



# PATHWAYS 2 PREVENTION

Substance Abuse Resources  
for Youth Leaders



# **Pathways to Prevention:**

## **Substance Abuse Resources for Youth Leaders**

### **Editors**

**Katie Swafford, M.A., L.P.C.-S., Ph.D. in Leadership**  
**Director, Counseling Services**  
**Texas Baptists**

**Carrie Beaird, M.A., L.P.C.-S., L.C.D.C.**  
**Carrie Beaird Counseling**

**Joe Haag,**  
**Former Director of Program Planning and Special Moral Concerns**  
**Christian Life Commission**

### **Special Acknowledgments**

**Jim Bender, Academy for Educational Development**  
**Trish Merrill, Faith Partners**

These materials are adapted in part by permission from *Pathways to Prevention* published by the Executive Office of the President of National Drug Control Policy as part of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

## Endorsements

"There is an enormous need for science-based drug prevention resources like this that are sensitive to the needs of Christian Education departments. This curriculum will be a great tool for churches large and small."

Jim Bender  
Deputy Director  
AED Center for Health Communication, Washington D.C.

"I urge you to use this excellent resource, one that will help young people and adults discuss alcohol, tobacco and drugs, an important yet often avoided conversation in the church. Congregations can have a powerful and positive influence when they offer both the latest information and the stories of faith to bear on this issue. The Christian Life Commission is to be commended for this fine effort."

Trish Merrill  
Director, Rush Center of the Johnson Institute

"This material is an outstanding resource in educating our youth, parents and congregations about the realities of addictions and how to avoid the trap. It should be a great help to pastors, youth ministers and churches throughout Texas and the US as we continue to deal with more addictions within our congregations."

Dan McGee  
Former Director, Counseling & Psychological Services Center, Baptist General Convention of Texas

"I recommend 'Pathways to Prevention' to anyone who works with teens at their church. Pathways provides good information about substance abuse and is an excellent tool to help prevent drug and alcohol use among young people. Most of all, its Christian foundation gives teens all the right reasons for living a pure, healthy lifestyle."

Jana Whitworth  
Church and Community Ministries Director, Dallas Baptist Association

Texas Baptists is pleased to offer the following materials to be used by your church in addressing the issue of substance abuse and adolescents. Reports indicate that substance abuse is a continuous problem in our society, and it is imperative that churches take a stand and give young people the tools to make good choices in dealing with alcohol and drugs.

The following is a resource guide of lessons, educational material, and studies which hopefully give our churches a place to begin in providing parents, youth leaders, and church staff some tools to use in talking to adolescents about alcohol and drug abuse.

This resource guide can be used in an inclusive manner as a series including all of the lessons in an age group, or it can be utilized as stand-alone lessons on individual topics.

Ideas for utilizing this curriculum in your church:

1. The youth minister could choose various lessons that speak directly to issues that currently impact the youth. This would particularly be useful during events such as homecoming, prom, and special events where the peer pressure is great and kids are actively trying to figure out how to make choices about drugs and alcohol.
2. The youth minister could choose specific lessons that have been written for adults and young people to dialogue about the issue of substance abuse. In an informal Talk time with adults, youth would be provided an opportunity to hear from adults and their beliefs and expectations in them. This would provide a positive and safe environment for a free exchange of beliefs and feelings.
3. Parents can utilize the material as a resource for information about alcohol and drugs to help them in finding ways to communicate their concerns to their kids in a positive and informed manner.
4. The curriculum can also be utilized in the local church in a recovery focus which would highlight the issue of substance abuse with the entire congregation.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to give us a call.

**Katie Swafford, M.A., L.P.C.-S., Ph.D. in Leadership**

Director, Counseling Services

Texas Baptists

(214) 828-5188

## Introduction to Learning Activities

### The World of Youth Today

Youth today are bombarded daily by messages that normalize ideas and actions that are harmful to their emotions, bodies, and spiritual walk. Materialism, casual sex, and the abuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco have become an accepted expression of popular culture as portrayed in movies, television and literature. The conflicting messages youth receive from popular media and from school friends can easily overwhelm their ability to distinguish

**Some youth will be tempted to experiment with drugs, tobacco, and alcohol as early as elementary school.**

right from wrong and to understand the inherent problems associated with substance abuse. The church needs to have a positive voice to speak the truth about these issues and bear witness to Christian discipleship regarding these issues. Your role as a youth leader in the church is both timely and vital. You are in an ideal position to give young people one of the most valuable gifts an adult can provide – a good example.

Alcohol and drug abuse can have serious consequences, affecting the user's judgment. This has proven to be a strong predictors of involvement in other high-risk behavior, including sexual activity. Beyond health consequences and the negative impact on brain development, the leading behavioral consequences according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2016) are: unsafe sex, driving while intoxicated, hazardous unsupervised activities, school failure, problems with family and other relationships, impaired memory, and mental health problems.

Some youth will be tempted to experiment with drugs, tobacco and alcohol as early as elementary school. But realistically, by the time most kids leave high school, they will have been in unsupervised situations - alone or with friends - in which they have made decisions about how they will deal with these issues. Because young people today live in a world of confusing value systems and daily face conflicting peer pressures, they often must make on-the-spot choices that could alter their lives forever. In this climate, having a Christian foundation on which to base choices becomes critical. Through formal and informal activities, as well as through planned and spontaneous communication, you can help the youth in your community make wise decisions that will keep their journey to adulthood free from substance abuse and its consequences.

### What's Faith Got To Do With It?

Our faith is the covenant trust we have with God in Christ. Through this covenant relationship lived out in a community of faith, we learn the craft of discipleship – acquiring the virtues, habits, and affections necessary to follow Christ. Christian discipleship involves

## Introduction to Learning Activities

the decision-making process regarding right and wrong, good and evil, choices and consequences.

Christian faith also reflects hope in the future and the conviction that there is a higher plan for one's life, a plan worthy of commitment, work and sacrifice. Faith gives us the ability to make tough choices about substance abuse. The teen whose faith is strong can more readily say with confidence: "No, thanks, I don't do drugs," or "No, thanks, I don't drink." The sustaining power of faith is a safety zone in times of temptation, which, for many teens, are all too frequent.

No, thanks,  
I don't do drugs.

Religious faith is truly critical in the healthy development of youth. Research consistently shows that young people actively involved in church tend to have lower rates of drug and alcohol use. This inverse relationship between religious involvement and substance use is remarkably robust across different religions, ages, ethnic groups and substances. Most importantly, the effect seems to be **stronger** among youth than adults. But you know from experience that even a strong religious upbringing does not **guarantee** a young person will be safe from the lure of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. As a youth leader, you are in an ideal position to influence youth by illustrating the practical power of faith in your own life.

### Use Teachable Moments

An active approach to prevention can help the young people in your church acquire skills to make wise decisions within the context of their faith. An active approach means involving youth in structured activities that help them learn reasons to avoid drug, alcohol and tobacco use and develop skills to do so effectively. It also includes taking advantage of "teachable moments," i.e., windows of opportunity that can happen any time adults and young people are together. Teachable moments open the way for you to introduce or reinforce the prevention messages you want youth to learn and follow.

Can you recall a moment when you heard or saw something that sparked a quick comment, a provocative question or just a statement of feeling? That "something" is the backdrop for a teachable moment when you can guide a discussion with a young person, offer advice or just make a clear statement of your own beliefs and thoughts. Such a moment may require that you, as a youth leader, be a good listener in order to hear what youth are thinking about and feeling.

The level of conflict, tragedy at schools, drug and alcohol use by celebrities and world events is concerning. However, the daily living life in an internet world provides adults with many opportunities for teachable moments and for youth to be able to have a platform to verbalize their thoughts and concerns.

## Introduction to Learning Activities cont.

Teachable moments can occur when you are with one person, a small group or a large group. They might occur in the midst of a youth retreat when discussing a celebrity who was admitted to a rehabilitation clinic. They may arise in the discussion of a popular song or movie that depicts drug use as pleasurable without showing the real consequences of addiction. The challenge for the leader is to anticipate these teachable moments and seize the opportunity to share insight, wisdom or experience in sensitive, meaningful ways.

### Using prevention activities with youth

As you begin to review the learning activities that follow, remember that there are a few consistent themes that are emphasized.

**First**, the materials will help you remind youth that ***most young people do not use drugs, tobacco, and alcohol***. The activities try to instill the belief that drug use is not normal, is not socially acceptable, and is a contradiction of Christ-like living.

**Second**, there is a recurring theme that ***drug abuse causes pain and trouble for oneself and others***. Youth are encouraged to think about the consequences of drug, tobacco, and alcohol use in a variety of activities.

**Third**, the learning activities and other resources emphasize that ***a drug-free lifestyle has clear and positive benefits***. These benefits are physical, social, emotional, and spiritual.

