

GrowUpSmart

Storybook for Boys



MINISTRY OF HEALTH



**Institute for
Reproductive Health**
Georgetown University

This storybook has been adapted from the flipbook from the *Gender Roles, Equality and Transformations (GREAT) Project's Scalable Toolkit* and original work in northern Uganda with collaborating partners Pathfinder International and Save the Children with support from U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. OAA-10-00073. All illustrations are original work by Jean de Dieu Munyurangabo.

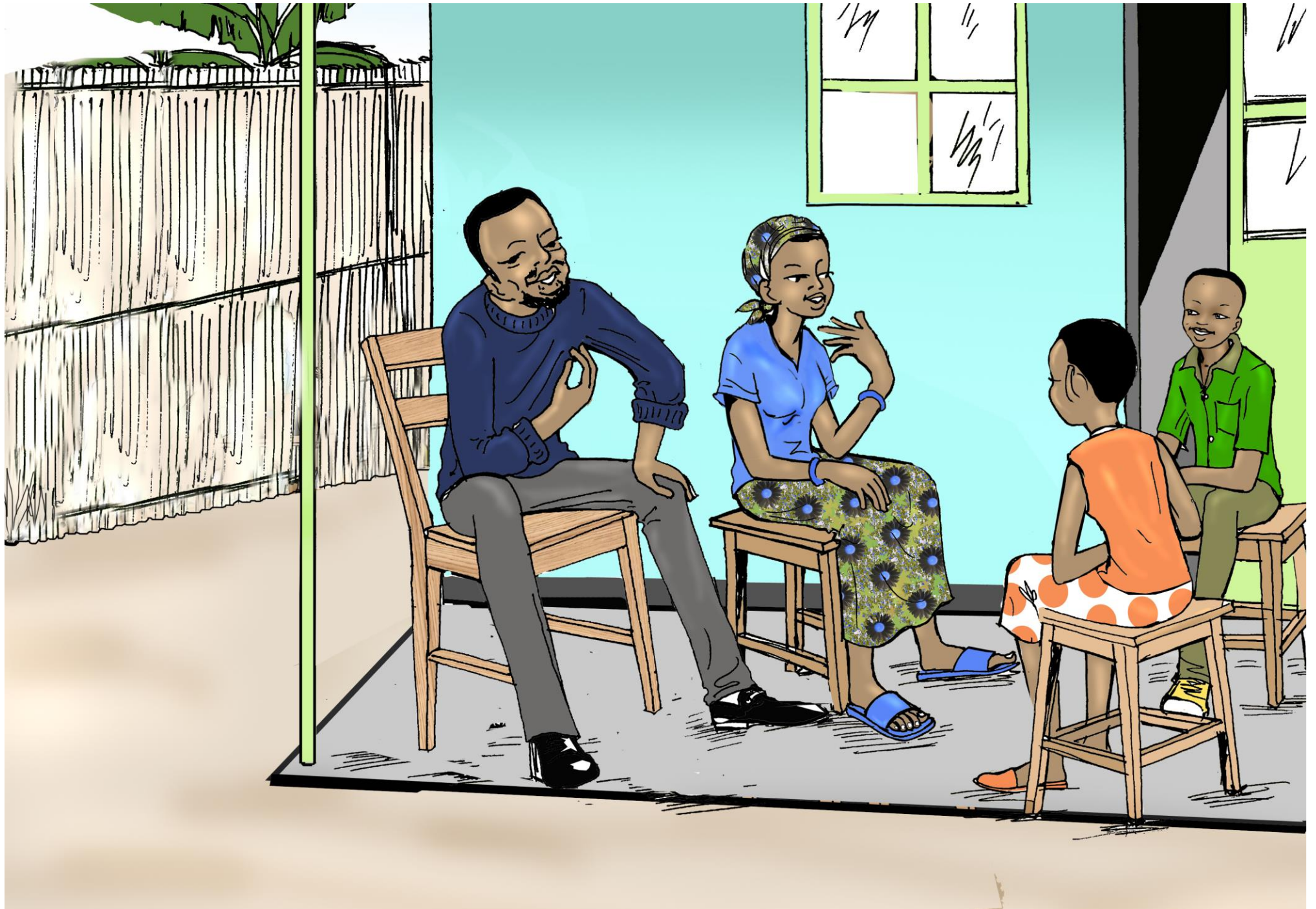


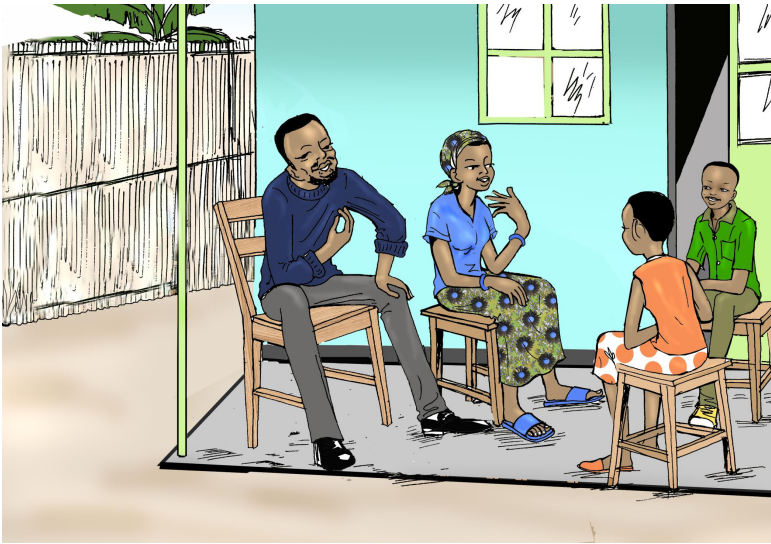
Background in brief for storytellers

The beginning of adolescence, between ages 10 to 14, is a time of changes in the body and mind. Younger adolescents sometimes feel confused and need to seek guidance from trusted adults. Parents, aunts and uncles, older siblings and leaders, such as club matrons and teachers, have an important role in guiding younger adolescents to grow up healthy. This set of stories is intended to help trusted adults talk with younger adolescents about what happens during puberty, decisions they may face and how to navigate their place in our community. The stories centre on advice from the boy's father.

Instructions for use by storytellers

1. This storybook is intended for use with groups of boys between the ages of 10 and 14. It can be read to a group with boys and girls of the same age. It helps boys and girls become knowledgeable and develop mutual understanding and respect for each other. Boys can also take the storybook home and read it with a parent, older sibling or another trusted adult.
2. The storybook can be used in any setting, including school clubs, religious groups, community meetings, or at home.
3. There are three short stories. Each story is expected to take up to 30 minutes. The storyteller can choose to tell one story or more than one story in the same session.
4. The storybook can be held by the storyteller, placed on the ground or set on a table. The left side of each page is a picture to show the adolescents. The right side of the page has the text to be read by the storyteller. It also contains suggested questions to ask and discuss.
5. Begin by showing the image to the adolescents and asking them to describe and explain what they see in the image.
6. It is recommended that the story be told in a dramatic fashion, using character's voices and actions. The storyteller can choose to read the story and questions as written, or add local experiences and questions. Real experiences and local details about the differences between boys and girls can help to spark reflection and discussion with the younger adolescents.
7. A list of common questions and answers about puberty is found at the back of the storybook. This list can assist you to answer questions that adolescents may ask.





This is a picture of a family from a town called Nyagatovu.

The boy is Gasore. He is 13 years old and he is at home with his parents and his sister. Each day he wakes up early to dig in the garden before going to school. At school, Gasore does homework. He likes to play football with friends.

Gasore's favourite time is at the Imbuga-ngali when he hears stories from elders. He feels so proud to learn these stories about his culture.

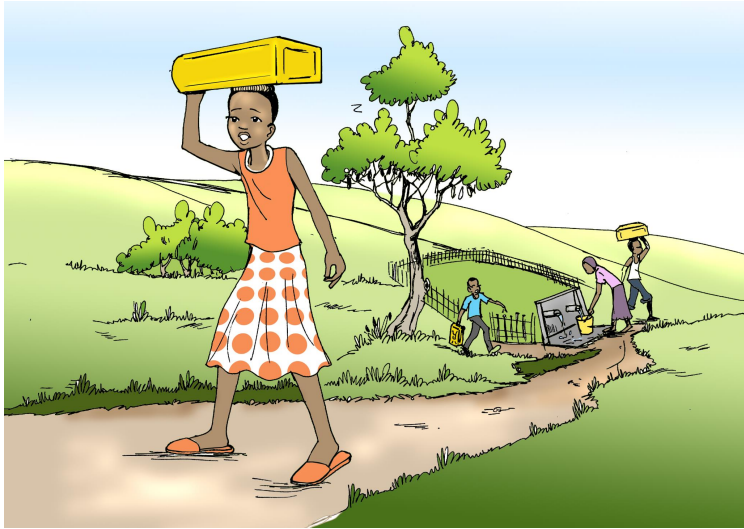
Questions to discuss:

- What special activities do you enjoy with your family, such as farming, time at Mbuga-ngalior dances?

