily walks across the room pointing at different objects while Truth talks.

LILY

These are the Ladies' rooms. Does anyone have a question?

Truth raises his hand.

TRUTH

Do you stay here?

LILY

(Laughs) You're silly. I think you'll enjoy it here. You need a sense of humor to survive.

Lily turns her back to the audience.

TRUTH

At the end of the tour we exchanged numbers. I called her that night and we had lunch the next day. The rest is history. I was a virgin and Lily told me she had only one boyfriend before me. We were in love and decided to go all the way. We were careful at first to use

protection but over the next few months as our relationship progressed we stopped using condoms.

Enter Br. Boss (Nana Florence in a suit). Lily quickly runs to him and starts to dance for him.

TRUTH

Lily never talked about her family and only generally said where she was from. I heard rumors that Lily had a sugar daddy who paid for her college and bought her all the nice clothes that I admired on her. I didn't believe it at first but then I realized that every few weekends she wouldn't be available and refused to tell me where she was.

As he talks Lily moves toward him. Mr. Boss turns his back to the audience. She then talks.

LILY

Stop pestering me about this Truth. Where I go over the weekends is my own business.

Lily turns her back to the audience and freezes.

TRUTH

Lily finally confessed, and we broke up. She was my first love and I was heartbroken. My friend Raymond told me I should get an HIV test and I didn't think it was necessary because I'd only slept with one person. But Raymond kept insisting, so finally I went to a VCT near campus and was tested. I was so shocked when I found out that I was positive. The VCT advised me to call Lily and tell her I was positive, so she could get tested too. I was so angry, I knew she had done this to me, but I called her anyway.

Truth picks up the phone and dials. Lily unfreezes and answers her phone.

TRUTH

We need to talk. Can you meet me for coffee?

LILY

Yes, of course.

The two meet at the center of the stage. Lily listens to him talk and starts to cry.

TRUTH

When I told Lily, she cried and cried and then she agreed to get tested if I would go with her. Lily's test was also positive. Somehow all the anger melted away and I was sad to find out my friend was also HIV positive. I told her that even though we weren't dating anymore, I would still like to be friends and support one another. Luckily she agreed, and we support each other through this.



Small Group Discussion:

1. How likely is this story to be true? Why or why not?

2. What percentage of people do you think stay faithful to God until marriage? What reason do you think they would give for having sex before marriage?

3. Why must you wear a condom when you are HIV positive? Does that include when you are married?

4. What do you know about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

5. What questions do you have about sex? (Use the question box and collect all the questions and then answer them all at once.)

Crowded Bed activity (Instead of Express Yourself): participate as required in the activity that will be explained to you by the facilitators.

Answer questions about the activity:

1. What did you learn from the Crowded Bed activity?
2. How can Bwana and Bibi avoid the risk of being exposed to so many partners?
3. Why is it so difficult to be honest with people we are intimate with?

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.



8

GUARD = IDENTIFY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Objective: To understand why disclosure is important and to whom we should disclose our status. To understand how a support system can improve our lives. Understanding stigma and discrimination and how to overcome them.

 **Opener:** Human knot: Grip with someone opposite you in a circle. Then try to untangle yourselves. The facilitator will explain exactly how to do it.

 **Devotion:** Proverbs 17:17 (The Voice) - *A true friend loves regardless of the situation, and a real brother exists to share the tough times.*

How do we choose friends?

How do we know to whom we can trust and disclose our status?

 **Prayer:** Dear God, remind me always that you are my friend and that I can lean on you. Help me to identify people in my life who will support me and love me for who I am. Amen.

MAARIFA PLAY ACT EIGHT

Guard = Identify Friends and Family

Truth is asleep. Promise bursts into his room and wakes him up

PROMISE

Truth wake up. There's an emergency!

TRUTH

(Startled) What? Where? Who? Promise! What's going on?

PROMISE

It's an emergency! I was outside, and I saw my friend Grace walking to her house with her mum. What do I do?

TRUTH

Ahhh...don't go out?

PROMISE

No. Not that! We have been friends for a long time and next year we are going to the same boarding school. I'm so excited to see her, but I'm not sure if I should tell her I have HIV.

TRUTH

Okay, let me wake up, that's a heavy topic. (*Stretches*) Deciding who to tell about your status is hard. That's what I meant by your army last night – the people who will support you and love you no matter what. Do you think Grace can be part of that army?

PROMISE

I didn't want to tell you at first, but you told me you had HIV, it made it easier to tell you. But she might not have HIV, so I don't know how she will react.