**Fourth**, specific skills that have been shown to be useful in prevention are described and practiced. Opportunities to ***develop skills in communicating effectively, making wise choices about how to spend time, and developing good friendships*** are woven into many activities.

These themes are repeated and reinforced throughout these materials for youth of all ages, presenting prevention ideas and suggestions for making biblical and faith connections.

We hope that you find the activities that follow to be good starting points for your ongoing efforts to guide the youth of your church toward drug free and healthy development.

These materials are for information and discussion purposes only and should not be considered therapy.



page 14

**YOUR OPINION PLEASE**

This activity will help youth examine their knowledge and beliefs about substance abuse and provide them with accurate information about the effects of using drugs, alcohol and tobacco. **Focus Scripture: John 10:10**

page 20

**ANTI-DRUG ADS THAT TELL THE TRUTH**

Youth will identify the purpose of advertising and how it works. They will then use these ideas in a fun activity to develop advertising that tells the truth about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. **Focus Scripture: Matthew 6:24**

page 26

**WHAT'S THERE TO DO AROUND HERE?**

Kids often complain, "There's nothing to do in this town that is fun." This activity will help identify a variety of "things to do" that are fun, safe, and legal, which do not involve drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. **Focus Scripture: Matthew 6:33**

page 30

**TOP TEN WAYS TO SAY NO**

The best defense is to be prepared with a good offense. This activity is a fun way to help youth learn new and creative ways to say no to drugs, alcohol and tobacco and resist pressure to go along with the crowd. **Focus Scripture: Matthew 10:32**

page 32

**WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?**

Sometimes the need to "belong" clouds the issue on the meaning of friendship. This activity will help each young person identify qualities he or she brings to a friendship and the qualities he or she looks for in a friend. **Focus Scripture: Proverbs 17:17**

page 36

**FRIENDSHIP AND CONFLICT**

When conflict over moral and ethical issues puts stress on friendship, the results can be very hurtful. This exercise will help kids learn and practice ways to resolve conflict with their friends while maintaining their own integrity. **Focus Scripture: Ephesians 4:32**

page 40

**RESISTING PEER PRESSURE**

Help children identify how peer pressure affects them, and how to say "no" to behaviors that would hurt them. **Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10**

## Contents

# Learning Activities for Junior High and High School Students

page 44

### WHAT'S OKAY TO DO AND WHAT'S NOT

Adolescents will explore choices people make to use or not to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco while considering the consequences of making those choices.

*Focus Scripture: John 8:32*

page 48

### WHY SOME PEOPLE MAKE POOR DECISIONS

Young people will increase their knowledge of alternative behaviors by identifying reasons why some young people choose to use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

*Focus Scripture: John 15:10-11*

page 50

### FEELING GOOD ABOUT TAKING A STAND

Youth will think about their beliefs regarding drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and they will learn what some adults in their congregation believe about these topics. They also will discover what the Bible teaches about the use of these substances.

*Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2*

page 54

### MARIJUANA GAME SHOW

Youth will learn facts about marijuana to counter common myths and misconceptions.

*Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:22*

page 60

### AVOIDING RISKY BUSINESS

Youth will explore risky situations and consequences of their actions and ways they might respond if they are ever in a similar situation. *Focus Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33*

page 66

### LAYING DOWN THE BURDEN OF LIES

Young people will feel some of the emotional and spiritual burdens brought on by lying about drug or alcohol use. *Focus Scripture: Proverbs 15:14*

page 70

### MEDIA IMAGES – FRIEND OR FOE?

Help youth learn critical thinking skills about the media; determine whether media images support or conflict with their values and faith regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. *Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10*

page 74

### TAKING THE STING OUT OF STRESS

Youth will identify sources of stress, recognize the effects of stress, and learn new ways to manage stress. *Focus Scripture: John 14:27*

## Contents

# Learning Activities for High School Students

page **80**

### IF I DON'T DRINK, WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Youth can hear lots of reasons from friends about why they should drink. This activity will help them identify the benefits and wisdom of not drinking alcohol.

**Focus Scripture:** *Matthew 6: 19-21.*

page **84**

### GIVING OTHERS A HELPING HAND

Young people will learn what to do and what to say in the process of helping a friend or family member whose use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco concerns them.

**Focus Scripture:** *Proverbs 27:6*

page **90**

### FEELING GOOD ABOUT TAKING A STAND

Youth will think about their beliefs regarding drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and they will learn what some adults in their congregation believe about these topics. They also will discover what the Bible teaches about the use of these substances.

**Focus Scripture:** *2 Timothy 2:2*

page **94**

### MARIJUANA GAME SHOW

Youth will learn facts about marijuana to counter common myths and misconceptions.

**Focus Scripture:** *2 Timothy 2:22*

page **100**

### AVOIDING RISKY BUSINESS

Youth will explore risky situations and consequences of their actions and ways they might respond if they are ever in a similar situation. **Focus Scripture:** *Matthew 10:32-33*

page **106**

### LAYING DOWN THE BURDEN OF LIES

Young people will feel some of the emotional and spiritual burdens brought on by lying about drug or alcohol use. **Focus Scripture:** *Proverbs 15:14*

page **110**

### MEDIA IMAGES – FRIEND OR FOE?

Help youth learn critical thinking skills about the media and determine whether media images support or conflict with their values and faith regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. **Focus Scripture:** *Ephesians 6:10*

page **114**

### TAKING THE STING OUT OF STRESS

Youth will identify sources of stress, recognize the effects of stress, and learn new ways to manage stress. **Focus Scripture:** *John 14:27*

## Learning Activities for Youth and Adults

page **120**

### DRUG PREVENTION IN OUR COMMUNITY – WHAT CAN WE DO?

Youth and adults will identify ways they can work together to tackle the issues of drug and alcohol abuse. *Focus Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16*

## Contents

# Learning Activities for Parents and Youth Leaders

page **124**

## **PARENT HELPS**

Recent studies show that clear and consistent messages from parents to children about drugs, alcohol and tobacco do make a very important difference. The study addresses ways in which parents can talk to their kids about substance abuse.

page **130**

## **BUILDING POSITIVE SELF IMAGE IN TEENS**

Teens with positive self-images have more confidence in making the choice to abstain from using drugs or alcohol. This resource provides some keys for adults to use in helping adolescents acquire a positive self-image.

page **136**

## **DEVELOPING GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Sometimes communication is difficult between parents and adolescents. This resource provides help for parents and youth leaders in learning some new methods to communicate effectively with teens.

page **140**

## **HARD FACTS ABOUT DRUGS**

A comprehensive look at drugs and alcohol including appearance, method of use and possible effects.

page **156**

## **DRUG MISUSE AND ABUSE**

When does drug use become abuse? What are the symptoms of drug misuse and abuse and what are the characteristics of particular drugs that are abused?

page **162**

## **LAWS REGARDING UNDERAGE DRINKING**

An examination of the Texas Zero Tolerance law and legal consequences for youth.

page **164**

## **BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS**

This resource explores what the Bible has to say about drugs and alcohol and gives a theological perspective for dealing with the issue of substance abuse.

page **184**

## **FOUNDATIONAL VIRTUES**

Bible studies are provided for the important issues of community, courage and truthfulness.

page **192**

## **THE BIBLE AND THE 12 STEPS**

An overview of the 12 Steps from Alcoholics Anonymous and a Biblical perspective of the steps.

page **198**

## **RESOURCE AND REFERENCE LIST**

## Learning Activity #1 for grades 6 - 8

### Your Opinion Please

#### Expected Outcome:

This activity will help youth examine their knowledge and beliefs about substance abuse and provide them with accurate information about the effects of using drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: John 10:10 (NRSV)

**"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Your Opinion Please" handout (Print out the "Your Opinion Please" worksheet below. Make a copy for each participant. Youth will answer the 10 statements about substance abuse individually and then discuss them as a group.)
2. "Your Opinion Please" Discussion Points (Print out the "Your Opinion Please" Discussion Points for youth leader reference)
3. Chalk board/white board or flip chart and markers
4. Pencils or pens

**Your Opinion Please.**

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

"Your Opinion Please" engages young people in a discussion about their personal beliefs regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. While involved in this process, they will receive accurate information about drugs and drug use. This process will help to clear up the myths or misperceptions they may have about substances. Knowledge becomes an anti-drug for youth. Before leading this discussion, it is wise to clarify your own beliefs and practices regarding these issues, and how your faith influences these beliefs and practices. We have included

discussion points for each of the 10 statements to help prepare you for the discussion. Please remember to discuss the youth group's answers and not just provide the answer sheet.

**Your Opinion Please.**

## Learning Activity #1 for grades 6 - 8

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Hand out the "Your Opinion Please" worksheet to each participant. Ask them to work individually and mark their answers.