Story 1



Story 1 Growing Up



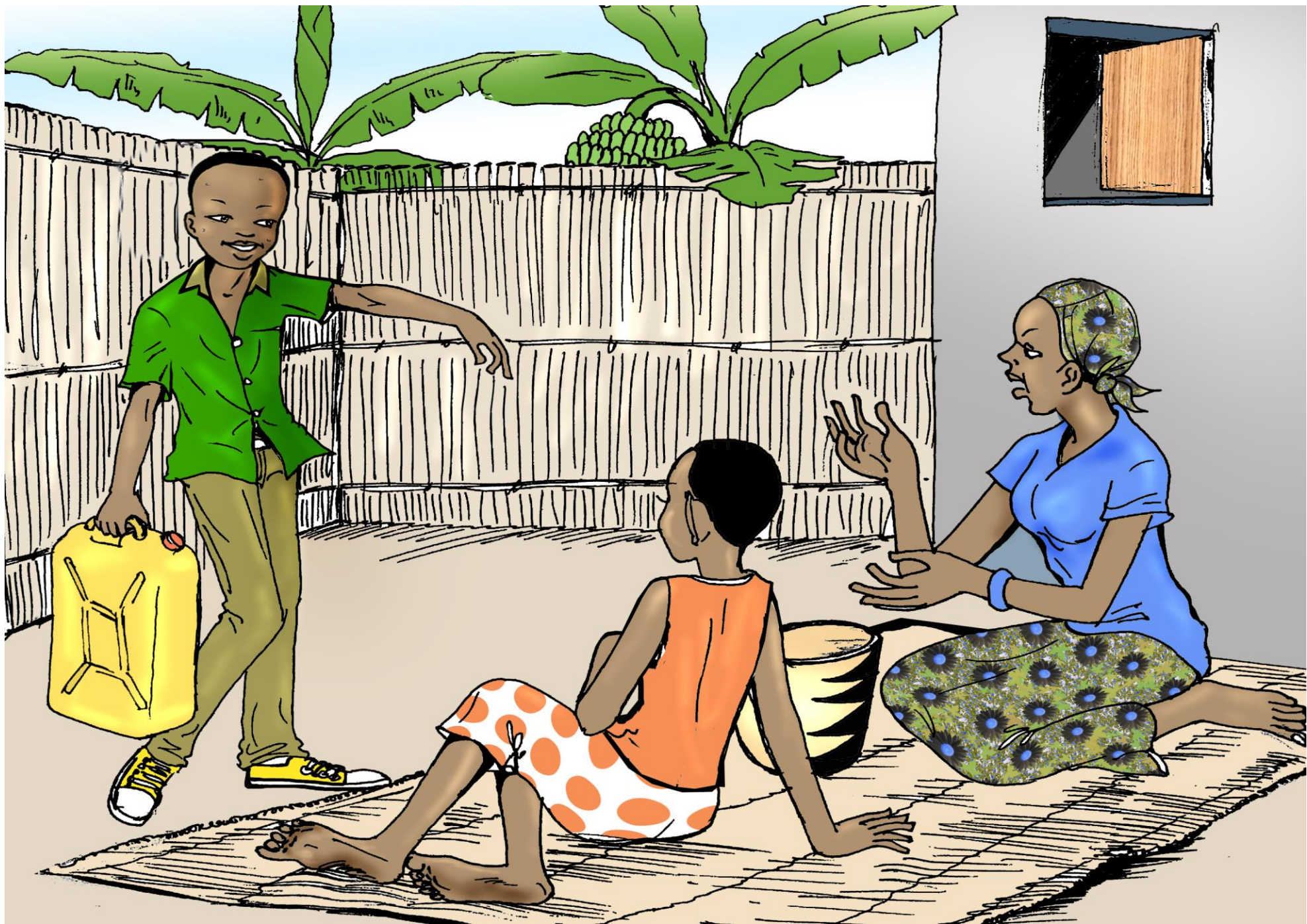
When he is older, Gasore's family expects him to get married, have children and provide for his family. Gasore wants to become a teacher. Gasore thinks this future is possible if he listens to his parents and works hard.

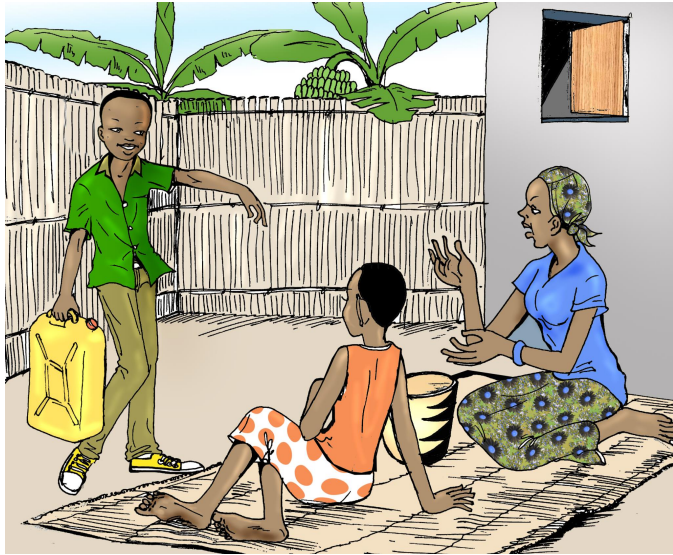
Gasore's sister is 11. Sometimes Gasore wonders if she can also achieve her hopes for the future. When they were young, Gasore and his sister did nearly the same things. They attended school, did their chores and played. They often laughed and talked together. But these days, his sister has more work at home while he still has time for playing and studying.

Gasore loves his sister. He wants to help her perform well in school so they both have bright futures, but he fears what his friends would say. It seems like there is an invisible wall that separates him and his sister and keeps him from helping out. This wall cannot be seen, but it is there. Gasore can feel it. Gasore wonders, "If I break the wall to help my sister, will I be seen as a man when I grow up?"

Questions to discuss:

- What chores do you usually do?
- Are chores the same or different for girls and boys?
- Do you think this is fair? Why?



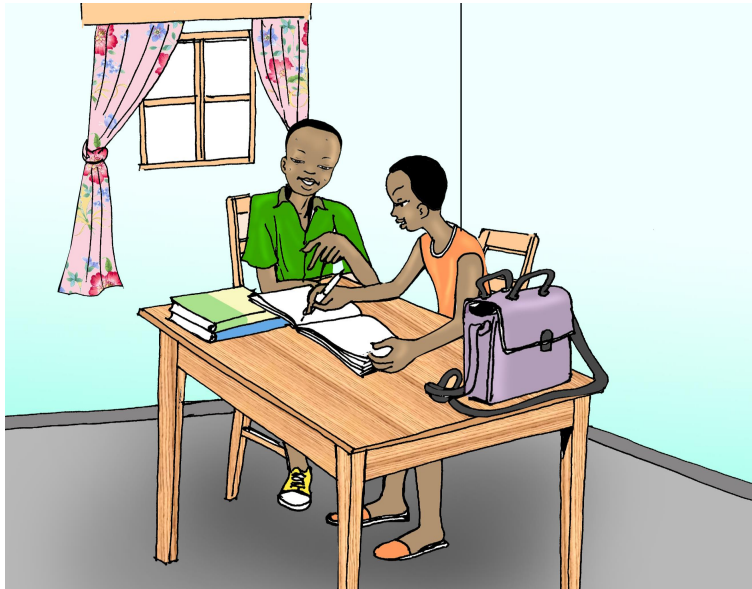


Gasore sees that his sister's many chores leave her little time for school work. He hears that it can be dangerous for girls to walk at night. Gasore wants to be a great brother. So, that evening, Gasore decides to fetch water for his sister. First, Gasore tells his father. "Father, I intend to fetch the water this evening. This will protect my sister and allow her time to revise lessons. We are both children of this family." His father agrees.

Gasore fills a jerry can with water at the borehole. Although the can is heavy, Gasore is strong and manages to carry it without spilling. Along the way home, some boys tease him. One boy laughs. Another boy says, "Hey Gasore. Are you a girl now?" Gasore replies "Look how strong I am!"

Gasore still thinks about his friends words. But when he reaches home, his mother and sister look so happy. That night, he feels a little different. Something inside his heart is a bit stronger.

