

A.C. Green's

Game PLAN

Everybody

has one life –

Time to develop

YOUR

Game
PLAN

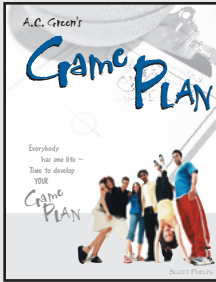


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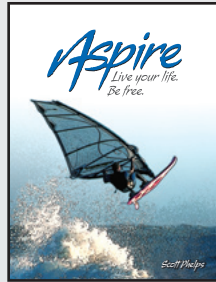
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Game Plan

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A.C. Green's

Game PLAN



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Introduction

In 1985, the year A.C. Green was drafted into the NBA, Project Reality began promoting abstinence until marriage as the safest, healthiest lifestyle for teens. As Project Reality has continued to expand its abstinence programs nationally, A.C. Green has also been an outspoken proponent of the benefits of abstinence among America's youth. In the spring of 2000, A.C. Green and Project Reality began to develop *Game Plan* as a means of furthering the message of the benefits of abstinence to students in schools across America. In January of 2009, Project Reality merged with the Abstinence & Marriage Education Partnership in Chicago. The purpose of A&M is to ensure that every teenager in the country has the opportunity to hear a clearly reasoned, positive presentation of the benefits of abstinence until marriage and instruction on preparing for a healthy future marriage. It is our hope resources such as *Game Plan* will further that end.

Game Plan is a highly effective tool for helping teens make wise, responsible decisions for their future by choosing abstinence until marriage. Students are taught that their choices today can have significant implications for their future, particularly on whether and to what extent they will accomplish their goals and dreams in life.

After decades of promoting birth control among teens, America now has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the industrialized world. Clearly a better message for teens is needed. While abstinence is the safest, healthiest choice for teens and the only sure way to prevent physical risks such as pregnancy and STDs, *Game Plan* is additionally concerned for the emotional, mental, and social health of the student. As premarital sex among teens is often associated with other related risk factors such as alcohol, drug and tobacco use, violence, and truancy, helping teens choose abstinence has numerous benefits for teens and society.

Although it is often claimed that approximately half of all high school students are sexually active, the fact is that many of these teens do not want to be. Most teens surveyed regret becoming sexually active,¹ and among sexually active teen girls ages 15-19, 1 in 3 said they were either forced or pressured into sex.² Among girls under the age of thirteen who are labeled as "sexually active," 3 out of 4 were either forced or pressured.² In light of these statistics, the best message that we can give to teens is that "regardless of what has already happened in your life you are still valuable and special, and you can start over again."

Through our work at A&M Partnership, we know first hand that students respond well to a clearly reasoned, positive presentation of the benefits of abstinence. Having presented the principles and concepts of *Game Plan* to thousands of students in middle schools and high schools in cities, suburbs and in rural communities, we know that it works. We have read letters from hundreds of students and have listened to their enthusiastic responses. Supporting our conclusions is a national study showing that nearly all students surveyed (93%) believe that teens should be given a "strong message" that they should abstain from sex.³ At the same time, teachers and nurses surveyed nationally say that abstinence is the "most important message" they can give to their students.⁴ Today, more and more teens who have been sexually active are choosing abstinence.⁵

Game Plan is written in a simple question-and-answer format in order to help students discover for themselves that abstinence until marriage is the safest, healthiest lifestyle. Our goal is to assist you in helping teens make good decisions which will help them achieve academic and athletic excellence, accomplish their goals and dreams, and become beneficial and productive members of society.

It is our privilege to have had the opportunity to work with A.C. Green and Project Reality to produce this unique, sports-themed, positive approach to abstinence education. We trust that, along with a growing number of educators across the country, you will find the message of abstinence to be of immense benefit to your students.

Scott Phelps
Chicago, 2009

Chapter 1

I Got Game!

HIGHLIGHTS

Everybody has one life to live.
Where do you want to go, and how are you going to get there?
What choices and decisions will you
have to make in order to accomplish your goals?
It's time to think about your Game Plan.