#### **Step 2**

When individuals have completed their worksheet, have participants move into small groups of four or five. Instruct the groups to share their responses to the statements and talk about their thoughts and feelings behind their answers.

After discussing the statements, have each group consider the following questions that you have written on the chalkboard or flipchart:

*Have you formed definite opinions about the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco?*

*Were there some questions still left unanswered or that seem to be gray areas?*

*How do your family, friends, and faith influence what you think about these situations?*

***Are you familiar with Christian principles about using or not using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco? How do these line up with your own opinions?***

#### **Step 3**

Bring everyone back to the large group and discuss the statements on the worksheet. Refer to the "Discussion Points" as the group discusses each of the 10 statements. Then go to the questions you have written on the chalkboard or flipchart. An opening question might be, "Were there any lively discussions that took place in your small group concerning the questions on the board?"

#### **Step 4 - Conclusion**

This activity concludes when all the questions have been discussed. A useful way to summarize is to ask participants what they learned from the activity and discussion. Also ask the youth to apply the discussion to their faith in terms of what it means to live a "Christ-like" life. Discuss the concept of "absolutes" and making decisions that are non-negotiable despite the circumstances. Ask the youth to complete this statement, "The bottom line for me is..."

## Your Opinion Please cont.

### ***"Your Opinion Please" Discussion Points***

#### **1. Most young people use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke.**

It is a common perception by youth that "everyone uses drugs, alcohol and tobacco." Yet, studies consistently show that most young people do not use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke. Young people should know that sometimes the word on the street about the frequency of drug use is wrong. Additionally, if a young person's peer group consists of all "users" then the young person should be encouraged to find a different peer group.

#### **2. People who use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke are bad.**

Many drugs have the potential to improve our health and enrich our lives. They protect us from disease, combat infections, cure specific illnesses, and comfort the terminally ill. Yet, the recreational use of certain drugs, alcohol, and tobacco also have the potential to cause serious health, legal, social, emotional, spiritual, and economic problems. People who are experiencing these problems as a result of drug use need assistance. It is our responsibility to seek ways to intervene and provide assistance.

Sometimes we interpret addiction in terms of moral failure. Addiction involves personal choices, but is fundamentally a disease. Because of genetics and other factors, some people can more easily become addicted. People with addiction problems are members of congregations across the U.S.

#### **3. People who choose not to drink alcohol have strong peer support for their decision.**

Many young people who choose not to drink alcohol have strong support for their decisions from their peers. Yet others who choose not to drink may lack support for their good decision-making. And many youth who have chosen to drink do not have the kind of peer support that would encourage them to refrain from drinking alcohol. It is important for young people to find out that there is support for not drinking. While it is important to find support for healthy decisions, young people need to clarify what is more important -- the opinion of their friends or being faithful to what they believe to be right.

#### **4. My religious beliefs are helpful in making decisions about whether to use or not use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.**

Being clear about your religious beliefs regarding the use of these substances is important and can be helpful in making decisions about using or not using them. Faith needs to be a part of all of life, not just what happens on Sunday mornings. A Christian should ask the question, "What would Jesus do?"

#### **5. There is nothing I can do if someone in my family abuses drugs or alcohol.**

There are many things that you can do. When you become aware of the problem, talk to your youth leader or pastor, talk to a school counselor, talk to a school teacher or talk to a trusted



## Your Opinion Please cont.

adult. It is most important that you do not hide problems, but seek what help is available. There are resources available in your community like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, along with counseling and treatment.

### **6. I can help my friends decide whether or not to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.**

One's family, peers and close friends are extremely important to preteens and teenagers. Peer pressure can influence positively or negatively. Research has found that often the most significant factor in a young person's decision to use or not to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is the influence of peers. Likewise, the influence of parents is a significant factor in whether a youth chooses not to use drugs.

### **7. It is my responsibility to talk to someone whose drug, alcohol or tobacco use concerns me.**

Concerned people of faith clearly have a responsibility to discuss their concern with loved ones when they see behavior that might be harmful to them or to others. Many problems can be resolved because of the concern and feedback of others.

### **8. Substance abuse problems primarily affect youth.**

Substance abuse problems affect people of all ages. In fact, in recent years, the problems of alcohol and prescription drug abuse among our senior population, along with the overuse and misuse of tranquilizers by middle-aged adults, have grown significantly.

### **9. When I have questions about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, the church is a good place to go for answers.**

The church is an appropriate place to go for assistance with concerns about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use. That is one of the reasons for these activities; we wish to communicate clearly to our young people that our church is an excellent resource. In many congregations there are trusted leaders who are experienced counselors, have an excellent knowledge of community resources, and can provide confidential assistance.

### **10. I believe the adults around me want to listen to my questions about alcohol, drugs and tobacco.**

Answers will vary but the point should be made that the problem of drug and alcohol abuse does not have to be faced alone.

## Your Opinion Please cont.

### "Your Opinion Please" Handout

Circle the response which most clearly indicates the way you feel about each statement. You will be asked to share your responses in a small group when everyone has finished.

SA=Strongly Agree    D=Disagree    A=Agree    SD=Strongly Disagree    U=Undecided

STATEMENTS	RESPONSES				
<i>Most young people use drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>People who use drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke are bad.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>People who choose not to drink alcohol have strong peer support for their decision.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>My religious beliefs are helpful in making decisions about whether to use or not use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>There is nothing I can do if someone in my family abuses drugs or alcohol.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>I can help my friends decide whether or not to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>It is my responsibility to talk to someone whose drug, alcohol, or tobacco use concerns me.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>Drug and alcohol problems primarily affect youth.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>When I have questions about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, the church is a good place to go for answers.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U
<i>I believe the adults around me want to listen to my questions about alcohol and drugs.</i>	SA	D	A	SD	U

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #2 for grades 6 - 8

### Anti-Drug Ads That Tell the Truth

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will identify the purpose of advertising and how it works. They will then use these ideas in a fun activity to develop advertising posters that tell the truth about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: Matthew 6:24 (NRSV)

**"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You can not serve both God and wealth."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Truth: the Anti-Drug" Activity Sheet handout (print out the Activity Sheet on page 24 and make copies for all participants)
2. Large sheet of blank paper and markers (to develop advertising posters) – one sheet for each participant
3. Sample ads on tobacco, beer and liquor from magazines or newspapers (for discussion purposes)
4. Sample ads or videos on YouTube and view or utilize in a group setting

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Youth and adults see advertising messages many times every day. On the radio, television, magazines, and billboards there are messages to buy certain products. Ads are usually very clever, colorful, and enticing kinds of messages and images. Very often they will contain a partial truth that pulls us in and makes us think we should try that product, especially if at the same time we can become that image in the ad; for example, the beautiful, appealing girl who gets the guy. The truth really is that the product cannot do that for us, and the truth is that at times that product may even be harmful.

As young people learn how advertising works, they will have more power and choice over what advertisers and media images are trying to sell. They will be able to discriminate more and make better, healthier choices. Tobacco and alcohol companies say that their marketing is not aimed at young people, but it seems clear that marketing

## Learning Activity #2 for grades 6 - 8

strategies reach and attract youth. Experts believe that youth are extremely receptive to advertising images. Even before they can read, children see the slick, youthful images that often are used in selling alcohol and tobacco. This is an activity that examines how advertising works and then gets the youth involved in developing ads that really tell the truth about the product.

Truth really becomes the "Anti-Drug" and helps us resist the power of the advertising. To help you with this activity, here are a few things about advertising to keep in mind:

1. The purpose of advertising is to sell the product by encouraging product users to switch brands, recruit new users of the product, and to increase the amount of the product used.
2. Advertisers know who the target audience is and what will work with that group.
3. Advertisers use "hooks" or images that appeal to certain age groups or groups of people. For example, risk-taking activities appeal to youth while a quiet sandy beach and warm sun appeals to older people.
4. Advertisers will often use partial truths, hoping the "true" part of the message will gain acceptance for the rest of the message that might be untrue.
5. Advertisers want you to "feel" a certain way when you see their advertisement.
6. Cigarette ads have been banned from TV and radio since 1971. Since 2001 tobacco advertising has also been banned from most billboards and magazines. However, tobacco companies have found other ways to get their message across like sponsoring race cars and putting images on sports apparel, toys and collectible merchandise.

You can extend this activity over a couple of sessions with your youth group or you can do it in one session. Give as much time for the development of their "Truth – the Anti-Drug" message development as you can since that will be the real learning part of this activity.

## Anti-Drug Ads That Tell the Truth cont.

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Ask the youth to describe ads that they have seen on TV or in magazines lately that they really like. (You may want to bring some ads to start this discussion or to expand on it.)

Describe some ads they have seen lately related to tobacco, beer, and wine.

