

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grow: Financial Planning for Life



OVERVIEW

This document provides discussion questions to augment the Grow: Financial Planning for Life course experience. For in depth information around course structure and implementation, please see the Grow: Financial Planning for Life Curriculum Guide. For additional classroom instructional material, please see course lesson plans.

KEY COURSE TAKEAWAYS

This course uses evidence-based strategies to inform and empower students in the following ways:

Knowledge: *Students will be able to...*

- Describe the importance of using a plan to achieve financial goals.
- Define short-term and long-term financial planning goals.
- Explain the financial benefits of saving for retirement early.
- Identify future financial goals.
- Identify different types of budgeting methods.
- Describe a plan for setting aside emergency savings.
- Explain smart money habits and techniques.
- Demonstrate how to manage money from a paycheck.
- Explain how owning your own home can be a financial investment.
- Describe different retirement plan options.
- Identify good versus bad debt and explain the differences between each type of debt.
- Describe ways to get back on track if savings goals get off course.
- Develop a plan to balance expenses while saving.
- Identify current financial goals.

DISCUSSION FOR LESSON: Planning for Your Future

Lesson Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with basic knowledge about the importance of setting financial goals both now and in the future. Topics such as long-term financial goals and thinking about life goals like early retirement will be discussed.

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to...*

- Describe the importance of using a plan to achieve financial goals.
- Define short-term and long-term financial planning goals.

- Explain the financial benefits of saving for retirement early.
- Identify future financial goals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Lesson:

Q1: What is your opinion of saving money?

Q2: Do you have things that you would like to purchase or do with your money? Do you have savings goals?

Q3: If you could meet any financial goal in the future, what would you save up for?

Q1-Q3 Suggested Activity: Think-Pair-Share

Procedure: Students take time to think about the question. They find a partner to discuss their initial ideas with, and then share their conclusions.

After Lesson:

Q4: What type of saver are you? This will be based on the profiles shared in the course:

- Saving Newbie
- Sometime Saver
- Super Saver

Q5: Why is it important to have savings goals?

Q6: Explain the difference between short-, mid-, and long-term savings goals and why it's important to have all three.

Q7: How does compound interest work? How will it help you meet your long-term goals? Will it help you meet your short-term goals? Why or why not?

Q4 Suggested Activity: This question can be an open discussion about savings. Students can share with whole class or consider having them write in a reflective journal that they will add to as part of the next discussion activity.

Q5-Q7 Suggested Activity: Board Rotation and Summary

Materials:

- Sticky notes
- Poster Paper

Procedure: Posters are set up around the classroom with one question written on each. Ask the students each question and have them record their answer on a sticky note. Then have students post their answers on the corresponding poster. Once all questions are complete, assign a small group to each poster to summarize student answers then wrap up this activity with a summary brief out of each poster.

DISCUSSION FOR LESSON: Smart Money Habits

Lesson Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to concepts of budgeting, the importance of emergency savings, how to create smart money habits for both themselves and their families, and what to do when they collect a paycheck.

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to...*

- Identify different types of budgeting methods.
- Describe a plan for setting aside emergency savings.
- Explain smart money habits and techniques.

- Demonstrate how to manage money from a paycheck.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Lesson:

Q1: What types of purchases that you make are considered needs and which ones are wants?

Q2: Do you prioritize your purchases? How do you generally prioritize them?

Q3: What are some things to keep in mind as you plan a budget for your money?

Q1-Q3 Suggested Activity: Stop and Jot

Procedure: Students write a response to each question individually. Remind them that you will not collect their writing but they may share it.

After Lesson:

Q4: List out a number of purchases that you would like to make over the next couple years. Complete the prioritization exercise.

Q5: What are the pros and cons of:

- The 50-30-20 method of budgeting.
- The Category Method of budgeting.

Q6: Discuss what it means to “pay yourself first.” What does that mean in terms of savings, debt, and investments?

Q4 Suggested Activity: Prioritization Exercise

Materials:

- Markers
- Sticky notes

Procedure: Students write or illustrate on sticky notes items that they like to spend their money on, or would like to be able to purchase. One item per sticky note. They then categorize and rank items that should be prioritized (needs) versus those that are wants. They then discuss why they ranked their spending choices in that order.

Q5 Suggested Activity: Mini Debate

Procedure: Have students create a grid of the pros and cons for the 50-30-20 method and the Category method of budgeting. Once they have filled out this grid, group or pair students up and have them debate which method they think is best or at least best for them.

DISCUSSION FOR LESSON: Growing Wealth

Lesson Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to growing their money to achieve goals for their future. Topics such as owning homes as an investment and saving for retirement will be discussed as well as the difference between good and bad debt.

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to...*

- Explain how owning your own home can be a financial investment.
- Describe different retirement plan options.
- Identify good versus bad debt and explain the differences between each type of debt.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Lesson:

Q1: How can debt be a good thing?

Q2: How can debt be a bad thing?

Q1-Q2 Suggested Activity: Anchor Chart

Procedure: Students help to make an anchor chart that reflects their thoughts and ideas about the topic. They will reflect on this chart after completing the learning.

After Lesson:

Q3: How would you:

- convince a person that buying a home can be a good investment even if it is taking on debt?
- convince someone that they should be paying off their credit card bills every month?
- convince someone that starting a retirement savings account as soon as possible is a great idea?

Q4: Discuss what credit history and credit reports are and why it is important to maintain a good credit rating.

Q5: Discuss various retirement savings accounts and which ones students should be aware of as they pertain to the type of work they are interested in (401(k), 403(b), Pension, IRA, Roth IRA).

Q3-Q5 Suggested Activity: Pitch Presentation

Materials:

- Markers
- Poster paper

Procedure: Students partner up and create a poster for either:

- Purchasing a home as an investment
- Paying off credit cards every month
- Starting retirement savings as soon as possible.

As each group presents, students in the audience ask questions and discuss whether or not they have made a convincing argument.

After each pair presents, wrap up by summarizing the main points of the pitch discussions.

DISCUSSION FOR LESSON: Balancing Expenses and Savings

Lesson Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to show students the value of balancing costs while saving for the future. Topics like managing monthly expenses while saving for the future will be discussed.

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to...*

- Describe ways to get back on track if savings goals get off course.
- Develop a plan to balance expenses while saving.
- Identify current financial goals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Lesson:

Q1: How would you prepare financially for emergencies that might happen in life?

Q1-Q2 Suggested Activity: Think-Pair-Share

Procedure: Students take time to think about the question. They find a partner to discuss their

Q2: How do you plan to get the things you want out of life?

initial ideas with, and then share their conclusions.

After Lesson:

Q3: If you were to decide to get a car in 6 months...

- What does it mean to “live within your means”?
- What strategies can you use to best keep track of your money and “know where your cash goes?”
- What is an emergency savings fund and how should you create one?
- How can SMART goals help you reach your financial dreams?

Q3 Suggested Activity: Conversions

Materials:

- Poster paper
- Markers

Procedure: Students are divided into groups of 4-6 to discuss the first question. Then two group members break off and join another group to discuss the second question. A new set of two group members who haven't moved break off and join another group to discuss the third question. That process repeats one last time for the fourth question. Have the students help you create an anchor chart to summarize their learning.