Parent Links for each chapter may be used to involve parents, promoting continued discussion at home on the concepts of Game Plan.

They are located at the end of the session for each chapter in the student workbook. Have students take books home to discuss questions with their parents. If desired, have parents initial assigned pages to show that they have reviewed the material with their children.

Parent Link

Questions for parents:

What were some of your goals and dreams when you were my age? (Page 7)

How do you think abstinence could help teens in reaching their future goals? (Page 10)

Coach's Playbook

Objective: To help students think about how the choices they make will affect their future, positively and negatively, and to assist students in considering their goals for the future.

Key plays:

- Introduce A.C. Green as a role model.
- Help students brainstorm future goals and dreams.
- Introduce and define abstinence as a positive and healthy choice in achieving goals and dreams.

Introduce A.C. Green. Have students discuss his accomplishments. What does it mean that he is the "Ironman"? What does A.C.'s NBA record for most consecutive games say about him? What sets A.C. Green apart from some of the other players on his team? (Abstinence). Why do you think this is important to A.C.?

I Got Game!

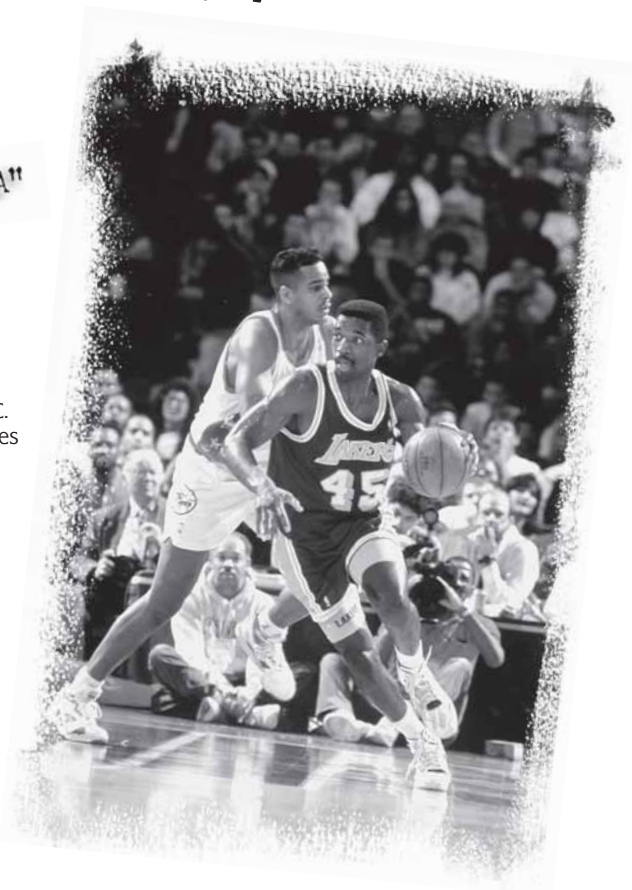
A.C. Green

"Ironman of the NBA"

When A.C. Green was in high school, he played basketball at Benson High School in Oregon. While he hoped that he would someday play in the NBA, his hope was just a dream. Upon his graduation from Oregon State University, A.C. was drafted in the first round by the Los Angeles Lakers and went on to win three NBA championships with the team.

A.C. Green holds the NBA and ABA records for most games played in a row at 1,192 – that's why they call him the *Ironman*. He's known for his commitment to the team and for his endurance.

But that's not all that sets A.C. apart. A.C. attributes much of his success to a decision that he made as a teenager and has kept to this day.



"I made a decision... I resolved not to be with a woman until I married.

My convictions were obvious when I joined the Lakers but not proven, so a few players taunted, teased, tempted, and tried me to see if I'd hold up to my standards to save sex for marriage. 'Hey wait 'til you see what's waiting for you,' they said... 'How much do you want to bet A.C. can't stay away from so and so?' one said. 'I'll bet twenty dollars he can't,' said another. Still another piped up with, 'Count me in for a hundred dollars.' 'You won't last two months in the NBA,' one of the guys told me. Some even threatened to set me up with women that they knew would pressure me. 'Let's see how strong you really are,' they said.