Show a few sample ads and examine them by asking the following questions:

*What is the purpose of this ad?*

*Who is the audience?*

*What "hooks" are used to attract the reader?*

*What does the advertiser want you to think and feel?*

*Can you identify any partial truths?*

*What is the complete truth?*

*What should a Christian do about seeking "the whole truth?"*

#### **Step 2**

Have the youth get into small groups of four to five. Although each person should develop an individual ad, the group can help generate ideas in this process. Using the "Truth: The Anti-Drug" Activity Sheet, have each youth plan an ad and then create an ad that tells the real truth about drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

*Alternate Activity: Encourage each youth or a small group of students to shoot a video ad or Public Service Announcement on their smartphone and share with the larger group and/or the church.*

## Anti-Drug Ads That Tell the Truth cont.

Encourage them to use the same approaches that ad agencies use in developing ads, like clever messages, humor and appealing images, but make the ad tell the truth rather than create a false impression.

Also encourage them to use the "anti-drug" theme in their ads. See if they can give a faith dimension to the message imparted by the ad.

### **Step 3**

Have each youth show her or his ad to the whole group.

Lead a discussion about how the youth can get these messages out to the whole congregation. Perhaps hang the ads in the church for viewing by church members.

Follow up with the ideas that are generated.

## Anti-Drug Ads That Tell the Truth cont.

### "Truth: The Anti-Drug" – Handout

#### Advertising Planning Sheet

Communication Objective: \_\_\_\_\_  
(To sell a certain product. What is the product?)

Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What age group? What part of the country? Who is buying? Can you be even more specific, like 10-15 year old boys that are interested in sports?)

Current Attitudes: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What do teenagers think and feel about this product?)

Desired Attitudes: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What do you want them to think and feel?)

Desired Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What do you want them to do?)

Primary Selling Proposition: \_\_\_\_\_  
(“If you buy this product you will...”)

Support: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What support is there for people to buy this product?)

Personality: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What kind of personality do you want this ad to have? Risky? Exciting? Thoughtful?)

Success Indicators: \_\_\_\_\_  
(When will you know the ad is successful?)



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #3 for grades 6 - 8

### What's There To Do Around Here?

#### Expected Outcome:

Young people will identify a variety of activities that are fun, safe, and legal which do not involve drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: Matthew 6:24 (NRSV)

**"But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."**

#### Materials Needed

Chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart with markers

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Whether you live in a large city, a suburb, or a small rural town, you have probably heard the complaint, "There's nothing to do around here on weekends but drink or get high." Sometimes it might sound different, "If you don't like to drink, you end up home alone watching TV on Saturday night." Whatever the words, the question is the same: What is there to do around here that is fun?

Almost any activity can be done with or without using drugs or alcohol. Young people need to explore what makes the activity fun itself so that they can discern that drugs and alcohol aren't needed. The fun may be because the activity is done with friends, because it is active, because it feels a little risky, because it makes you feel good and because of many other possible reasons. It is important for youth leaders to keep asking the question "Is the activity fun, safe, and legal?"

## Learning Activity #3 for grades 6 - 8

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Gather the youth into small groups. Provide each group with a flip chart or large sheet of paper. Ask them to generate a list of activities that are fun, safe, legal, and do not involve the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Ask them to think about:

*Games to play*

*Places to go*

*Things to make*

*Things to do*

*Items to collect*

*Ways to volunteer*

#### **Step 2**

Bring everyone back together and display all the lists. The group may even come up with new ones as you discuss them. (While it is most effective if your group comes up with its own list of activities, there are many ideas on the following page for you to try that were suggested by a group of young people.) Encourage the youth to circle the ones they think would be most fun to do and plan some activities for the next few weeks.

#### **Step 3**

Many times young people feel that adults in general or those within the church are opposed to fun, pleasure, or a good time. This is an opportunity to answer the question "What does our Faith tell us about having fun?"

## What's There to Do Around Here? cont.

### Games To Play

Baseball	Darts	Softball
Basketball	Hockey	Tennis
Board games	Ping-pong	Touch football
Bowling	Racquetball	Video games
Broomball	Skating	Volleyball
Cards	Soccer	

### Places To Go

Amusement park	Library	Park	Sports event
Beach	Movies	Picnic	Zoo
Church	Museum	Skate park	

### Things To Do

Build and fly a kite	Go swimming	Pray
Call a relative	Go to church activities	Put together a hobby kit
Clean your room	Learn a language	Read a book
Do aerobics	Lift weights	Talk to friends
Draw or paint	Listen to music	Take a bike ride
Garden	Meditate	Take a hike
Go boating	Meet with your youth group	Update iTunes list
Go camping	Organize a progressive party	Wash someone's car
Go canoeing	Plan a scavenger hunt	Watch the sun rise or set
Go fishing	Play a musical instrument	Write a letter to a friend or relative
Go for a walk	Play miniature golf	Write a poem or story
Go horseback riding	Play paintball	Write and film a video
Go on a photography hike	Play with a pet	
Go roller blading/skating	Practice skateboarding	

## What's There to Do Around Here? cont.

### Items To Collect

Antiques  
Coins

Dolls  
Rocks

Sports cards  
Stamps

Tropical fish  
Wood carvings

### Things to Make

Assemble a hobby model  
Cookies or a cake  
Dinner for the family

Homemade pizza  
Lego creation  
Put together a puzzle

Scrapbook  
Video

### Volunteer Opportunities

Adopt a grandparent  
Church nursery  
Community food bank

Day care center  
Senior citizen center  
Tutor younger students

Work on a Habitat for Humanity project

## Learning Activity #4 for grades 6 - 8

### Top Ten Ways to Say "No!"

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will learn new and creative ways to say "No" to drugs, alcohol and tobacco and resist negative peer pressure.

#### Focus Scripture: Matthew 10:32 (NRSV)

"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others,  
I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven."

#### Materials Needed

1. Flip chart paper and markers
2. Sticky dots (circles) to be used in voting (three dots per person)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Learning to say "No" and resisting peer pressure are skills that allow young people to make their own decisions about moral behavior. To be a part of a group and to be accepted is very important for all of us, and especially for adolescents. At some time, in order to be a part of a group, most of us have allowed someone to pressure us into doing something we had not intended to do.

Young people who are aware of peer pressure situations and who learn and practice skills to resist it are better able to resist all types of pressure. This activity will encourage the group to be creative with their strategies to say "No" and enjoy the challenge of coming up with effective options.

## Learning Activity #4 for grades 6 - 8

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

In small groups of four or five, have the youth brainstorm **outrageous** ways to say "No" to peers related to the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Then, direct the groups to write their lists on large sheets of paper in order from 1 to 10. When all the groups have completed their lists, ask a representative for each group to stand and read the list beginning with number 10 and working up to number 1. Encourage applause and laughter!

#### **Step 2**

When each group has read its Top Ten list of **outrageous** ways to say "No", ask each group to write a second list. This time, the list needs to be their **Top Ten Most Likely to Succeed Ways to Say "No."** When they complete this second list, invite each group to come forward and present its list of effective ways to say "No." Invite applause and discussion.

#### **Step 3**

Post all the top ten lists. Give each person three sticky dots and ask them to move around the room reading the lists of ways to say "No". They are to place their dots one at a time next to the strategies they believe they would use with their peers to say "No" to the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. When everyone has had a chance to do this, announce the top three or four ways people have chosen. If there is time, have the group act out the Top Ten Ways to Say "No" to peers.

*Alternate Idea: Divide into groups with each group consisting of one person to video group members in a short vignette on the Top Ten Ways to Say "No" to Peers. Create and video scenarios where group members act out saying "no" in different ways.*

#### **Step 4 - Conclusion**

Congratulate the group on all their creative thinking during this activity. Remind the group that learning ways to say "No" helps them to stand up for themselves. As a result, they will be more comfortable telling their friends they do not want to do something that may be unsafe, illegal, immoral or unwise.

## Learning Activity #5 for grades 6 - 8

### What Makes a Good Friend?

#### Expected Outcome:

Each young person will identify qualities he or she brings to a friendship and the qualities he or she looks for in a friend.

#### Focus Scripture: Proverbs 17:17 (NRSV)

"A friend loves at all times,  
and kinsfolk are born to share adversity."

#### Materials Needed

1. Flip chart or large sheets of paper and markers
2. "Friendship Response" cards (Print out one set of four cards per participant)
3. Scissors
4. "Friendship Qualities" sheet – to aid in printing a list of qualities on the flip chart

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

This activity will take a close look at what qualities youth value in their friendships. It will identify those qualities they possess and what qualities to look for in friends. Exploring and recognizing qualities of good friends will help them make more thoughtful and healthy friendship choices. Be sure to weave into the discussion the qualities that are valued in Scripture and by Christianity.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Instruct the group to get into small groups of four to five. Supply each group with a large sheet of paper and a marker. Ask them to quickly write down a list of **the qualities they value in their friends**. After about three to five minutes, invite each group to present their list to the other groups. Post the lists.