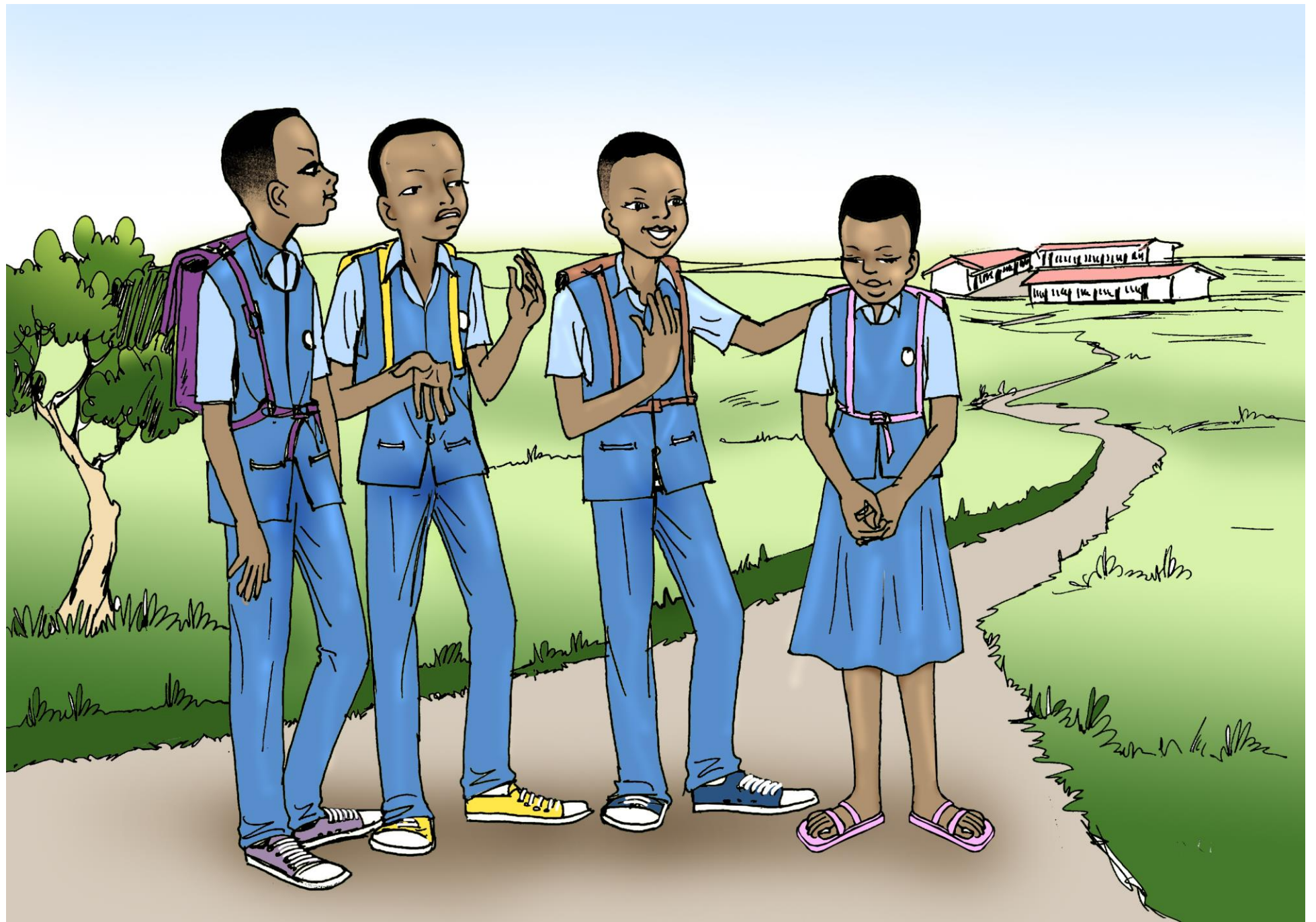




Another day, when Gasore returns from playing football, he sees that his sister is struggling with school work so he stops to help her. He goes inside and tells his parents that he wants his sister to complete school. He promises to help her keep up in school so she can finish. Later that evening, he feels even better in his heart. What is happening, he wonders?

Questions to discuss:

- Could you help your sister with chores and schoolwork?
- What could you do?
- How would your sister feel if you helped her?





The next day, Gasore walks home from school with friends. They meet a girl along the way. Gasore's friend likes this girl.

His friend asks the girl to be his girlfriend and go to a quiet place together. She does not say anything. Another boy says, "She is keeping quiet. That means she likes you!" So the friend tries to force the girl to go with him. Gasore thinks, "What should I do?"

Gasore steps in, and says, "Friend, silence does not mean that she accepts. You need to show respect to earn respect. Here is a tip I learned from my father. Get to know each other first. Then she may like you, too." The girl thanks Gasore and leaves quickly. Gasore's friend says, "Gasore, you seem different these days. You are more confident and grown up. Tell us your secret!"

Questions to discuss:

- What do you think is Gasore's secret to inner strength?
- Could you help friends learn how to respect girls? How?



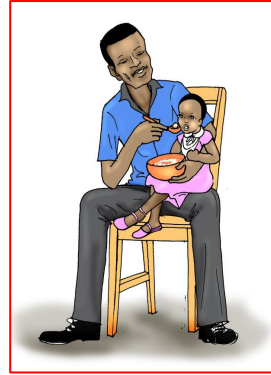


Gasore takes the chance to talk to his father at their home.

Gasore asks, “Father, recently I have helped my sister by fetching water in the evening. Sometimes I also help her to collect firewood, and revise school work. Now she has time to revise her lessons. Also she is not so tired when doing her school work. She told me that I am a great brother. These days I feel stronger in my heart. Can you tell me why?”

After hearing what happened, his father says, “You have broken the invisible wall, Gasore. You have broken it by doing what you know is fair, no matter what others think. Each time you do this, you gain inner strength. I am proud of you!” Gasore is so surprised!





Gasore wants to go tell his friends the secret. But his father continues giving advice, so Gasore tries to remember everything to tell his friends later.

Gasore's father shares, "Let me explain to you about men and women. You can see that there are some physical differences in our bodies between girls and boys. For example, men's parts and women's parts are different. These differences are fixed by nature.

But if you look around, you will also notice that boys and girls usually do different things and wear different clothes. But these differences are not fixed by nature. These are taught to us by society.

Women who do unexpected things, such as own land or lead meetings, are still women. Men who do unexpected things, such as care for children or cook, are still men. Because roles are learned, we can change what we want to make our life better.





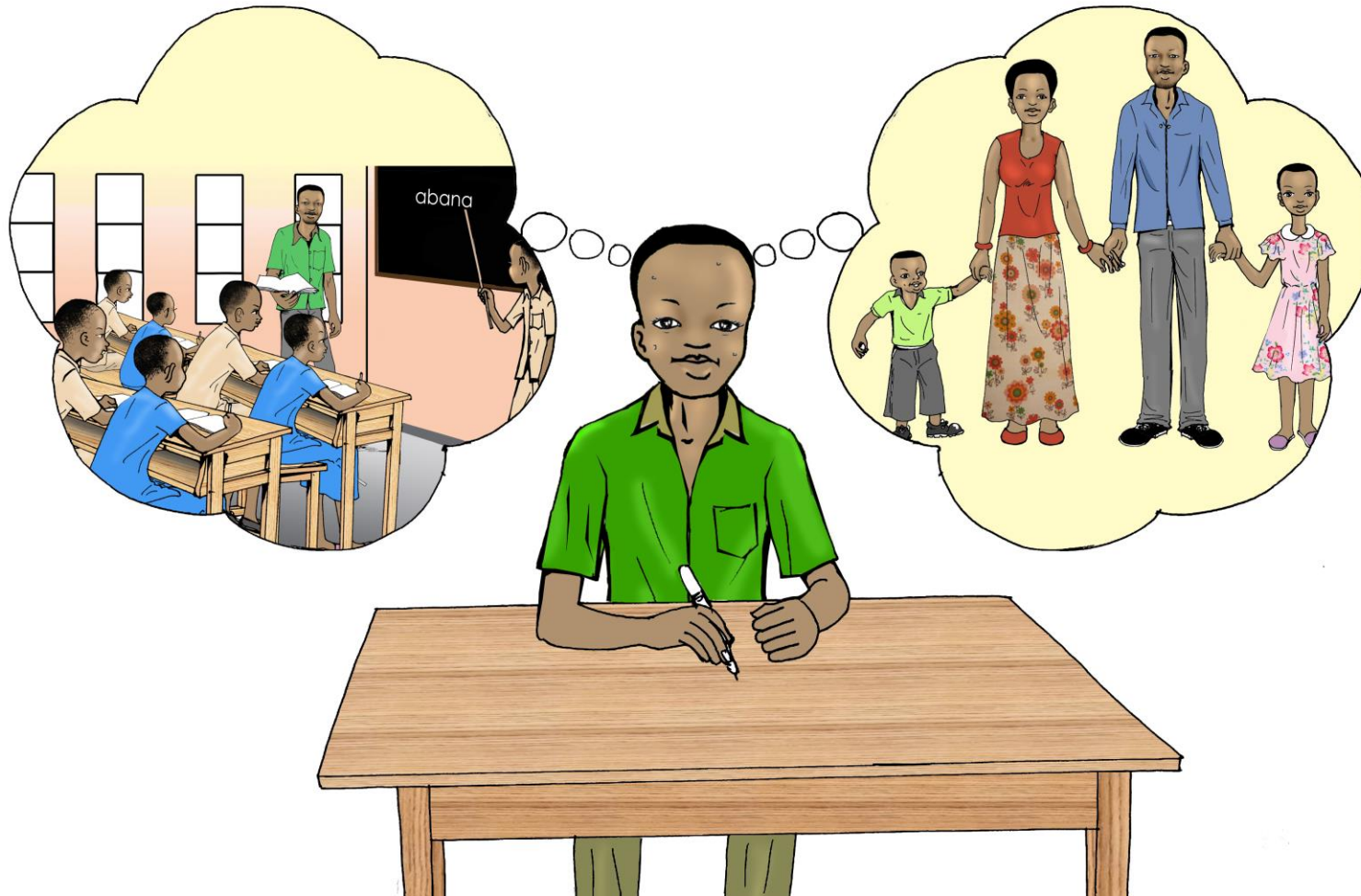
Gasore's father continues, "My son, being a boy is just different than being a girl. It is not better, or worse. We boys and men have challenges just like girls and women have challenges.

