

# FROM THE BARRIO<sup>SM</sup>

## CURRICULUM SAMPLE

*“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one single step.”*

*“Turn your dreams into a reality.”*

Thank you for your interest in the *From the Barrio* Curriculum. Robert, Corey and the *From the Barrio* Foundation are currently offering the curriculum at NO COST for the 2009-2010 school year. Our goal is to support your successful implementation of the curriculum in as many ways possible, so please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions/comments. If funding for the purchase of books is an issue, please ask us about the Barrio Book Drive!

In the name of our youth,



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# FROM THE BARRIO<sup>SM</sup> – Teacher’s Guide Chapter 1

*The Wonder Years: Growing Up Poor in East L.A.*

## Chapter 1: Discussion Questions

1. In Chapter 1, Robert tells us a lot about his mother, a proud woman who worked hard to support her family while trying to hide life’s heartaches from family and friends. She always believed in him. Is there someone in your life that believes in you? What is it about you that they believe in? If you don’t have someone in your life that you feel believes in you, where might you find someone who could provide that emotional support to you?
2. In some ways, Robert worked at his first job when he was five, collecting empty soda bottles and returning them at the store for money, which then went to help buy food for the family. In what ways have you had to contribute to support the survival or dreams of your family?
3. Why do you think Robert’s mother never gave up?
4. Define respect. Who do you respect in your life? Do you respect yourself? How so?
5. Robert’s extended family didn’t fall on tough times like Robert’s mother did. One might assume that one bad choice (his mother marrying his drug addicted and alcoholic father) took his mother down a different path in life. What major choices have you made in your life and how have they affected you both positively and negatively? Why do you think it’s important to make smart choices? Discuss five examples of making good choices.
6. Robert’s father was quite the ladies’ man who clearly had his way with the women. He was a drug addict who left Robert and his family when Robert was only 3 years old. How has substance abuse affected those around you?
7. When Robert was growing up, “things you don’t talk about” were always swept under the carpet. Are there issues that have happened in your life that no one speaks about? What do you think would happen if you revealed your secrets as Robert has done?
8. Robert’s step-father was abusive, yet Robert claims that he still respects him because he put food on the table for the family and provided clothing and shelter to kids that were not his. Despite their estranged relationship growing up, and the unfortunate abuse, what do you think Robert learned from his step-father?
9. Robert describes a moment where he watched other kids buying candy at a candy store – something he could not afford. Have there been times in your life that you felt like Robert, outside the window looking in on others who seemingly had more than you?

10. Who in your life encourages your dreams? What do they tell you? What are your dreams for the future?

**CHAPTER 1 ASSIGNMENT (level a)**

Choose any three assignments from the tic-tac-toe table that are in a row.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Write your own memoir</b></p> <p>Start your own chapter one by describing the way you grew up. Begin with the first experiences you remember and what your world looked like.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ranking Ladder</b></p> <p>List seven things that are important to you in your life. Then, use the Ranking Ladder worksheet to rank them from absolutely more important (at the top) to less important.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Write a poem</b></p> <p>Your poem must be about a struggle. It does not need to be about you or anyone you know. It does, however, need to be an original poem written by you about some sort of struggle.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Talk to a Friend</b></p> <p>Have a quiet conversation with a friend about Chapter 1. Pick four discussion questions to guide your dialogue. Fill out the “Quiet Conversation” worksheet with your thoughts about what was discussed for each question.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Draw a picture</b></p> <p>of the one room in your house where the family hangs out. It could be the living room, dining, room, kitchen, family room, basement area, etc... Make sure to draw every detail you can remember and don't forget to draw your family.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Draw a diagram</b></p> <p>An author lets us understand a character by words, feelings, actions and situations in a story. Can you describe Robert's mom? Identify 6 characteristics and an action or a quote that shows that characteristic in her. (Use the diagram worksheet)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing Assignment</b></p> <p>Many parents use <i>dichos</i> (sayings or proverbs) to teach virtues. For example, Robert's mom tells him “si se puede y con ganas”. What are some <i>dichos</i> your parents use as their words of wisdom to you. What do they mean?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interview a parent</b></p> <p>Interview your mom or dad. Ask them questions #4 and #10 (from discussion questions). Take notes while you talk to them. Write a one-page summary of your interview.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing Assignment</b></p> <p>At age five, Robert helped his family by collecting soda bottles for money. In what ways do you contribute to support the survival or the dreams of your family? What would happen if you didn't contribute at all?</p>

## CHAPTER 1 ASSIGNMENT (level b)

Choose any three assignments from the tic-tac-toe table that are in a row.

<p><b>Write your own memoir</b></p> <p>Start your own chapter one by describing the way you grew up. Begin with the first experiences you remember and what your world looked like.</p>	<p><b>Create a list of resources</b></p> <p>Research all of the community services available to the people of your neighborhood. Where can someone who is facing being homeless go for help? Hunger? Medical attention? Etc... Make copies of your list and post them around your school campus.</p>	<p><b>Write a poem</b></p> <p>Your poem must be about a struggle. It does not need to be about you or anyone you know. It does, however, need to be original.</p>
<p><b>Compare and Contrast</b></p> <p>Compare and contrast the struggles of Robert's mom to Robert's dad. Which parent suffered the most? Why do you think that? Support your answer.</p>	<p><b>Create a collage</b></p> <p>Create a collage of your vision of what Robert's life was like during his childhood. You can draw pictures or cut out pictures from magazines to paint a picture of his childhood.</p>	<p><b>Describe Robert's mom</b></p> <p>An author lets us understand a character by words, feelings, actions and situations in a story. Describe Robert's mom. What traits or characteristics does she have? How do you know? Support your answer.</p>
<p><b>Writing Assignment</b></p> <p>Many parents use <i>dichos</i> (sayings or proverbs) to teach virtues. For example, Robert's mom tells him "si se puede y con ganas". What are some <i>dichos</i> your parents use as their words of wisdom to you. What do they mean?</p>	<p><b>Make a list</b></p> <p>Make a list of adjectives to describe Robert's stepfather. Do you think he was a good parent or a bad parent? Why? Defend your answer.</p>	<p><b>Write a Letter</b></p> <p>Write a letter to Robert's mom as if you were young Robert. Would you challenge her? Giver her advice? Thank her? Ask her for something?</p>