Eventually they got tired of the game and started believing in me."

ACTIVITY: Where Is Your Focus?

Materials Needed: A Yardstick

Choose a student to stand in front of the class. Ask the student to balance a yardstick vertically on the palm of his or her hand, saying that to do so, he or she will need to focus on the point where it meets the palm of the hand. (This will be nearly impossible to do.)

Then ask the student to try it again, focusing instead on the top of the yard stick. (This should work.)

Say: "If we only focus on the immediate, we often fail to accomplish our goals. On the other hand, if we look at the bigger picture and focus instead on our future, we are more likely to accomplish the goals we set for ourselves. This is what this new book we're studying is all about. It is about looking to the future and making good decisions that will help you accomplish your goals and dreams in life."

Long before joining the NBA, A.C. Green was focused on doing something positive with his life. He wanted either to play basketball or to be a sports broadcaster. Even though he could not be sure he would make the NBA, A.C. made a game plan for his life and he stayed with it.

What are some of your goals for the future?

Give one word descriptions of some of the things that you would like to see in your life 10 years from now. Write these goals in the clouds.

Good Job Nice House College Degree Children
 Marriage Family Dog Happy Healthy
 Successful Friends Nice Car Money

Name three possible career goals. What would you like to do?

- Computer Engineering Construction Government
- Teacher Business Entertainment Travel Agent
- Doctor Trucking

CHALKBOARD:

Say: "All of us have goals and dreams for our lives. We may not think about them often, but we have pictures in our minds of what we would like our lives to look like in the future. What are some one-word descriptions that describe your picture of what you want your life to look like?"

Write students' goals and dreams on the board.

- Look for both abstract and concrete goals. If students respond with abstract goals (happiness, success, fulfillment) include these but ask for concrete goals as well (house, car, good job, etc.) and vice versa.
- Once the goals are on the board, walk through the questions on the next page and complete the chalkboard with the two lists added as shown.



Getting There...

1. Now take a look at the cloud on the previous page which represents your dreams and at your list of three possible career goals.

• Will these dreams and goals be easy for you to accomplish? Yes No

• What will it take for you to reach these goals? List three things you will have to do to accomplish your goals.

- I will have to study hard and do well in school.
- I will have to make good decisions about how I spend my time and who I spend my time with.
- I will have to resist pressure from others to do things that will derail my plans for the future.

• When should you begin planning to achieve your future goals? Today

As a teenager, there are a few decisions that will have a significant impact on your future. Good decisions now make it easier for you to accomplish your goals, and bad decisions make it more difficult for you to accomplish your goals.

2. Describe some activities that could make it difficult for you to accomplish your goals:

Being lazy, not thinking about making good decisions, hanging out with the wrong group, worrying all the time about what other people think about me, trying to impress people, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, having sex

Say: "What are some feelings that Tom might experience as a result of his decision?"

Tom may experience anger toward his friends, regret, and disappointment.



TOM'S STORY

Tom is now 27 years old. He's been in a wheelchair since he was 15. Tom wasn't driving the car, but he was riding in a car with a friend who was driving while drunk. For the rest of his life, Tom will be in a wheelchair needing daily assistance.

Tom thought he was okay because he wasn't drinking. The problem is that his friend was drinking – and driving.

He often thinks about how different his life would be if only he had resisted his friends and chosen not to ride in the car that day.



CHALKBOARD – Step Two:

See instructions on the previous page.

1. What should Tom have done when his friends told him to come along for the ride?
 He should have told them he wasn't going to ride with them. Even if he was pressured, he should have made a decision and stuck to it regardless of what his friends might think or say.

- What would you do?

I would choose to not ride in a car with a person who was drinking or using other drugs.

- How different would Tom's life be if he had resisted his friends and made a good decision that day?

He would not be in a wheelchair and would have a very different life. He would have more choices and opportunities and would be more likely to accomplish some of his original goals and dreams.