In fact, we are born nearly the same. Boys and girls have healthy bodies and intelligent minds. Boys and girls have blood and bones. Boys and girls have hopes for their futures. Boys and girls deserve the same opportunities to become their best selves.

This is why we must break down the invisible walls. Start with small, simple steps, just as you did, and never stop. Stay true to yourself. In this way, you will be strong and respected."

Questions to discuss:

- What is a difference between boys and girls? Is this fixed by nature or taught?
- How will you break invisible walls between boys and girls? Why is this important to try?





Gasore's father says, "My son, let me also hear about your hopes for the future. Share your hopes with adults so we can help you achieve them. So tell me, what you would like to be in the future?"

"I want to be respected. I want to be a good husband and father with a peaceful home. I want to become a teacher," says Gasore.

"My son," says Gasore's father, "I am glad to know. This is the time of life to make a plan, work hard and continue to show respect for everyone."

Questions to discuss:

- What kind of person do you want to be in the future?
- What kind of work do you want to do in the future?
- Who will you talk to about your hopes?
- What did you learn from Gasore's story?

Story 2



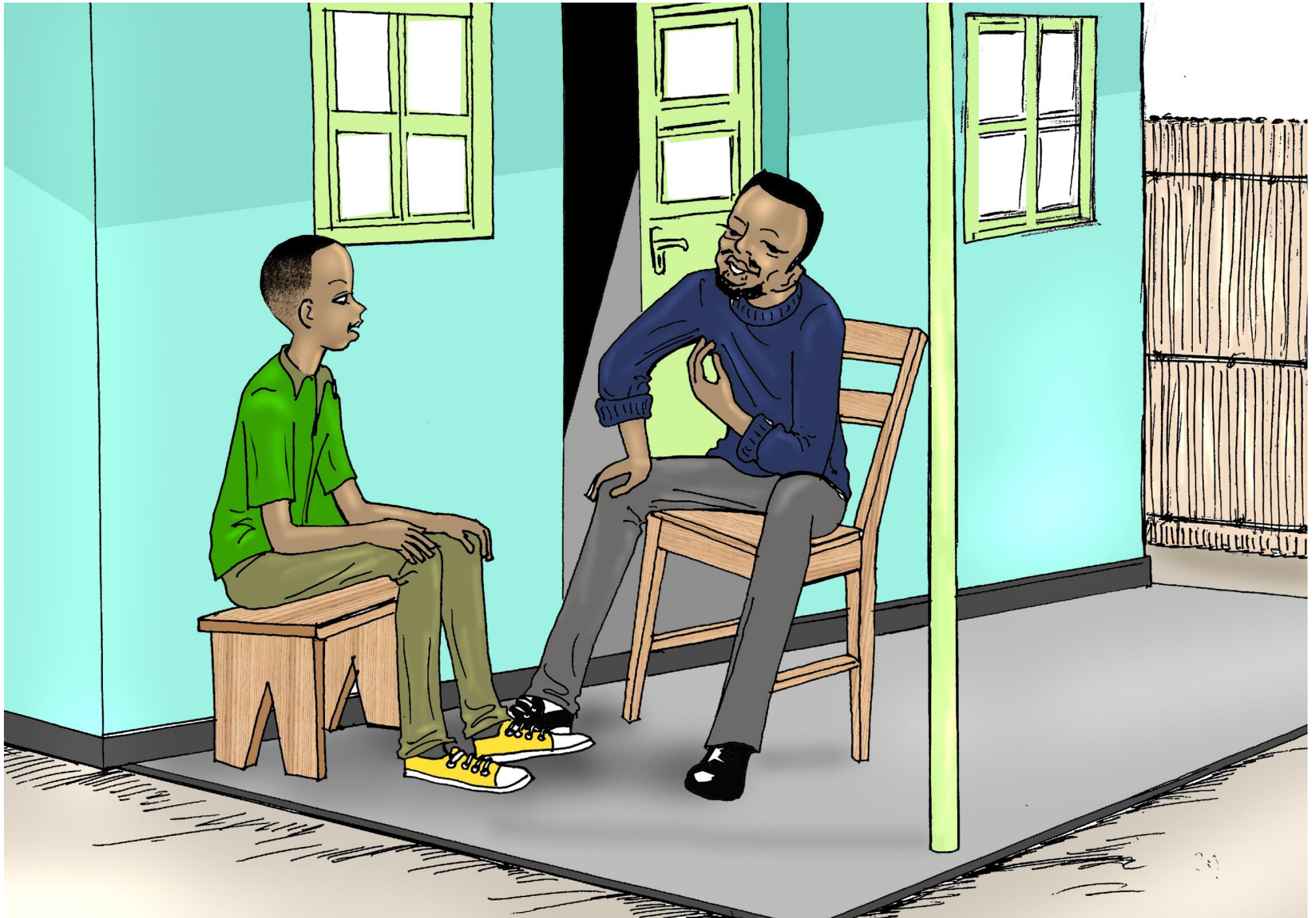
Story 2 Puberty



One morning, Gasore wakes up to find that his shorts and sleeping area are wet. It is a sticky wetness, and does not smell like urine. He is so confused! “Am I sick?” Gasore worries all day.

Questions to discuss:

- What do you think happened to Gasore?
- Do you know anyone who has experienced this?



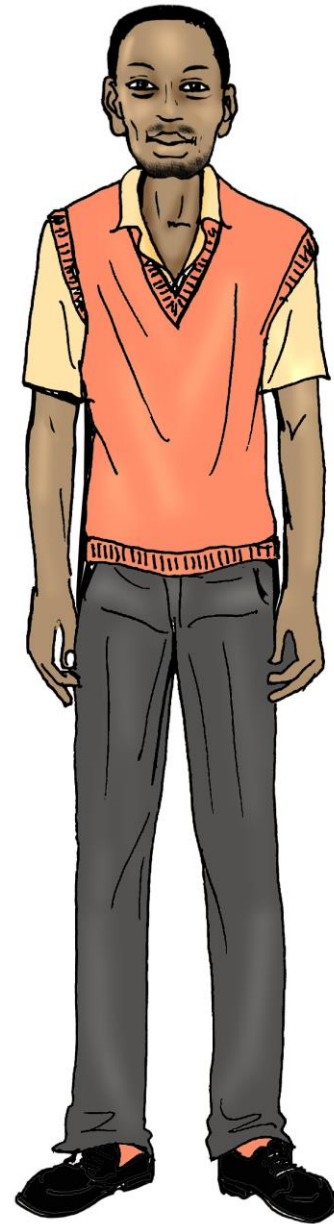
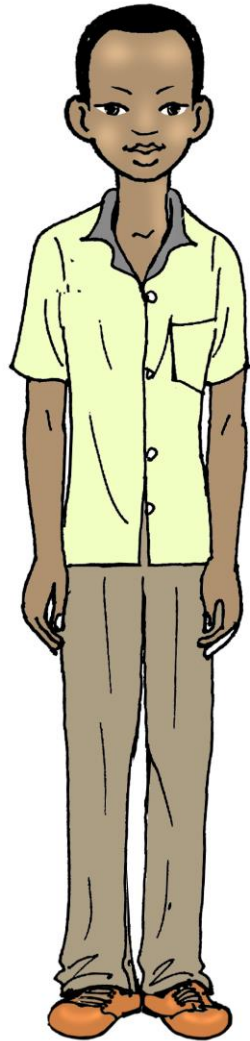


At the Imbuga-ngali, that evening, he tells his father what happened. Gasore's Uncle says, "My son, do not fear. I will tell you about this, and everything about growing up. I remember going through all of this myself."

What you experienced last night is called a "wet dream". Boys and men often have this while asleep. It is possible to wake up when the fluid comes out (ejaculation), or to realize it after you wake up. This is normal and cannot be controlled.

You are now in a special time of life called puberty. This is a time when your body and mind are growing and changing. Puberty can start at different times for different children. Some boys start as early as age 10, while others start by age 15. Body and mind changes continue until you are 21 years old. My son, you have started a long journey to becoming an adult."

Gasore feels relieved!





Gasore now feels brave to tell his father about another concern. The other day in class, I tried to answer the teacher's question. But my voice suddenly sounded strange and I felt like I had to cough. Father, what is happening to me?" asks Gasore.

His father laughs. "You should have seen me when I was younger! I had the hairiest legs in my class before anyone else developed! So, do not worry. Voice changes are just one change you will experience.

Also, your man parts will get bigger. You will grow hair under your arms, on your face and chest, and like me, on your legs. You will grow taller, develop muscles and sweat more.

You will also get erections. This is when the man part gets hard. Erections can happen at night or during the day. Just like wet dreams, erections cannot be controlled. If you wait, the erection will go down on its own. You do not have to have sex or even ejaculate. This will not cause you any harm.

Body changes are completely normal. They are signs that your body is growing and changing. Do not be embarrassed. Be proud of your strong and healthy body and mind!"