##### Step 2

Distribute the 'Friendship Response' cards to each participant.



## Learning Activity #5 for grades 6 - 8

Using scissors, have each participant cut the four cards from the sheet. They will use one card to respond to each friendship quality that you will read aloud.

Using the list of friendship qualities recorded by the groups, and supplemented by the printed list provided, read the list of qualities one quality at a time and ask each person to respond by holding up the response card that indicates how important they feel that quality is to a healthy friendship. Encourage discussion after you have read a few qualities.

For each quality, count and record the number of people who respond with the "very important" card and the "not at all important" card. Review this count with the group.

### **Step 3**

Review the original lists of qualities they generated. What personal qualities does your faith tell you to value? Ask the young people what they notice about the lists and the way they and others responded to the different qualities as they were read aloud.

### **Step 4**

Ask the large group to come to consensus in identifying three friendship qualities that they feel belong in the "most important" category. Talk about why these are so important. Congratulate the group on the many positive qualities they value in their friends. Remind the group that these qualities will help them to choose healthy friendships.

### **Step 5**

Read the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-37). How do the friendship qualities identified by the group compare to those qualities suggested by the story of the Good Samaritan?

### **Step 6 - Questions for further discussion.**

1. Do your friends exhibit the qualities that you think are important?
2. Do you exhibit these qualities?
3. Would your friends say that you "walk the talk?"

## What Makes a Good Friend? cont.

### Friendship Qualities

Athletic	Keeps up with fashion trends
Cares about helping others	Kind
Constant	Likes the same kinds of food
Faith-centered	Likes the same kind of music
Fun loving	Lives near me
Generous	Loyal
Goes to my school	Owns great stuff
Good looking	Patient
Good sense of humor	Popular
Has enough money to do things	Practices the golden rule
Has the same religious beliefs as me	Selfless
Honesty	Strong, able to take care of her or himself
Intelligent	

## What Makes a Good Friend? cont.

### Friendship Response Cards – Handout

<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>

## Learning Activity #6 for grades 6 - 8

### Friendship and Conflict

#### Expected Outcome:

When conflict over moral and ethical issues puts stress on a friendship, the results can be very hurtful. This exercise will help kids learn and practice ways to resolve conflict with their friends while maintaining their own integrity.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 4:32 (NRSV)

**"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. God in Christ has forgiven you."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Friends Have Conflict Too!" Activity Sheet (Print out and cut apart the four "Friendship Problems.")
2. "I" Statement Formula (see below) written on board or large sheet of paper
3. Paper and pencil (One set for each of the four groups.)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

It is not unusual for young people to have conflicts or fights with their friends. Unfortunately, they often don't know how to handle these situations. This activity will identify some examples of friendship conflicts and "I" statement strategies for helping to resolve conflicts and still keep their friends.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Begin this activity by asking for anyone who has ever had a fight or conflict with a friend to raise their hand. Ask for a volunteer to give an example of a conflict between friends and how they might resolve it. Let the group know that this activity will help them find strategies to use when in a difficult situation with friends.

## Learning Activity #6 for grades 6 - 8

### Step 2

Divide the group into four small groups. With the four Friendship Problems cut apart, assign one problem to each team. One person in each group will record and report the ideas for resolving the assigned problem. Allow five minutes for the group to discuss ways to solve the problem.

Refer to the "I" Statement Formula written on the board or large paper in the front of the room. Discuss the purpose of the "I" Statement.

Have each small group report its assigned Friendship Problem resolution.

Ask someone from each group to volunteer to roleplay their problem situation using the "I" Statement Formula.

Note: You could also invite each group to replace the problem from the sheet with a situation that someone has experienced or knows about.

Review the original lists of qualities they generated. What personal qualities does your faith tell you to value? Ask the young people what they notice about the lists and the way they and others responded to the different qualities as they were read aloud.

### Step 3

Ask the group whether they believe that the "I" Statement Formula is a good strategy for resolving conflicts with friends. If so, why? If not, why not and what would work better? Some young people are skeptical about using "I" statements and may have their own examples of how they respectfully resolve conflict with friends.

### Step 4 – Conclusion

Remind the youth how difficult it sometimes is to get along with others. It is important to remember that even when friends have disagreements or conflicts, they can learn to resolve them respectfully and remain good friends. Ask the group to give a "thumbs up" if they have successfully resolved conflict with a friend.

## Friendship and Conflict cont.

### "I" Statement Formula

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because it feels like \_\_\_\_\_.

I want you to / or I want \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Example: "I feel hurt and angry when you leave me out at lunch and sit with someone else because it feels like you don't care. I want to eat lunch with you tomorrow."*

## Friendship and Conflict cont.

### Friends Have Conflict Too! – Handout

#### **Friendship Problem #1**

*A friend acts one way when they're alone with you and another way when they're with a group.*

**Discuss.**

#### **Friendship Problem #2**

*You want to be someone's friend but you don't want to belong to the group he or she hangs around.*

**Discuss.**

#### **Friendship Problem #3**

*A friend hurts your feelings.*

**Discuss.**

#### **Friendship Problem #4**

*You and a friend have a fight.*

**Discuss.**

## Learning Activity #7 for grades 6 - 8

### Resisting Peer Pressure

#### Expected Outcome:

This activity will help children identify how peer pressure affects them, and how to say "No" to behaviors that would hurt them.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-11 (NRSV)

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.  
Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may  
be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Paper and pencil for each student
2. Chalkboard or flip chart with markers
3. "Pledge to Live a Faithful Life" handout for each participant

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1 – Tell Me About Your Friends

Give each student a piece of paper and pencil. Tell them you are going to read several statements, and they should write their answers on the paper.

1. *Sometimes my friends ask me to do things I shouldn't do. True or False?*
2. *One thing that my friends might want me to do that may not be right is \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *Sometimes my friends help me do things that are good. True or False?*
4. *One thing that my friends and I do that is good is \_\_\_\_\_.*
5. *What are your feelings and concerns when your friend asks you to do things you shouldn't do?*



## Learning Activity #7 for grades 6 - 8

### Step 2

Tell the students you do not want them to sign the papers, but to hand them in to you.

### Step 3 – What Would You Do?

Make two columns on a flip chart or chalkboard. Label one column "Negative" and one column "Positive." From the answer sheets the youth gave you, write down the items from #2 in the negative column and the items from #4 in the positive column. Add anything from your own personal experience that you feel comfortable with. Talk about how you handled negative peer pressure in the past.

### Step 4

Place students into groups of 2-3 and ask them to "role play" a few of the negative and positive situations on the list. Each role play should ask a student to do something from the list, and then to respond. Use these two examples to get the group going.

**NEGATIVE** - Student A, B, and C are in a convenience store. Students A and B steal candy bars by slipping them into their pockets. They tell student C to do so as well. Student C chooses whether to do it.

**POSITIVE** – Student A talks to student B about joining the soccer team. Student B says she isn't a good player and she'd rather stay at home and watch TV. Student A says that soccer is good for her because she will get some exercise. Student B decides whether to join.

### Step 5

Talk about the role play situations. Point out that friends can influence each other in both good ways and bad ways. Did any of the students say "No thanks" when they were asked to do something negative? How did they say "No?"

*Continued on page 42*

## Resisting Peer Pressure cont.

### Step 6

Write the following on the chart or board:

**Say no. Leave.**

**Say no again and again.**

**Say what might happen if you do this.**

**Suggest something else to do.**

Ask students to role-play the negative situations again, but this time, assign them one of the responses listed above. Make sure each response is covered at least once. After they have acted these situations out, talk about what they experienced. How did they feel? How can they respond to negative peer pressure?

### Step 7 – Something to Take Away

Distribute the "Pledge To Live a Faithful Life" handout and encourage each youth to fill it out and sign it. For those willing to make a commitment to stay faithful, ask them to seek out another class member – a "buddy" – who will hold them accountable for their commitment and remind them why they made this choice today. You may want to make copies of the pledge cards for the young person making the pledge and for the friend who will hold them accountable.

### Step 8 – Wrap Up

Close with a prayer. Pray for each student by name, asking for the strength for each one to say "No" to the bad influences in their lives, and for the ability to be a good influence on others.

## Resisting Peer Pressure cont.

### Pledge to Live a Faithful Life – Handout

#### Pledge to Live a Faithful Life

When my friends ask me to do something wrong such as \_\_\_\_\_,

I will \_\_\_\_\_.

In making my decision, I PROMISE to consider my own values, what my faith teaches  
and to seek advice or help from others I trust if I need to talk about it.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## Learning Activity #1 for Junior High and High School Students

### What's Okay To Do and What's Not

#### Expected Outcome:

Adolescents will explore choices people make to use or not use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco while considering the consequences of making these choices.