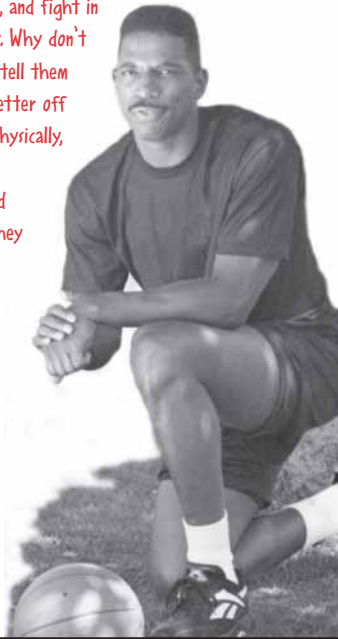
- How different might your life be if you allow yourself to be pressured in a negative way by others?

If I am always following others, I am not going to end up where I want to go. Like Tom, I could end up in a very bad situation for which I am not prepared. I could get in an accident or could get hurt in some other way by doing things that are not wise.

2. When Tom was 15, he had goals and dreams for his life. Do you think he can still accomplish some of those dreams and goals? What will it take?

Yes he can, but it will be much more difficult. He has been set back by his injury and will need to work hard to overcome the difficulties created by his injury. If he has help from his parents and friends, he will have a better chance of recovering from these difficulties and will still be able to accomplish some of his goals.

"It's great to let people know their options, but the options given today are faulty. Young people are told when they're old enough to smoke, drink, drive, vote, go to school, and fight in the military. Why don't we at least tell them how much better off they'll be, physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially, if they wait until marriage for sex."



CHALKBOARD: Draw train tracks.

Say: "Every train has a destination. Sometimes the train doesn't reach its destination because a collision knocks it off its tracks. There are a handful of decisions that you will make as a teen that have the ability to alter the course of your life – to knock you off your tracks."

Draw the three arrows as you say: "It could be alcohol, it could be drugs, it could be sex. Tom made one bad decision and it made a huge difference in his life – he got derailed and didn't end up where he wanted to go. Getting to your destination and accomplishing your goals and dreams means avoiding activities that could knock you off your tracks. Good decisions now make it easier for you to accomplish your goals, and bad decisions make it more difficult for you to accomplish your goals."



The point here is to help students think through their impressions about abstinence at the outset of the course. Some students may have negative perceptions of abstinence. These often turn positive by the end of the curriculum as they realize that abstinence has significant advantages for their future and that it is the safest, healthiest lifestyle they can choose.

This question is to help students realize that this decision is in their hands. You are helping them think about the decisions that they will make. Students are often much more receptive to abstinence when they realize that you are giving them the tools to make good decisions in every area of their lives.

You might say something like: "I can't make your decision but I'm confident that if I give you good information, you will be able to make good decisions."

Emphasize this key point.

Considering Abstinence As Part Of Your Game Plan

Abstinence: "to abstain"

To abstain means to voluntarily choose not to do something.¹ When referring to sex, it means voluntarily choosing not to engage in sexual activity until marriage. Sexual activity refers to any type of genital contact or sexual stimulation including, but not limited to, sexual intercourse.² Abstinence is the only 100% effective protection from the possible physical, emotional, mental, and social consequences of sex before marriage. Abstinence is the safest and healthiest lifestyle.

1. What do you think about abstinence? Does it seem positive or negative to you? Positive Negative
 - How might sexual abstinence make it easier for you to accomplish your future goals?

No worry about pregnancy or diseases or how this will affect my relationship with my parents. I won't have the emotional problems or mental stress that come with sexual activity. I can better focus on my school work and play sports without worrying about all the consequences of sexual activity. Making a good decision about saving sex for marriage will help me make good decisions in other areas as well.

2. Who will make the decision about whether or not you will be abstinent until marriage?

I will.

3. Who will benefit from the good choices that you make for yourself?

I will make the decision and I will benefit from the positive effects of that decision.

Abstinence doesn't mean: Sex is bad.

Abstinence means: Sex is good.

Save it, protect it, and preserve it so that you can enjoy it in a marriage relationship.

