Objectives: To better understand the challenges associated with living with AIDS.

Opening: Go around the room and share information about someone you know who is HIV+. It’s okay if they don’t know anyone.

Activity: 64 REASONS (written by an 11 year old with AIDS)

Pass out slips (64) in random order until all are passed out. Have each person read a slip, in order (starting with #1 and finishing with #64).

Discussion: How did you feel after the readings?

Journal: How did you feel from this activity? Did you get a sense of what life might be like with HIV? Are you motivated to protect yourself from contracting HIV?

Background on the author of 64 Reasons:
In the early eighties, Elaine and her husband Charles DePrince, who already had two sons of their own, decided to adopt a boy who was a hemophiliac. Later they adopted a pair of brothers who also suffered from hemophilia. All three adopted boys had to use a blood product called "Factor VIII," and tragically, they would all contract HIV from the very substance they took to keep their bleeding disorder in check.

Elaine DePrince wrote the novel Cry Bloody Murder to expose the truth behind corruption associated with blood distribution companies that delivered contaminated and unscreened blood to thousands of patients who were thus infected with HIV. Her book is concluded by this excerpt. Written by her 11 year old adopted son, Cubby, "64 Reasons Why You Do Not Want to Get AIDS," was written just before he died.

Note from Dr. Fan: This is a correct depiction of a kid with AIDS, although in the US HAART therapies generally control HIV infection and prevent development of AIDS for many. However, if HAART therapies cannot control the HIV infection in someone (including children), then the symptoms described will still ensue. Be aware that HAART therapy is not universally available worldwide -- particularly in developing countries. In those locations, the challenges described would still apply, with the exception that medicines to control the secondary infections would generally not be available either.