Questions to discuss:

- What are some body changes that boys experience during puberty?
- Have you experienced any of these changes yet?
- Do you think that having wet dreams or other body changes means that a boy is ready to have sex?
- Why?





Gasore asks, “Father, my friends said that these days I get big-headed sometimes.

Like when a boy is cheating on the football pitch. I want to fix the game whereas I used to let it go. You know, Father, I was not like that before. Why do I do that?” Gasore’s father reassures him. “Just keep your cool. Don’t worry, you may feel different sometimes during this time of changes. You may feel like others do not understand you. You may feel happy one minute and sad the next. Be patient with yourself. You will become used to this new you.”

Questions to discuss:

- What emotional changes do adolescents experience during puberty?
- Have you experienced any of these changes yet?

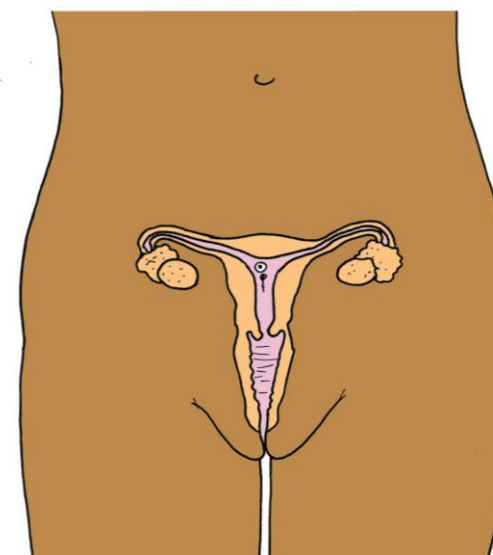
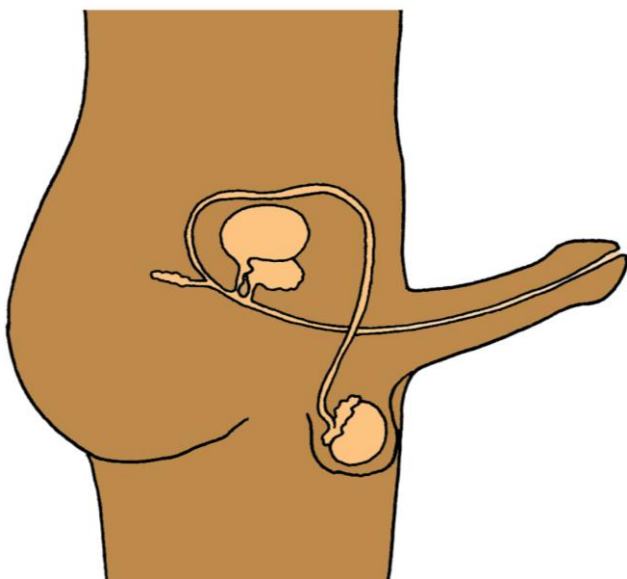
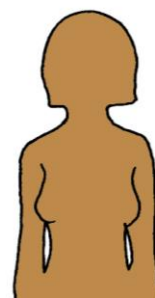
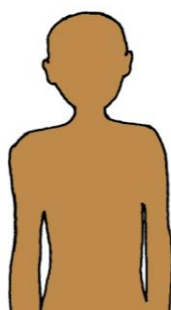


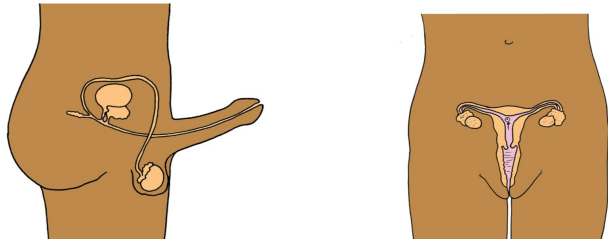
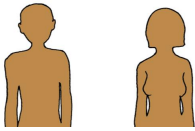


Gasore's father continues. "My son, you may also feel romantic or sexual attraction toward girls. But acting on such feelings is a big responsibility, and you should wait until you are older.

Now let me tell you about girl's body changes so that you are knowledgeable about girls and boys. Compared to boys, girls experience some similar and some different changes. Like boys, girls get taller and grow body hair under their arms and around their woman parts. Girls also sweat more, and may get pimples.

Unlike boys, girls grow breasts and hips, and start monthly bleeding. Monthly bleeding can start between the ages of 9 to 14 years. Bleeding happens each month for 3 to 7 days. Although girls can get pregnant once monthly bleeding starts, their bodies and minds are not ready for pregnancy. Like boys, they need to grow and develop during puberty as they prepare to become adults.





"Gasore, now I will teach you how babies are made. Hold up your right hand and wave it back and forward like a worm. This represents the sperm in men. Hold up your other hand like a fist. This hand represents the egg inside the woman. Now repeat after me:

"I was conceived when my parents had sex and the sperm from my father (wave the right hand like a worm or sperm) and the egg from my mother (fist the left hand) came together (join your hands) and created me. Sperm is in the fluid that comes out of a boy's hard man parts. Boys are not born with sperm. Boys begin to produce sperm during puberty and continue their entire life. When a boy's man parts gets hard and releases sperm, if he has sex with a girl he can cause her to become pregnant.

A boy can get a girl pregnant any time they have sexual relations without using a condom or another method of family planning.

Being able to get a girl pregnant does not mean that you are ready for sex or pregnancy. When you have finished growing, and are older you will be better prepared to be a father and have a family of your own.

So, Gasore, remember this well for your future, it is best to wait until you are older to have sex. Later on, when you are in a relationship and you both agree that it is time, visit a health worker. Learn and discuss your options for planning when to get pregnant and have children and how to prevent the infections a person can get from having sex. There are methods available to help a couple plan for pregnancy, avoid unintended pregnancy and avoid infections, like HIV. Will you do this for me and for your family?"

Gasore agrees.





With his father's advice, Gasore is not worried about body changes now. He is ready to share his experiences with other children.

The next day while playing football, Gasore sees that his cousin is acting different than usual. Instead of playing hard, his cousin quietly sits on the side. He asks, "Hey, what is wrong with you?"

Gasore's cousin reveals, "Cousin, something confusing happened last night. I woke up to find that I had wet underpants. I think I may be sick."

Gasore smiles, he says, "Cousin, you are experiencing things like I have. This is called a wet dream. It happens during puberty when your body and mind are growing up. It is very normal for boys. I am some years older than you, so I can tell you about it and other changes coming. *Obongdyan ma malolubu ma piny.* (The cow's hind hooves step in the same spot as the front hooves.)"

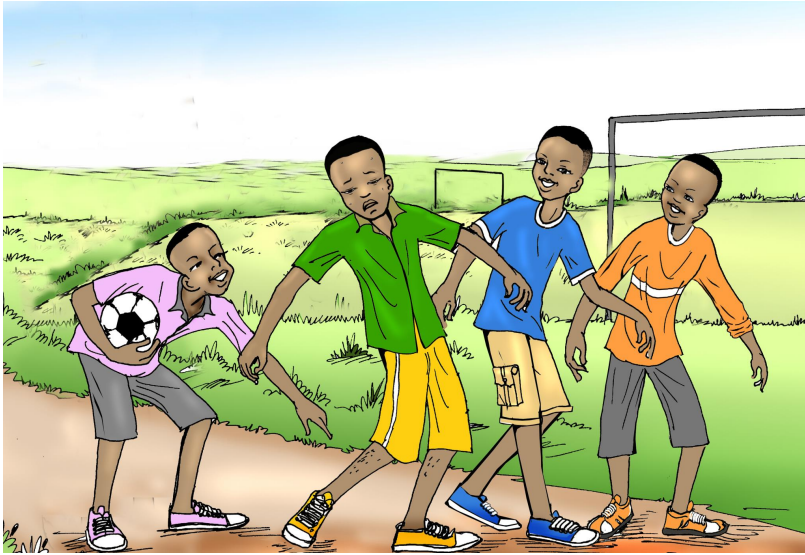
Questions to discuss:

- Can you support friends who experience body changes? How?
- What would you say to a friend who has concerns about body changes?
- What did you learn from Gasore's story?