Sex
is Good!

CHALKBOARD:

Say: "We need to understand why it's important for us to be talking about sex. Some people think that sex is just about 'getting,' but it's also about giving." Write: Sex = Giving myself to someone else. "We talk about giving away our virginity, don't we? If you give away your virginity, can you get it back? Sex is about giving yourself to another person. Inside marriage, sex is a giving between two people who commit to each other for a lifetime. Outside marriage, sex may seem like giving but what you end up feeling is used and hurt."

"That's why we're talking about abstinence. Abstinence isn't about giving, but saving." Write Abstinence = Saving myself for marriage. "Rather than giving yourself to just anybody, abstinence says, 'I'm saving myself for someone who loves me enough to make a lifelong commitment to me in marriage.'"

"Abstinence isn't just for people who have never had sex. Even if you've been sexually active, you can still make a good decision to save yourself until marriage. Yesterday is gone, but what matters is today and the choices I will make for my future."

STEVE AND TINA

Steve and Tina had been dating for about six months and had just graduated from high school. As their relationship developed and they were preparing to go to college, Tina began to pressure Steve for sex. He had been abstinent and was planning to save sex for marriage. One night when they were alone, she told him that if he truly loved her he would prove his love to her by having sex with her. He refused and left the house. Their relationship ended shortly afterward.

Do you think Steve made a good decision? Yes No

Two months later Steve learned that Tina was already pregnant on that night when she was trying to get him to have sex with her. Tina became a single mother at age 18.



1. Why do you think Tina was trying to get Steve to have sex with her? What was her real concern?

Her real concern was her pregnancy. She only wanted to have sex with Steve because she wanted to make Steve think that he was the father.

- Do you think that Tina's former boyfriend may have pressured her for sex? What are some feelings Tina might be experiencing now?

Yes. She was probably very concerned about what might happen to her and her baby. She might have been wondering what people would think and whether the true father would help her in any way. She was in a difficult situation.

- If Steve had had sex with Tina, do you think it would have affected his future? Yes No How?

Yes, it certainly would have affected him. He would not have known that it wasn't his baby. It is uncertain if he ever would have known whether or not it was his baby. His plans would have to change to be able to care for, and pay for, the baby.

2. What would you do if a boyfriend or girlfriend were pressuring you to have sex?

I would say, "No thanks. I'm not interested in all of the problems that come with it."

ACTIVITY:
Sex Is Like Fire!

Work through this illustration with the students.

Questions for discussion:
Sex in Context

What is the purpose of fire?

- In a fireplace, fire is beautiful and gives warmth to a home.
- Outside the fireplace, it can cause serious harm.

What about sex?

- In a marriage relationship, sex can be beautiful.
- Outside marriage, it could cause serious harm.

Abstinence is protecting yourself from the pain that often accompanies sex outside marriage. Abstinence is about preserving sex so that it can be enjoyed in an intimate marriage relationship.

Note that this is a true story.

Sex = GIVING myself to someone else

Abstinence = SAVING myself for marriage

Note:

The abstinence definition should always include marriage. There are many reasons why this is important as will become clear throughout this book. Briefly stated: If teens wait until "later" but not until "marriage," they are still subject to all the risk factors associated with sex outside marriage. The only difference is that those risk factors will come "later." The purpose of this curriculum is to emphasize that the safest, healthiest lifestyle for teens is abstinence until marriage. Studies and statistics show that married people have more satisfying and fulfilling sexual intimacy than non-married couples. See Chapter 7 for more information about marriage.

- What if students aren't interested in marriage? Point out to students that it is wise to keep their options open. Our ideas often change as we mature. Also, even if a person doesn't marry, abstinence is still the safest, healthiest lifestyle.

ACTIVITY:
Balloon Goal Bounce

Materials Needed: 5 Balloons (various colors, two yellow), Black permanent marker

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the importance of focusing on positive future goals and avoiding negative decisions, distractions, and high-risk behaviors like sexual activity and the use of alcohol and other drugs.

