

Lesson 11

Sex in Society: Pornography

Activity 1

Mock Trials

Students will play the roles of prosecutors (two), defense attorneys (two), expert witnesses (one for each side), and a six person jury. There are a number of trials that will take place and each will have a different jury. Each student in class will have one chance to present an important argument. Students will be broken up into groups of three (two lawyers and one expert witness) to prepare in class one day, and have the trial the next day.

The trial's subject is as follows:

- a. possession of allegedly obscene child pornography on a personal home computer.
- b. the singing of vile and obscene lyrics at a concert open to the public, including girls dancing in the background using allegedly obscene moves
- c. Julie Jenkins, a substitute teacher at a middle school in Westport, Conn., said she had simply wanted to e-mail her husband. The authorities contend that she was—purposely or, perhaps, carelessly—exposing 11- and 12-year-old students to pornography rather than teaching them English. She has insisted on her innocence, refusing to accept a plea bargain that would have allowed her to walk free. She portrays herself as a hapless technophobe who was too clueless to unplug a wayward computer.

The teacher will serve as judge and give time for the jury to meet after each presentation.

Each side chooses an expert (who could be a clinical psychiatrist from a prominent university, person from the Department of Justice child porn unit, famous art critic. etc.). Before class, the experts and lawyers should turn in a bibliography of readings they used to support their case.