Story 3



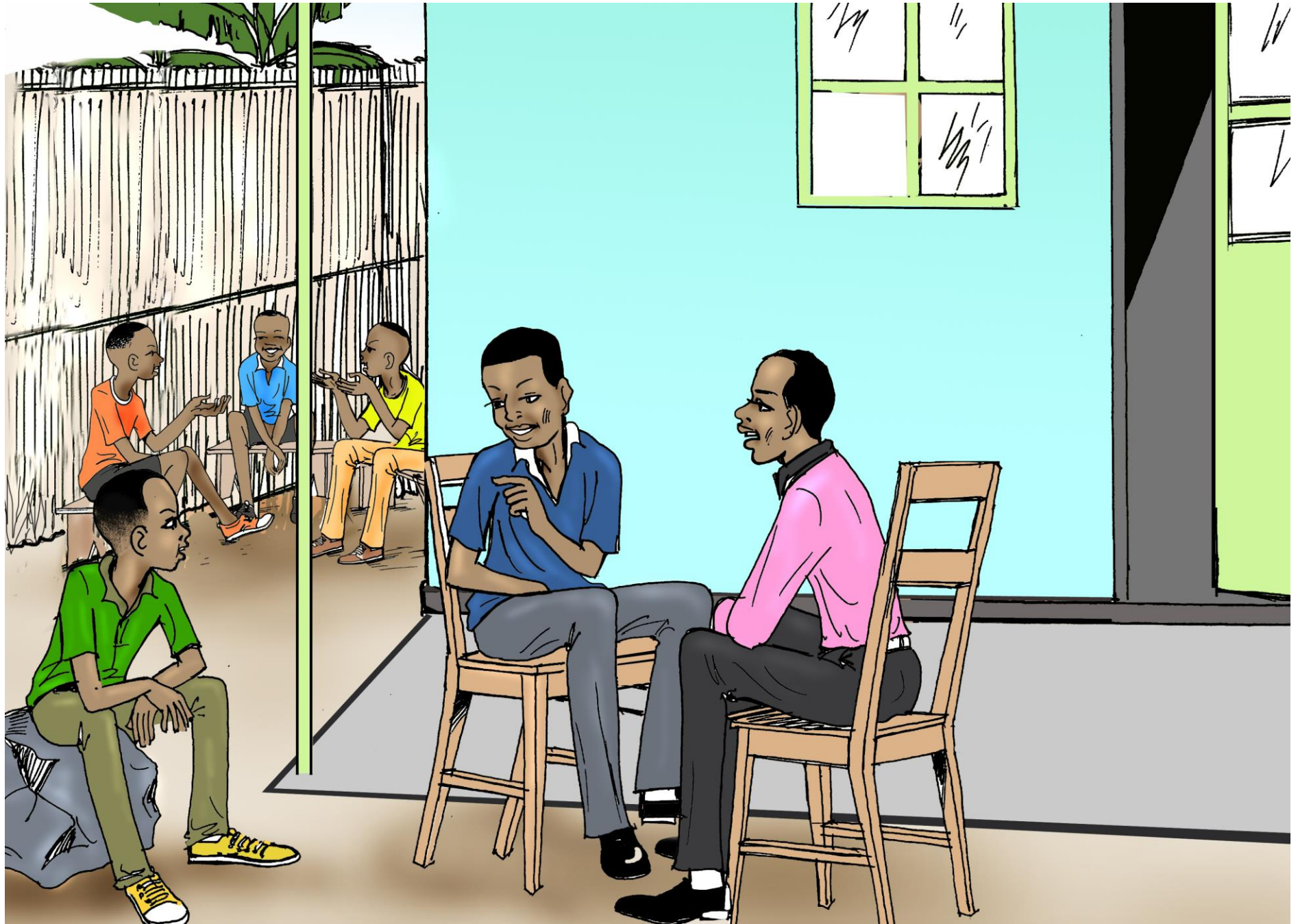
Story 3 Making Great Decisions



Gasore walks home with some friends after a football game. The friends notice that Gasore has hair on his legs. “Hey! You are now a man. You should go for sex with a girl. You will enjoy it!” Gasore wonders, “Am I a man?”

Questions to discuss:

- Does having hair on the body mean that Gasore is now a man? Why?





That evening at the Imbuga-ngali, Gasore sits on a large stone. He wants to signal to the others that he is becoming a man. But the men around look at him sternly. Gasore gets the idea that he should move to where his other age-mates are.

Then Gasore quietly asks his father, “Am I now a man?”

His father replies, “My son, just look at yourself. Do you look like me? No, this is a special time to learn and grow. You are not a young child and not yet an adult. So you are not yet ready to have sex, or a wife. Ojukkweecetokiicetiot a maro.” (When you are still young, you shouldn’t hurry to have a woman early.)





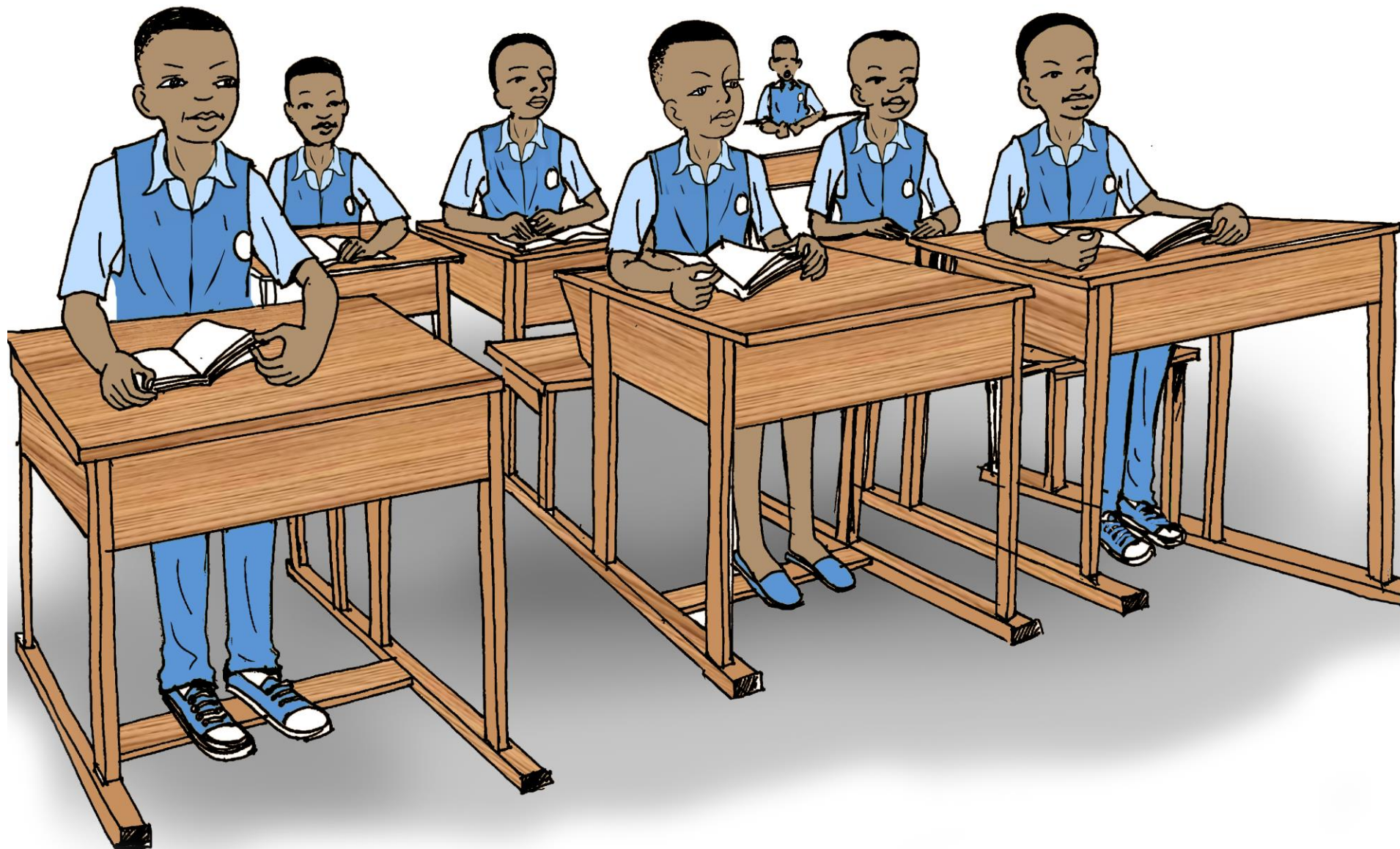
His father continues, “Gasore, as you grow older there will be many decisions ahead of you. I know you will always try to make good decisions.

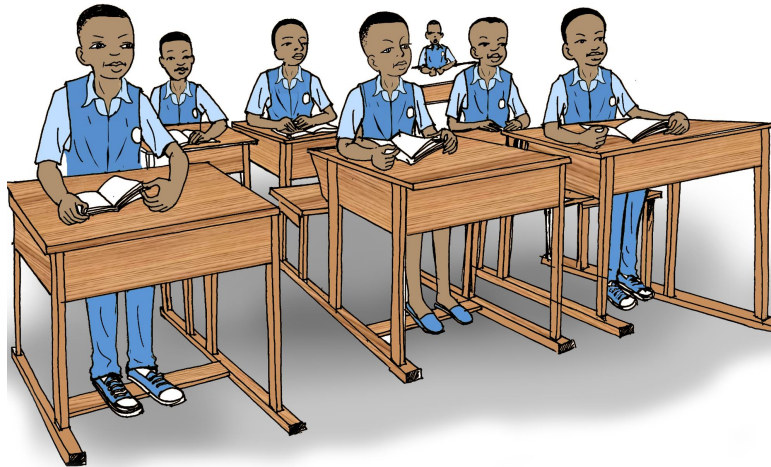
One decision you will have to make over and over in your life is whether or not to do what friends suggest.

If friends pressure you to have sex when you are not ready, they are using their power in a bad way. Even though this may not leave a physical scar, it affects people in a bad way. In this case, a good decision would be to tell them that you are not ready. You can ‘agree to disagree’. An even better decision would be to explain to them why you are not ready to have sex yet, and encourage them to think about their own decision, too.”

Questions to discuss:

- Is it easy to do different things from your friends? Why?
- What can help you to make a good decision for yourself?