#### Focus Scripture: John 8:32 (NRSV)

**"And you will know the truth,  
and the truth will make you free."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Situations" Activity Sheet for each participant (Print out copies of the PDF File)
2. Chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart and markers
3. Pens or pencils

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

By the time young people leave high school, almost all will have been in situations – unsupervised, alone or with friends – where they have had to make choices about using or not using drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Most are making that choice in their early teens. This activity is designed to assist young people in making decisions about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco by exploring their beliefs about drug use and the consequences of using drugs. There are two messages that need to be communicated clearly and frequently from preschool through graduation:

1. *Abstinence from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco is a lifelong decision that many young people are making. You are not alone in making a choice to abstain.*
2. *We don't want you to use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs. A major part of living an abundant life is to know that you can live without using mood-altering substances.*

## Learning Activity #1 for Junior High and High School Students

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Hand out a "Situations" Activity Worksheet to each participant. Read through the instructions and ask them individually to mark their answers to each situation. While students are marking their answers, write the following questions on the chalkboard or a flip chart:

*Was it easy to select words that describe each situation?*

*How did you choose which words to use?*

*What do your religious teachings say about using or not using drugs, alcohol and tobacco? Are those teachings clear or not so clear?*

*What, if any, mixed messages do you get?*

#### **Step 2**

When participants have finished marking their "Situations" Worksheets, have them move into small groups of four or five. Instruct each group to share the answers they marked on their "Situations" Worksheet and the reasons for their choices. After discussing their choices, have the groups turn their attention to the questions you posted on the chalkboard or flip chart and discuss them.

#### **Step 3**

After they have finished discussing in their small groups, bring everyone back together in a large group. Ask the entire group to compile a list of guidelines or standards ("personal rules") for determining when the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is appropriate. Record their responses on the board or flip chart.

#### **Step 4 - Conclusion**

Review and discuss the list of guidelines and standards the group has suggested. Let the group know that the decision of whether or not to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco is an intensely personal one for which each person is accountable. We all need to realize that our choices often have consequences that affect others, such as increasing trust or losing trust, causing worry and sometimes creating health problems and financial costs.

## What's Okay To Do and What's Not cont.

### Situations Worksheet

A number of situations that involve drug, alcohol or tobacco use are described below and on the facing page. For each situation, choose up to three of the words listed here that you feel best describe the use.

<i>Bad</i>	<i>Illegal</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Unhealthy</i>
<i>Dumb</i>	<i>Legal</i>	<i>Risky</i>	<i>Wrong</i>
<i>Good</i>	<i>Not okay</i>	<i>Safe</i>	
<i>Healthy</i>	<i>Okay</i>	<i>Smart</i>	

<i>It's the prom and "everyone" is drinking.</i>	
<i>Your date encourages you to just try some alcohol. "A sip will not hurt anything."</i>	
<i>A group of high school-age young people hold a "keg party" and advertise all the beer you can drink for \$5.</i>	
<i>Parents allow their 16 year old daughter to have a glass of wine with the evening meal.</i>	
<i>Several young people share some marijuana while at a party.</i>	
<i>Two friends attend a rave where ecstasy is used.</i>	
<i>An adult enjoys having a glass of wine with the evening meal.</i>	
<i>A friend gets into the car you are riding in and lights up a cigarette.</i>	

## What's Okay To Do and What's Not cont.

<i>As an athlete, you hear that steroids will help you gain strength. You want to make the first team so you start buying and using steroids.</i>	
<i>You've been gaining weight. Your friends say that diet pills will help you lose the weight easily.</i>	
<i>I will drink in high school but I'll stop when I get older. Nothing bad will happen because I'm young.</i>	
<i>You've waited to be a part of the popular group and you are finally invited to a party. As the fun begins, alcohol and pills are passed around for all to use.</i>	

### Notes

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## Learning Activity #2 for Junior High and High School Students

### Why Some People Make Poor Decisions

#### Expected Outcome:

Young people will increase their knowledge of alternative behaviors by identifying reasons why some young people choose to use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: John 15:10-11 (NRSV)

**"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart and markers
2. Markers or pens

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

This activity gets the conversation going about the "why" of youth drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. It helps young people become more aware of and intentional about their decisions. It helps youth become aware of the many things they can do to deal with their feelings instead of participating in risky behaviors like the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Note older youth will see more "gray areas" in the discussion. It is wise for leaders to let the youth fully discuss these issues instead of just expecting a "just say no" answer.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Ask group members to brainstorm reasons why they think some youth use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. This list can include reasons they have actually heard as well as ones the participants guess. What do you think "using" youth say when asked? Make a list on the left side of the board or paper, leaving space to the right of each reason.



## Learning Activity #2 for Junior High and High School Students

### Step 2

After brainstorming all of the reasons youth might use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, ask youth to list next to each reason a safer, healthier way to accomplish the same thing, such as “a change of feeling.”

#### Example:

Reasons youth use	Alternatives to using
<i>to relax</i>	<i>play sports, jog, lift weights, listen to music</i>
<i>calm down</i>	<i>take deep breaths, take a walk</i>
<i>to belong/be accepted</i>	<i>work with others in a community project, hang out with positive friends</i>

### Step 3

Go back over the reasons youth use and ask for possible consequences of using alcohol or other drugs to achieve the desired effect. Then ask about the possible consequences of using the alternatives to accomplish the same ends. You might even come up with a list of reasons why youth don't use. Point out how positive it is to learn healthy ways to handle feelings or relate to others.

Look at the list of alternatives. How many of them have spiritual dimensions? Prayer is an alternative that youth need to be encouraged to plug into in dealing with stressors. Also, discuss how involvement with the church youth group or projects in the community serve as good alternatives to drugs by providing friendship and stability and by avoiding the many negatives that accompany drug use.

Help the young people think through the process of change. How do people change behaviors? How do deeply held values change? How do new or reaffirmed values result in changed behaviors?

### Step 4 – Conclusion

Have each youth write down his or her own personal action plan identifying possible alternatives to alcohol and drug use. Help them make a commitment to let faith guide them in their daily choices of actions.

## Learning Activity #3 for Junior High and High School Students

### Feeling Good About Taking A Stand

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will think about their beliefs regarding drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and they will learn what some adults in their congregation believe about these topics. They also will discover what the Bible teaches about the use of these substances.

#### Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2 (NRSV)

"And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well."

#### Materials Needed

1. Paper and pens
2. Copies of the questionnaire for each participant
3. For **Connect to the Content, Option 2**: Video camera and TV/smartphone with video capability

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1 – Preparation

1. This lesson can be conducted in two sessions if you have the young people interview members of their church and then bring back their results.
2. For **Connect to the Content, Option 1**, you will need to invite members of your church to participate in a panel discussion.
3. For **Connect to the Content, Option 2**, you will need to make copies of the questions so the young people can take them along on the interviews.
4. Think about your own history of substance use, including alcohol. How has your faith influenced (or failed to influence) your choices about substance use?

##### Step 2 – What Do Youth Think?

Read the statements below to the youth and ask them to indicate what they believe about each statement. Some youth will clearly "agree" or "disagree." However, some youth will have more of a "middle ground" response. Encourage the youth to discuss

## Learning Activity #3 for Junior High and High School Students

the “why” behind their beliefs no matter which response they give.

**Statements:**

1. *Most teens smoke. Most teens drink alcohol. Most teens use drugs.*
2. *I know what my religion says about using these substances.*
3. *It is difficult to be popular if you don’t smoke, drink or use drugs.*
4. *There’s not much I can do if one of my friends is into smoking, drinking, vaping or drugs.*
5. *I know someone I could talk to if I had questions about these substances, or if I or someone I knew was using them.*
6. *I know what I believe about these substances and I feel like my actions will support my beliefs.*

Here are a few points you may wish to highlight during your discussion of the questions above. To help you prepare for specific drug questions, see the drug fact sheets in the adult activity section of this guide.

