STD Fact Cards:

1. Every 8 seconds, a teenager gets a sexually transmitted disease.
2. There are 15 million new cases of STDs in America each year. Most of these occur in people under 25.
3. One of three sexually active unmarried persons gets an STD by age 24.
4. Only the common cold is more common than sexually transmitted disease.
5. Until the mid-1970s, there were only two main STDs: syphilis and gonorrhea. Now there are more than 25.
6. The United States has the highest STD rate of any country in the industrialized world.
7. Most of the time when you have an STD, you have no visible symptoms.
8. According to the Alan Gutmacher Institute, while condom use has increased most among teens, the spread of STDs has also increased most among teens.
9. The most common STD is human papilloma virus—5.5 million cases per year.
10. Untreated, human papilloma virus can cause cervical cancer, which kills nearly 5,000 women per year—more than are killed by AIDS.
11. Cervical cancer does not occur in girls who remain virgins before marriage.
12. An estimated 45-60 million Americans have genital herpes.
13. Bacterial STDs can be treated and cured, but viral STDs, such as HIV/AIDS and herpes, have no cure.
14. Health problems caused by STDs are more frequent and more severe in girls than boys.
15. The younger a girl is, the greater her chance of being infected by chlamydia, which can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease.
16. One infection of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease carries a 25% chance of becoming infertile; a second infection, a 50% chance; a third infection, a 75% chance.
17. Most STDs can be passed from a mother to her baby before, during, or immediately after birth.
18. One out of 5 sexually active unmarried men and women has genital herpes, which cannot be cured.
19. STDs can be transmitted by any kind of genital contact, including oral sex.
20. Doctors have reported a significant rise in oral herpes among teens.
21. A person with one STD is at greater risk of getting another STD at the same time.
22. Using the birth control pill may increase a girl’s chance of being infected by several STDs at the same time.
23. In one study, three-fourths of men who knew they had STDs said they had sex without telling their partners about their STDs.
24. A 2001 report by the National Institutes for Health reported that condoms provide no proven protection against six of the eight leading STDs.
25. STDs are usually transmitted through sex outside of marriage because unmarried partners don’t know what the other person might be carrying.

—Thomas Lickona, Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (Respect and Responsibility) www.cortland.edu/character; see also www.medinstitute.org.