Gasore asks, “Father, I understand that I am not a man and not ready for sex. But I really like a girl at school. She is pretty and intelligent. How can I show this girl that I like her without confusing her or me?”

His father answers, “Oh yes! There are many ways to show love to someone. Consider your parents and friends. You care for and love them, don’t you? You show them love in different ways.

As you grow older, you can decide what type of relationship to have with a girl. If a girl you like feels the same way about you, you can express your feelings to each other in many ways without sex. You can write letters and poems. Share secrets and stories. Sing songs. If you feel a desire to have sex, exercise to clear your mind.

Gasore’s father continues, “Do you know that it is not acceptable for you or any boy to confuse, pressure, or force himself on a girl? No one has the right to touch another person’s private parts if the other person does not agree. It is also not acceptable to pressure any boy or girl to have sex. These are forms of violence. Violence harms everyone. Using violence makes boys lose respect and separates them from other people.

Questions to discuss:

- Do you think Gasore is ready to make good decisions? Why?
- Do you show love to your family and friends? How?
- Can someone express love to a girlfriend or boyfriend without sex? How?

So, Gasore, do you think you are ready to practise making good decisions about relationships?





Gasore says, "I am ready!"

The next day at school, Gasore's friend hears that the girl likes him. Gasore is excited, but nervous. He asks his friend, so what do I do now?"

His friend suggests, "Just send a letter to the girl and invite her to meet you here at school tonight. Then you can tell her that you like her."

Gasore remembers what his father advised. A good decision would be to invite her to talk during the daytime. An even better decision would be to get to know her better while developing strong trust and friendship.

Gasore thinks for a minute. Then he sends the girl a letter to explain that he likes her and he respects her. He asks to become her boyfriend, and promises to show love in many ways without sex now.

Questions to discuss:

- Do you think the girl accepted his letter? Why?
- Did Gasore make a good decision?
- What decision could you make in this situation?





One rainy day, Gasore and his friends are standing under a tree. They cannot play football due to the rain and mud on the pitch.

One of the friends says, “My older brother has offered to buy us alcohol. Shall we go and try?”

Gasore looks at the other boys who stay quiet. He remembers what his father advised. A good decision would be to go with his friends, but not drink the alcohol. But an even better decision would be to suggest a different fun activity. Gasore wonders what his friends will say.

“Friends, we are still young to drink alcohol. It does not make us look like men. We would just look foolish and others would laugh at us. Let’s go play a game together.”

The friends agree, and Gasore is happy!

Questions to discuss:

- Did Gasore make a good decision?
- What decision could you make in this situation?





Another day, Gasore returns home to find his sister leaving for the market. Gasore asks, “Where are you going?” His sister replies, “Mother has given us extra money. I am going to the market to buy a new dress.”

Gasore feels unhappy because he wants to buy a football. Then he starts to get angry. As the brother he should be part of the decision!

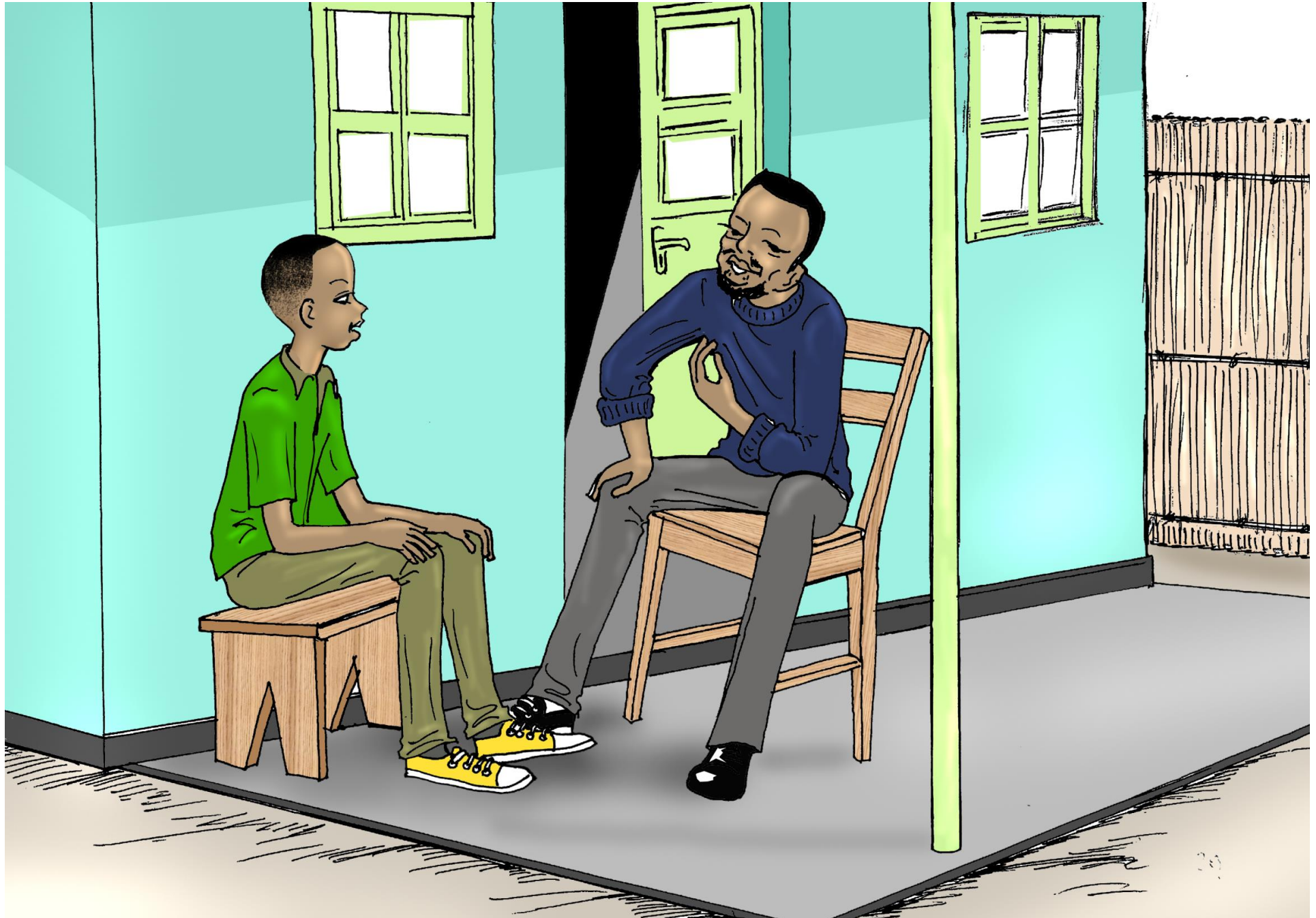
Gasore considers his choices. One decision would be to ask his sister to split the money. That could resolve the conflict peacefully. But, a better decision would be to listen to his sister’s side, discuss and come to mutual agreement. After all, he has two ears and one mouth for a reason.

Gasore asks, “Why do you want a new dress?” She explains, “Brother, girls at school laughed at me because of the holes in my dress. I felt ashamed. Gasore now understands. “Sister, thank you for sharing that. I would like something, too. Can we use the money to benefit both of us? What are your ideas?” His sister thinks and then says, “We could get my dress repaired and get a used football.”

Gasore realizes that he and his sister rarely talk together, but she has some great ideas!

Questions to discuss:

- Did Gasore make a good decision?
- What decision could you make in this situation?