**Statement 1:** *Although many people think that ‘everyone does it,’ the truth is that most young people do not use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke. According to the 2017 National Institute on Drug Abuse report ([www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)), illicit drug use was the lowest it has been in 20 years. Alcohol use and binge drinking has also continued to decline.*

**Statements 3 and 4:** *Youth may or may not feel pressure to do these things to be popular, but you always have a choice. Nobody will force you to do it. It will take guts, but talking to your friends about not using drugs, drinking and smoking can make a difference in your decisions. More important than talking is what you actually do. Peer pressure can work both ways. If your friends like and admire you, even though you don’t do these things, you will make an impression on them.*

**Statement 5:** *The person(s) you can trust may be someone in your congregation, a school counselor, a parent or another adult. Provide the names of community resources.*

**Statement 6:** *The first step toward being able to say ‘No’ is deciding firmly what you believe - before you have to take a stand. When someone hands you a “joint” is not the time to be deciding what you believe.*

Continued on page 52

## Feeling Good About Taking A Stand cont.

### Step 3 – Connect to the Content

#### **Option 1: Interview The Leaders**

Invite members of your congregation to participate in a panel discussion with youth about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Panel members could include church staff, lay leaders, parents, youth leaders, teachers, coaches, or law enforcement that would include an age span of older and younger members of the congregation. Give panel members a list of possible questions ahead of time and let them know that the youth will also be able to ask additional questions. Some possible questions:

- 1. What does our faith teach about drug, alcohol, and tobacco use?*
- 2. Why do we have these views?*
- 3. What scriptures speak to the use of these substances? What do they say?*
- 4. What does our faith say about the occasional use of some of these substances as opposed to the abuse of them? What does it mean to abuse them?*
- 5. Is there a difference between youth and adults using these substances? What is it?*
- 6. Where can someone get good advice about dealing with the pressure to use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco?*
- 7. How does drug use affect one's ability to develop a spiritually meaningful life?*

Lead the panel in discussing the answers to these questions and ask youth to contribute any other questions or comments they have.

#### **Option 2: Roving Reporters**

Using the same questions and possibly the same people as in Option 1, assign youth to go interview and video record people responding to the questions with a smartphone. The youth should be in groups of 2-3. In addition to interviewing the people who have been contacted ahead of time, the youth might want to try some "on the street" interviews to see what kind of responses they get.

## Feeling Good About Taking A Stand cont.

### Step 4 – Take Away

#### **Option 1: What Have You Learned About Our Faith?**

Go around the room and ask each young person to state one thing that he or she believes about the use of drugs, alcohol, and smoking that is a result of their Christian faith. Continue until they run out of ideas.

#### **Option 2: What Have You Learned About Each Other?**

If the youth videotaped the interviews, watch the videos and discuss them. Questions to use in the discussion might include:

- 1. Were you surprised by what people said? Why or why not?*
- 2. Did everyone agree on what our faith teaches us? If they disagreed, why do you think that is?*
- 3. Did people have strong opinions on this topic, or were they kind of wishy-washy?*
- 4. Is there a difference in what our faith teaches about adults or youth using these substances?*

#### **Option 3: What Have You Learned About Substance Abuse?**

Ask each young person in the group to share two things that they know now about alcohol, drugs and smoking that they didn't know when the session started.

### Step 5 – Wrap Up

Hand out paper and pencils to each student. Ask them to write at the top of the page "**THIS I BELIEVE.**" Below it, ask them to write what they now believe about the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Encourage the students to be honest and realistic in what they write down.

## Learning Activity #4 for Junior High and High School Students

### Marijuana Game Show

**Expected Outcome:**

Youth will learn facts about marijuana to counter common myths and misconceptions.

**Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:22 (NRSV)**

"Shun youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

**Materials Needed**

1. [What is Marijuana handout](#) (Page 143-144)
2. [Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet](#) (Page 57)
3. [Marijuana Game Show Answer Sheet](#) (Page 58)
4. [Prevalence of Marijuana Use Chart](#) (Page 55)

**Tips for Youth Leaders**

There are many myths and a lot of misinformation about marijuana use. For example, most youth overestimate the number of people who smoke marijuana. It is important to let young people know that this perception is incorrect. In fact, most people do not smoke marijuana. Young people are more likely to use marijuana, alcohol or other drugs if they believe everyone else is using them.

The following activities will help clear up some of those inaccuracies through a game show format (taken from the Jeopardy Game). Using this format will make it easier and more fun for the group to participate in and retain the information.

## Learning Activity #4 for Junior High and High School Students

### Activity Directions

#### Step 1

Briefly review the following definition of marijuana:

*Marijuana is a dried mixture of leaves, vines, seeds and stems of a hemp plant called cannabis sativa. It is generally used to make homemade cigarettes called "joints or reefers" which are smoked.*

#### Step 2

In small groups of three or four people, ask them to come up with the percentage of teens they believe use marijuana in the United States. Ask them also to discuss what percentage of their peers and/or classmates at their school they believe smoke marijuana.

#### Step 3

Give the small groups five minutes to complete the task. Ask each group to report their findings regarding national marijuana use. Record the percentages and have them compare those numbers to the actual percentages on the following chart.

Prevalence of Marijuana Use-Year 2017 Data*			
Marijuana use	8th grade	10th	12th
Past month	5.5%	15.7%	22.9%
Daily	.8%	2.9%	5.9%

\*[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov), 2017

Then ask each team to report the percentage of teens in their church they guess smoke marijuana. Now do you think that is accurate? Why or why not? Be sure to tell the students that the majority of teens nationally and locally do not smoke marijuana and/or use other drugs. If you can obtain actual numbers for use at the community or school level, share those as well and compare.

#### Step 4 – Quiz Show Directions

Make two copies of the Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet. Cut each sheet into strips. Each strip contains one statement or fact.

Continued on page 56

## Marijuana Game Show cont.

Divide the group into two teams. Distribute a set of statements to each team.

As the youth leader, you will serve as "Quiz Show Host" for the Marijuana Game Show. The game show is based on the "Jeopardy" television show. You will read an "answer" aloud from the Game Show Marijuana Answer Sheet.

Team members will identify the statement corresponding to that fact (from their fact strips) and phrase a question from it, which can be answered by the fact that you read.

For example, you read, "The answer is, THC." Team members must find the corresponding fact statement and phrase a question, e.g., "What is the mind-altering or psychoactive ingredient of marijuana called?"

The teams score points for each right answer. Each team must come up with a unique sound to indicate they know the "question." (oinking like a pig, siren, etc)

After you read each answer, the team that makes their sound first gets the opportunity to respond. If they respond incorrectly, the other team takes their turn.

The team with the most points wins! But of course everyone wins because they all learned the facts about marijuana.

### Step 5 – Conclusion

Congratulate both teams for their quick thinking in completing the Marijuana game. Remind the group that most young people report that their close friends would disapprove if they smoked marijuana even just once in awhile. Ask the group if they were surprised by any of the marijuana facts that they learned today. Have them finish the statement;

*"I was surprised to learn that marijuana or using marijuana \_\_\_\_\_"*



## Marijuana Game Show cont.

### Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet

(These Facts need to be stated in the form of a question.)

1. Marijuana's psychoactive or mind-altering ingredient is called THC.
2. THC or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol determines the potency or the strength of the marijuana.
3. Marijuana smoke contains carbon monoxide and tar, causing the same problems as tobacco smoking.
4. Marijuana affects short-term memory and interferes with the ability to concentrate.
5. Marijuana users have a poor sense of time and space and this effect interferes with the ability to drive and perform other complex tasks.
6. Smoking marijuana causes the heart and pulse rate to increase up to 50%.
7. Marijuana that is available today is approximately ten times more potent than the marijuana that was available in 1975. This increased potency contributes to the dangers of using it on any regular basis.
8. When marijuana is smoked, the active ingredient, THC, is absorbed by many tissues and organs of the body and it can be identified in the body system for as long as one month after use.
9. Marijuana may temporarily make a person feel better. It cannot help a person to cope more effectively with life's problems. It usually makes the situation or problem worse.
10. There are serious legal, social and health consequences to using marijuana.
11. Most teens do not use marijuana.
12. Some people become very depressed, nervous or confused after smoking marijuana.
13. It is difficult to learn anything when using marijuana.
14. Like cigarettes, smoking marijuana regularly for many years can cause certain types of cancer.

## Marijuana Game Show cont.

### Marijuana Game Show Fact Answer Sheet

1. *THC*
2. *Determines potency of marijuana*
3. *Carbon monoxide*
4. *Short term memory*
5. *Poor sense of time and space*
6. *Up to 50%*
7. *10 times more powerful*
8. *Identified in the body system for as long as one month after use*
9. *Makes a person feel better but cannot cope more effectively*
10. *Legal, social and health*
11. *Most teens do not use marijuana*
12. *Very depressed, nervous or confused*
13. *Difficult to learn*
14. *Certain types of cancer*

## Notes

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## Learning Activity #5 for Junior High and High School Students

### Avoiding Risky Business

#### **Expected Outcome:**

Youth will explore risky situations, the consequences of their actions and consider ways they might respond if they are ever in a similar situation.

#### **Focus Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33 (NRSV)**

**"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."**

#### **Materials Needed**

1. Copies of "A Ride to the River" (Make copies of this case study.)

#### **Tips for Youth Leaders**

Youth are strongly influenced by peers and their need to fit in. Many youth find themselves in situations that involve the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco that they are not prepared for. By involving youth in discussions about situations similar to "A Ride to the River," we can help them think about potential risky situations and plan for a response if they ever find themselves in a similar situation.