TRUTH

There are many people who have the wrong information about HIV. They are scared of people living with HIV, and because they are afraid they say bad things about people living with HIV. It's called stigma. When you do things to harm a person with HIV, that's called discrimination.

PROMISE

So, you are saying people are unkind because they are scared? That doesn't make a lot of sense.

TRUTH

No, it doesn't, but it's the truth. People often do bad things because they are afraid. They are afraid if they become your friend, then someone will make fun of them for hanging out with you. Or they are just so afraid of HIV because they don't know how to protect themselves from it, so they won't even attempt to be your friend.

PROMISE

What do I do?



TRUTH

You carefully choose your friends. Especially the ones you want to know your status. When you tell someone your status it's called disclosure. You have disclosed your status to me. I'm your cousin and you knew I had HIV and would understand how you feel and what you are going through, but everyone might not react the same way I do. It's good to ask people questions about HIV to find out what they know and if they are likely to stigmatize you or discriminate against you.

Nana Florence calls out to Promise.

NANA FLORENCE

Promise! Grace has come to see you.

PROMISE

I'm coming. (*To Truth*) So you are saying I shouldn't tell her?

TRUTH

No that's not what I mean. It's so important to have friends or family who know your status and love and support you. They will be there when you are feeling depressed or scared. It's also important not to

tell anyone else about your friends who might also be living with HIV. Remember to “Do No Harm” meaning that you won’t do to anyone else what you wouldn’t want done to you. If we are made in God’s image then we won’t gossip or say mean things about other people.

PROMISE

Okay. I think I want to tell her. I think she can be in my army and that she has my back. I only hope it will go all right. So, I protect my front with my breastplate, my shield, my helmet and my sword. I stand on a firm foundation and face my struggles with God’s love in my heart and my army protects my back. I like that.

Nana Florence calls out from off stage.

NANA FLORENCE

Promise! Have you forgotten your guest?

PROMISE

No, I’m coming! *(To Truth)* Okay, let me run! Thanks Truth!

Promise runs out and Truth goes back to sleep.



Small Group Discussion:

1. How do you decide whom to tell about your status?

2. How do you deal with stigma and discrimination?

3. Who is in your army (friends and family) and how do they help you?

Express Yourself: Who are the friends and family who have your back? Why do you trust them? Draw or describe these people.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.



9 C.A.R.E (CONDOMS, ABSTINENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, EXCUSES)

Objective: To learn about the importance of using condoms when you are living with HIV. To understand that abstinence is the most viable solution to not spreading HIV. To understand that you are responsible for living positively and not infecting others. To understand the impact of making excuses for your bad choices.

 **Opener:** Paper Football – this game allows you to explain your feelings anonymously and throw things! Please wait for your facilitator's instructions!

1. Pick one question to answer on your paper (that you will turn into a football):
2. Will you use condoms to protect yourselves and others? Why or Why not?
3. Do you think remaining abstinent until marriage is realistic for you? Why or Why not?
4. Is the possibility of spreading HIV a concern for you? Why or Why not?
5. Have you made excuses for your own irresponsible behavior in the past concerning your HIV status?

Do not write your name on the paper.

Paper Football Discussion after all footballs have been collected and read.

- What did you hear that surprised you?
- How do you feel about what people shared today?
- How did you feel about the way you shared your feelings?
- Does anyone want to comment on or add to what was said?

 **Devotion:** Proverbs 2:6-8 (NLT) *For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.*

1. What is God requiring of our character in Proverbs 2:6-8?

2. How can we demonstrate these traits to Him and to others?

 **Prayer:** Dear God, help us to always be honest people of integrity who act justly with everyone and are faithful to you. Help us to C.A.R. E. about ourselves and others. Amen.

 **MAARIFA PLAY**
ACT NINE

Gloves = C.A.R.E. (Condoms, Abstinence, Responsibility, Excuses)

Promise and Truth are walking together from the wedding. Promise is wearing her red dress.

PROMISE

Oh, Truth wasn't the bride beautiful! She looked like a Hollywood superstar. One day I'll get married and wear a beautiful white dress and people will buy me gifts. *(Stops herself)* Truth, can people like us who have HIV get married? Can we have children?

TRUTH

Yes, you can get married and have children. We just have to do things a bit differently. We have a few more steps that people who are negative don't have to make, but it's not hard.

PROMISE

So not only taking medicine every day. There is something else?

TRUTH

Taking medicine every day isn't easy, but people with all kinds of illness have to take medicine every day. Remember the armor? Well there's a part I haven't told you about. The gloves. You will need to put on gloves that represent how you will care for yourself.