Prior to the start of this activity, ensure that you have a total of 5 fully inflated balloons of various colors, including two yellow balloons.

First, ask for two volunteers to come to the front of the classroom. Ask the first volunteer to share one future goal (e.g. to be a doctor, go to college, to have a family). Write the goal on one yellow balloon in a black permanent marker. Hand the first volunteer this balloon and ask him or her to keep this goal off the ground by bouncing the balloon in the air with his or her hands for the remainder of the activity.

Say: "In order to keep the balloon—the goal—from falling, the first volunteer must focus on the goal, expend energy, and avoid distractions and decisions that can take focus away from the goal."

Then, ask the second volunteer to share one future goal and write this goal on the remaining yellow balloon. Hand the second volunteer the balloon and ask him or her to keep this goal off the ground by bouncing it in the air with his or her hands.

Say: "Both volunteers, like each of you, have the ability to achieve their goals through the choices they make. In this activity, the first volunteer will represent someone who is committed to abstinence. The second volunteer will represent someone who is influenced by media messages and peer pressure. For example, sometimes young people may feel pressured to have a dating relationship."

Write "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" on another balloon and toss it to the second volunteer. Ask him or her to keep all of the balloons that he or she is given in the air for the remainder of the activity.

Say: "The second volunteer is trying to juggle reaching his or her future goal as well as maintaining a dating relationship. While balancing the two may be more difficult, by practicing abstinence and setting boundaries in the relationship, the student may be able to effectively manage both."

STEVE AND KAREN

Six years later, Steve met his future wife Karen in college. Steve and Karen were both abstinent, and shortly after they graduated from college, they were married. Steve and Karen have now been married for over 17 years and have four children. Steve is a teacher, and Karen enjoys caring for the children. Steve and Karen never have to worry about sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy. Sex is a normal, natural, and exciting part of their lives together.

1. For Steve and Karen, what were the benefits of saving sex for marriage?

They didn't have to worry about STDs, unwanted pregnancy, or emotional issues. They were able to experience sex in a good and positive way.

- Do you think that Steve and Karen regret being abstinent until marriage? Yes No
Why or why not?

There was nothing to regret. They were happy that they waited for each other.

- How did abstinence help Steve and Karen accomplish their game plans?

They were able to stay focused, finish high school, finish college, and begin their careers without having lots of other problems and complications.

2. How could saving sex for marriage benefit you now and in the future and help you accomplish your game plan?

It can help me make good decisions and stay on track. It can help me avoid the pitfalls that will make it difficult for me later on. It can help me resist negative pressures that could make it difficult to accomplish my goals.

Thinking It Over...

Developing a Game Plan for your life can help you reach your future goals and dreams. Making good decisions now and choosing abstinence can make your Game Plan a lot easier to accomplish.

Parent
Link

For Home Discussion:

What were some of your goals and dreams when you were my age? (Page 7)

How do you think abstinence could help teens in reaching their future goals? (Page 10)

Say: "Sometimes pressure also exists for students to engage in alcohol or other drug use." Write "Drugs" on a different balloon and toss this to the second volunteer.

Say: "Drug use also impairs judgement, and in a dating relationship it can influence a person's choice to engage in sexual activity." On another balloon, write the word "Sex" and toss it to the second volunteer as well. Encourage the student to try to keep all balloons in the air. When the yellow goal balloon falls to the ground, ask both volunteers to stop bouncing the balloons.

Ask the students, "Where is the first volunteer's goal? Where is the second volunteer's goal?" The first volunteer should have the goal in his or her hand. The second volunteer's goal should be on the ground. Pick the second volunteer's goal balloon off of the ground.

Say: "Just like in this activity, if young people begin to focus on distractions like sex and the use of alcohol and other drugs, their future goals can fall by the wayside."

Pop the balloon. Hold the first volunteer's goal balloon in one hand and the popped balloon in the other.

Explain to the students: "If left on the ground long enough, a goal can end up exactly like a popped balloon. The choices that you make today can dramatically impact your abilities to reach your future goals. You have the choice to decide which type of future you want to have."