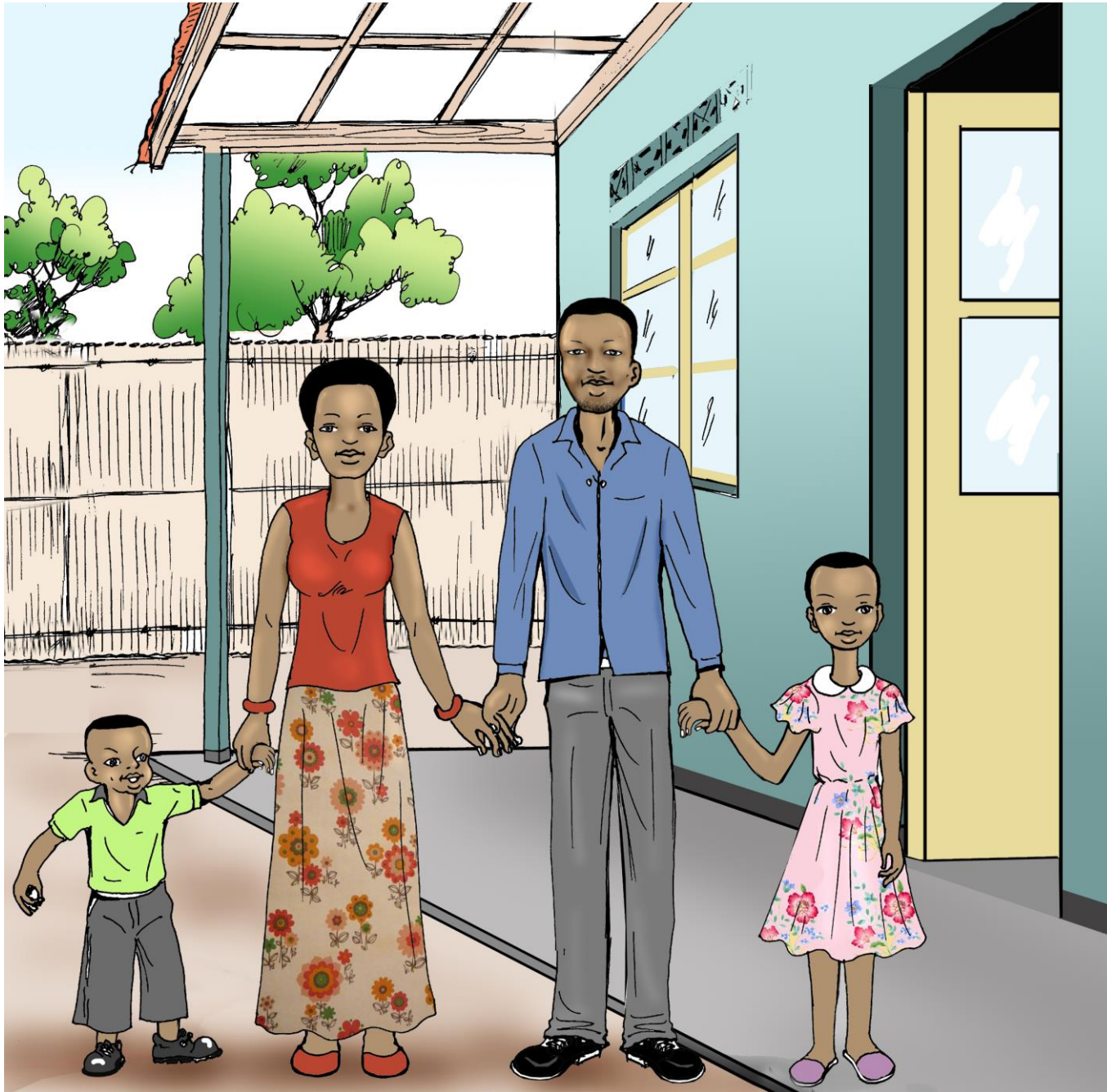


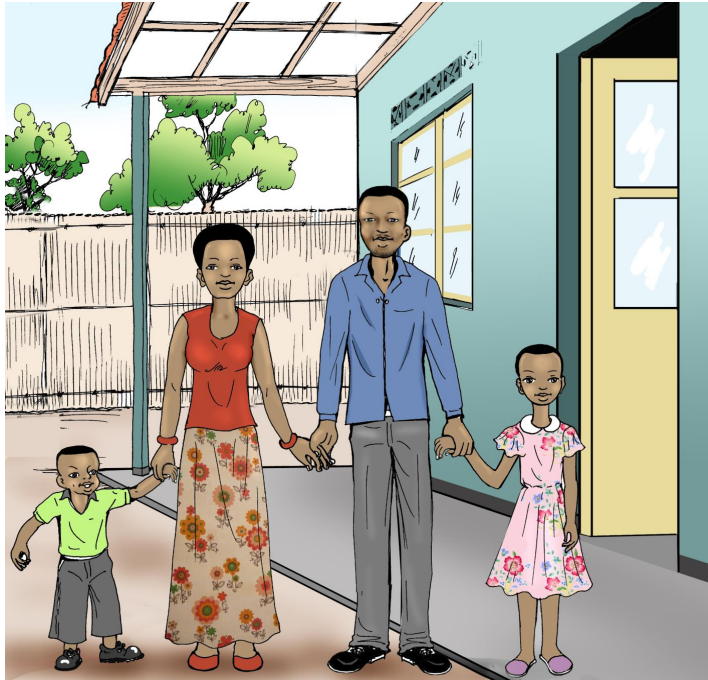
“My son,” says Gasore’s father, “I am proud of you. You have been thinking about your choices and decisions. You are learning to make great decisions. You are growing up, but not yet a man. There are many things ahead of you in life.”

“You are so special. Believe in yourself. I believe in you!”

Questions to discuss:

- Will you do anything differently after learning Gasore’s story? What?





Gasore grew up great! By trying hard, Gasore became a respected teacher and role model in his community.

Gasore got married to a woman he liked talking to. They have a peaceful home. After two children, they decided that two children are enough. They visited a health centre to learn how to stop having children.

Gasore remained an important person in his sister's life. He encouraged his sister to finish school. When she married, he spoke at the marriage ceremony. When she had children, Gasore took his role as their maternal uncle seriously. Whenever they had questions, the children talked with their uncle, just as Gasore talked with his uncle and father while he was growing up.

Gasore and his wife treat their daughter and son equally. Every night, Gasore says to the daughter and son,

"You are so special. Believe in yourself. I believe in you! "

Common questions & answers

What is puberty?

Puberty is a time when children are no longer young children and not yet adults. During puberty the bodies of boys and girls physically change—bodies grow bigger and taller, genitals mature, and hair often starts growing in new places on the body. During puberty, a girl becomes able to get pregnant and a young boy becomes able to father a child, although they are not yet ready to have a child and care for a family.

At what age do boys and girls go through puberty?

Puberty describes all the physical changes that children go through as they grow into adults. Girls usually begin changes earlier than boys. Most girls notice that changes start between 8 to 13 years old, and boys notice that changes start between 10 to 15 years old. It might be sooner or it might be later. Each person is a little different, so everyone goes through puberty at one's own pace. Changes in mind and body continue until 19 or even 20 years of age.

Is it normal for some boys and girls to mature earlier than others?

Yes. Some boys start puberty as early as 10 years old, others not until they are 15. Some girls start puberty as early as age eight, others not until they are 13 or later. Each person is normal for themselves.

Why do some parts of the body mature more quickly than others?

During puberty, there is an order in which certain physical changes usually occur: For boys, growth of the testicles is usually the earliest sign. However, bodily changes can occur in a different order and still be considered normal.

What is an erection?

An erection is when the penis gets hard with blood. Boys and men usually have several night-time erections. It is common to wake up with an erection. This is normal. Boys and men can also get an erection when they are not expecting it during the day, even when they're not sexually excited. Boys and men cannot control when they have erections. This is a normal part of sexual development and growing up.

What is the normal size and angle of a penis?

Penis size is not important and does not determine a man's ability to father a child and be a good lover. For adults, the average penis size is about 14 to 16cm when erect. For adolescents, there is no average length because boys develop at different ages and rates. During puberty between the ages of 10 to 18, the penis and testicles develop more rapidly, although the penis doesn't stop growing until the age of 21. There is no correct angle when hard.

Can semen and urine leave the body at the same time?

No. The same passage is used for both urine and semen, the fluid that comes from a man's penis when hard. However, a valve at the base of the urethra, a short tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body, makes it impossible for urine and semen to travel through this tube at the same time.

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is an operation to remove the piece of skin (the foreskin) that covers the tip of the penis. If a boy gets circumcised, it's nothing to worry about. It does not affect sex in the future.

How should the penis (man parts) be cleaned?

Gently wash the penis with water and soap each day. If a boy has not been circumcised, he should pull back the foreskin gently and wash underneath.

What is sperm?

A sperm is the male sex cell. Sperm are produced in the testicles and released in fluid called semen from a boy's hard penis. There are millions of sperm in each drop of fluid. If the fluid enters a girl's vagina, she can get pregnant. The sperm in the fluid determines whether a pregnancy will result in a baby boy or a baby girl. If a boy has sex with a girl but pulls his penis out before releasing fluid, he can still get her pregnant. This is because it can be hard to pull out early enough, and there may be sperm from the previous release of fluid remaining in the urethra that get carried in pre-ejaculate.

What is masturbation?

Masturbation is when you someone gets sexual pleasure from touching their genitals (man parts). Masturbation usually leads to an orgasm and ejaculation. There is no right or wrong way to masturbate.

Can masturbating cause health problems?

It is safe. Masturbation does not cause any harm even if it is done often. Also, there is no risk of pregnancy, HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. Masturbating will not affect a man's ability to produce sperm. Men produce sperm continuously and never run out. After a man has ejaculated, it will take some time before he can ejaculate again. This is normal and doesn't mean there is anything wrong with his sperm. It is only a problem if it happens so often that it keeps someone from their daily activities. Soreness, cuts or bruising can happen if masturbation is done too roughly. Although people may be embarrassed to talk about it, there is no shame in it.

What is needed for pregnancy to occur?

Although pregnancy does not occur with every act of sex, it is likely to occur when three things happen: 1) an egg must be present in the woman's fallopian tubes, the tubes that carry the egg to the womb where babies grow; 2) sperm from the male must join the egg to fertilize it; and 3) the fertilized egg must attach itself to the lining of the woman's womb (uterus).

How can pregnancy be prevented?

When a man and a woman want to have sex without having a child, they can use a method of family planning to prevent pregnancy. There are many types of methods including condoms, oral contraceptive pills, injectables, intrauterine device (IUD) and natural methods. When a couple is using a method correctly, this means they are "protected" from pregnancy. When they use a condom in addition to another method of family planning, it means they are "protected" from both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections like HIV. The best way for boys and girls to prevent pregnancy, and prevent the infections a person can get from having sex, is to not have sex. If you or someone you know needs a family planning method or protection from sexually transmitted infections, see a health worker or other trusted adult.