PROMISE

So, what does "putting on gloves" mean?



TRUTH

There are four letters of the alphabet that will help you remember what to do. The letters are C. A. R. E. They stand for condoms, abstinence, responsibility and excuses.

PROMISE

I'm only 13, Truth, why do I need to know about condoms?

TRUTH

You are right, Promise. You don't need to know about condoms now, but it is good for you to be prepared with information, for when you are grown up. It is best to abstain from sex before marriage but even when you are married you will have to use condoms.

PROMISE

Even if I'm married, why? Even if we will both be faithful?

TRUTH

Because you have HIV, there is always a risk that you will infect your husband. If he is negative, he could get HIV; if he is positive, he could get a different type of HIV that is resistant to ARVs. Since you are made in the image of God, and therefore showing His love you will also want to protect them from HIV. So, you will always use condoms.

PROMISE

I understand; so that means abstinence before marriage and condoms after marriage.

TRUTH

Yes, that's what we call being in a responsible relationship. That's one where you do no harm to yourself or the person you love. We've already talked about the consequences to having sex before marriage; do you remember what they are?

PROMISE

How could I forget: getting pregnant, getting an STD and getting HIV!

TRUTH

Many people have lots of excuses for not caring for themselves or their partners. Can you think of any that people might use?

PROMISE

I'm not sure but I always hear some of the older girls saying that everyone is having sex so why shouldn't they? I heard on the radio the other day that boys don't like condoms so that's why they don't use them. Those are the excuses I've heard.

TRUTH

We make excuses to avoid making hard choices and decisions. We make excuses to try to cover up our unhealthy behavior. But if we put on the armor of positive living, we can face tough situations and know how to do the right thing and feel good about doing the right thing. One day you are going to make a beautiful bride Promise, I believe that. There is just one more thing you need to complete your armor...the belt.

Small Group Discussion:

1. Do you have friends who are sexually active? Do they use protection? Why or Why not?

2. Why is abstinence important?

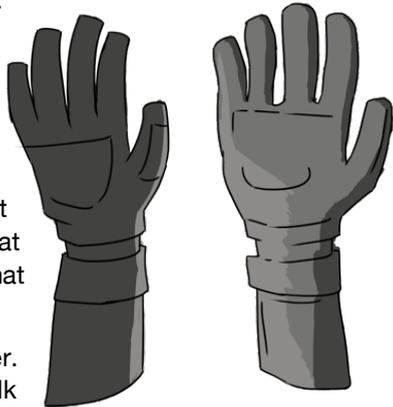
3. Why is it important for people living with HIV to have responsible relationships and live positively?

4. What excuses do we make for not living positively?

5. What are stereotypes? As a youth living with HIV, do you feel as if you are stereotyped?

6. How do we change stereotypes?

 **Express Yourself:** If we handle our relationships with care by protecting ourselves and our friends we are using our gloves (C.A.R.E.) properly. In what area of your life do you especially need to put on your C.A.R.E. gloves? Draw or write about it. What do your gloves for that particular situation look like? What outcome do you want to achieve?



Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.

10

BELT = EMPOWERMENT

Objective: To understand the importance of sharing the knowledge you've gained through Maarifa. To understand the important example that living positively can be to your friends, family and community. To understand that God has a plan for you and has already given you the skills needed to carry it out. To understand God is always with you and will never leave you if and when you choose to speak out about HIV.

 **Opener:** Pass It On! – This is a game you've probably played before – it's kind of like telephone.

 **Devotion:** Joshua 1:9 (NLT) - *This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*”

How will you educate others about HIV?

How will you share what you've learned about God with others?

Do you feel strong and courageous or do you still feel isolated and confused?

If God took you home to heaven tomorrow, would you have done or be doing what He has asked of you?

 **Prayer:** Dear God, empower me to do what you want me to do. Remind me that I am your valuable creation and that my voice and example can help other people. Amen.



MAARIFA PLAY

ACT TEN

Belt = Empowerment

Grace and Promise have just finished packing Promise's bags to go to boarding school.

GRACE

I have to go now. Mum will be angry if I'm late.

PROMISE

It's okay. Thanks for coming to help me pack. I'm happy we are going to the same school.

GRACE

Yes, so am I.

PROMISE

Grace, before you go, can I ask you a question? What do you know about HIV?

GRACE

Before my aunt got sick, I only knew what they taught us in school and the rumors I heard in the village, my aunt was tested at the VCT and was put on ARVs and now she is doing much better.

PROMISE

And you still love your auntie, even though she has HIV?

GRACE

Of course, I do. She has HIV, but she is still the same person.

PROMISE

(Eyes filling up with tears) I have something to tell you, I'm HIV positive too.

GRACE

Oh Promise, I'm so sorry. How can I help you?

PROMISE

My cousin Truth told me about the armor of positive living. It's how you can take care of yourself when you are positive. I'll tell you all about it tomorrow but run home before your mum makes noise.

GRACE

Okay, I promise I won't tell anyone.

PROMISE

Thanks Grace!

After Grace leaves Promise finds Truth and tells him that she disclosed her status to Grace.

TRUTH

You told her?

PROMISE

Yes, she was very understanding.

TRUTH

How do you feel about telling her?

PROMISE

I'm so happy! I was so angry and scared before. Now I have you and Nana Florence and Grace to talk to. And I know all the facts about HIV and I have the tools to live positively so I can help others do so too.

TRUTH

That's your last piece of armor – the belt. It ties all the pieces together. When we have the correct information and God's love within us we are empowered to help others who cannot yet speak out for themselves.

PROMISE

I'm not afraid any more Truth. I'm ready to live positively. My new life looks like this: I've accepted my status. I'm adhering to

treatment, eating a balanced nutritious diet and exercising and I'm going to do my best to make good choices.

PROMISE

I'm going to obey God's word and build a strong relationship with Him, so I will have a firm foundation for my life. I seek information from reliable people and I don't listen to myths or rumors. I will be faithful to the man I choose to spend my life with and wait to have sex until I am married.

PROMISE

I have a support network of Truth, Nana Florence and Grace and I will add more friends and family to this group in time. I will use condoms to protect myself and my husband from HIV, I will abstain from sex until I'm married, I will be responsible in all aspects of my life. I won't make excuses for my behavior if I do something wrong. I now know it's okay to speak out about HIV to help prevent the virus from spreading. I can help end HIV and I'm only 13.

TRUTH

You've put on the armor of positive living Promise!

PROMISE

Anybody can put on the armor and help end HIV.

They look at the audience ...and point to them and say in unison.

PROMISE AND TRUTH TOGETHER

You can too!

Small Group Discussion:

1. If you were Promise, would you have disclosed your status to Grace? Why or Why not?



2. Do you have friends you would like to disclose to but are afraid of being rejected? Does Promise's story help you in any way?

3. Does Promise's new "positive living life" appeal to you? How can you start living positively today?

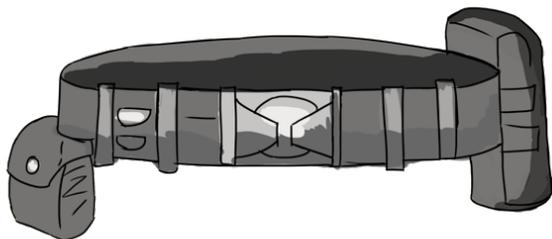
4. Who are the people in your life who need to know the facts about HIV? How can you make them understand?

5. Who are the people in your life who don't yet know God? How can you lead them to Him?

 **Express Yourself:** Imagine your own suit of positive living armor. Imagine putting it on. What does it feel like? What can you do now that you have your armor on that you could not do before?

Make a postcard. Decorate it and write a message you would like the world to know. For example, "Save Lives. Get Tested for HIV Today! "HIV is a Virus. Not a Curse!" Make as many postcards as you'd like. Give them out or simply tell people the facts about HIV.

Take away: Take it home. Read it over. Give it to your guardian to read. Talk about it.



CONCLUSION

So now you've put on the Armor of Positive Living. How does it feel? Do you feel stronger, more capable, less afraid? Do you have the tools you need to speak out about HIV? Is your foundation solid?

Maarifa was not just meant to be a support group for adolescents, it was meant to be a vehicle by which individuals, churches and communities transform the stigma surrounding HIV into a spirit of hope, acceptance and unity to stop the spread of HIV.

The Maarifa Play is one way to educate your school, church or community about HIV. Don't shelve the Maarifa booklet when you've attended all 10 meetings, use it to educate others. HIV spreads because of stigma and silence. Stigma is myths and misunderstandings and fear.

Maarifa gives you the tools to speak out against stigma. Where there is dialogue there is the opportunity for transformation. Speaking out about the truth about HIV can help lessen stigma and make more people comfortable with learning their status and living positively.

You are not alone, God is always with you...go get your army of friends and family to back you up!

Don't wait for someone else to speak out first. They are waiting for you!