Decision-making can be defined as a process in which a person chooses from two or more alternatives. Every day, people are faced with situations that demand decisions. Because these decisions are so common, the process is taken for granted until a person has to make a serious decision that has long-term effects on his/her life.

Some decisions are difficult because the issue confronting us is truly complex, and the complexity of the issue creates a moral dilemma. Other decisions are difficult because we have conflicted feelings regarding an issue. The issue itself may be fairly simple and straightforward, but circumstances surrounding the issue and our feelings about these circumstances create the dilemma. Examples of the first kind of dilemma include issues of capital punishment, war and peace and biomedical ethics. Examples of the second kind of dilemma include a number of issues related to substance abuse.

It is fairly clear to many people that smoking cigarettes is probably unhealthy and not good Christian stewardship of our bodies. The simplicity of the issue is overridden by the complexity of circumstances. Young people experience peer pressure to smoke, and may begin smoking experimentally only to find that cigarettes are addictive. What should have

## Learning Activity #5 for Junior High and High School Students

been no dilemma at all becomes a real dilemma because of circumstances and factors larger than the original issue.

The goal of Christian moral education, the path we usually term Christian discipleship, must embrace both kinds of dilemmas. We must provide solid information regarding the complexities of moral decision-making, and sensitivity to the personal/social circumstances that interfere with making clear decisions. Christian discipleship involves both understanding the complexity of issues and developing the character to resist social pressures that tend to cloud issues. We tend to make better decisions when we understand the facts and we are empowered to make Christian decisions when we become persons truthful enough and courageous enough to make such decisions.

When churches offer the opportunity for their teenagers to learn Christian decision-making skills, they offer the opportunity for a young person to learn how to reason through situations, to solve problems, and to direct behavior. Maturity empowers Christian decision-making. As they center their lives in Christ, young people reduce the amount of ambiguity in their choices and limit the degree to which outside influences affect their decisions. Learning Christian decision-making skills increases the likelihood that each person can achieve that which he/she most deeply values.

### Activity Directions

#### Step 1

Have youth read through "A Ride to the River." (You may want to ask for a volunteer to read it aloud or you may want to read it). The situation involves three young people having a good time playing ball who are offered drinks by an older cousin and his friend and then are invited to go for a ride to the river.

#### Step 2

Below are some possible questions for starting a conversation about the story. You may want to do this in a small group or with the whole group. Ask the group these questions and allow them to respond.

*Do you think the three younger people in this narrative were having a good time playing softball?*

*What are some of the problem situations in the story?*

*Did Tanner have more reason to drink than Tanisha or Carlos? Explain.*

*Why do you think Tanisha "faked" the drinking rather than saying "I don't want any?"*

*Continued on page 62*

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

*How do you think Tanisha was feeling while they passed the bottle? Why was Carlos faking drinking?*

*How did the others feel about Carlos refusing to go to the river?*

*If Tanner had refused the drink, how might that have affected the situation for Tanisha and Carlos?*

*Alex said he had a quart of vodka at a party. Why do you think some people exaggerate how much they drink?*

*What are the choices that Tanisha can make in regard to going to the river?*

*Do you think they went to the river?*

*How would you have responded to this situation?*

*What does our faith say about situations like this one?*

*What types of situations cause you to feel the greatest amount of peer pressure – situations with alcohol, tobacco, vaping, marijuana, pills, or other substances?*

*What makes a choice easier or more difficult?*

### **Step 3**

The participants may have additional thoughts and questions that they want to discuss. Provide an opportunity for the youth to express any ideas or thoughts that they have. Ask youth if there are any situations similar to "A Ride to the River" that they have been in or can anticipate that they would like to discuss.

### **Step 4 – Conclusion**

You may find yourself in this kind of situation. Remind the youth that church can be a place where it is safe and fun to have activities or events free from drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Your faith can be the foundation for saying "no." Ask the youth to share ways their beliefs have helped them in similar situations.

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

### “A Ride To The River” – Handout

#### **Situation**

Three young people are offered drinks by an older cousin and his friend and then are invited to go for a ride to the river. The characters are:

**Tanner** – Young boy who is teaching Tanisha how to hit a ball

**Carlos** – Tanner’s friend who is pitching the ball

**Tanisha** – Young girl who is learning to bat

**Brian** – Tanner’s older cousin who is smoking a cigarette

**Alex** – Brian’s friend

*The scene is a beautiful summer day. Three friends are goofing around at a baseball field. Tanner and Carlos are helping Tanisha with her hitting. Tanner is catching and Carlos pitches the ball. Tanisha hits it to center field and Carlos gives her encouragement, “Nice hit, not bad, not bad. Now the pitch will come a little faster.” Tanisha smiles, pleased with her progress and obviously having a good time. Tanner leans toward her, helping her with her stance and says, “Wait a minute now, better choke up and get a better grip.” Tanisha connects again, and the boys shout enthusiastically, “All right, all right - sign her up for the team.”*

*All three heads turn as a car horn begins to blast. They look toward a car backing down the street toward them. Someone is leaning out the window shouting loudly. “Who’s that?” asks Carlos. “That’s my cousin Brian and his friend Alex,” responds Tanner. Carlos continues, “What does he want?”*

*Two older boys brazenly stagger toward the fence, yelling at Tanner, “Hey man, come over here. Come on, we ain’t got all day.” Brian has a cigarette in one hand and a bottle in the other. He takes a long swig from the bottle and hands it over the fence to Tanner. “Here,” he says, “I got something for you, drink up, come on.” Tanner looks at the bottle in his hand and sits down on the grass near the fence. Tanisha and Carlos join him.*

*Alex says in a slurred voice, “That’s it man, that’s right, sit down and make yourself comfortable.” Tanner then samples the booze and passes the bottle to Tanisha. Tanisha raises it to her lips as if to sample it, and then passes the bottle to Carlos.*

*Continued on page 64*

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

Tanner asks Brian, "Hey, Brian, why weren't you at Uncle Joe's party?" Alex answers for Brian, "Me and Brian went to this concert." He looks at Tanner and says, "Why are you laughing man? It was good."

Carlos, who hesitated at first, takes a sip from the bottle. Brian looks at him and teases, "Hey Carlos, it's not mouthwash, swallow it! Don't gargle." Carlos swallows and passes the bottle back to Alex and Brian who also take a drink.

"The concert was definitely supreme," states Alex. Brian comments, "Oh yeah, he missed half of it because he passed out twice. I had to carry him back to the car." "What can I do after three quarts of vodka?" says Alex, bragging. Tanner smiles, and when the bottle is again passed to him, takes a drink from it. Tanisha sits quietly with eyes down, obviously uneasy with the conversation.

Alex continues talking. "You know why Brian wasn't at Uncle Joe's? He puked up!" "That's a lie," Brian says. "It was the cat that puked up, it was the cat." Alex asks, "Did fat old Uncle Joe wear a funny hat to the party again? What would you want to go there for? He's 47 years old and he runs around wearing Mickey Mouse hats."

The booze bottle is being passed again. Tanisha pretends to drink and passes it on to Carlos. Brian says, "Hey, anybody want to go to the river? Come on, I'll drive my car. How about it?"

Tanner looks at Carlos, "Want to go, Carlos?" Carlos replies, "No, that's all right. It's getting late. I've got to cut out." Brian says, "Hey, the river is great. Just because the gargler don't want to go!" He leans toward Tanner and teases, "Hey Tanner, take your girlfriend. We can go to the river. We can ride in my car, listen to the stereo, and get something to drink."

Tanner gives Brian a push and says, "She's not my girlfriend." Brian grins and says, "Oh come on. I'll bet she'd like to be." He looks at Tanisha and asks, "Like to be his girlfriend?" Tanisha smiles uncomfortably as Tanner asks, "You wanna go to the river?"



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## Learning Activity #6 for Junior High and High School Students

### Laying Down the Burden of Lies

#### Expected Outcome:

Young people will feel some of the emotional and spiritual burdens brought on by lying about drug or alcohol use.

**Focus Scripture:** Proverbs 15:14 (NRSV)

**“The mind of one who has understanding seeks knowledge,  
but the mouths of fools feed on folly.”**

#### Materials Needed

1. Weights such as hand-held or gym weights of varying pounds, or heavy books (one for each participant)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Young people will realize that the negative consequences of using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco go beyond physical risks. They will see that using these substances almost always leads to lies, which can damage relationships and lead to emotional and spiritual burdens.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Invite each person in the group to pick up one of the weights (they won't all be used) and then form a group circle in the middle of the room. Ask for one volunteer from the group to put down her/his weight and step into the middle of the circle.

Explain that you are going to tell a story about the volunteer. With each event described in the story, the volunteer will take one of the weights from a person in the circle and continue to hold it until the story is finished.

##### Step 2

Read the following story (or make one up of your own) inserting the volunteer's name in the appropriate places:

\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert volunteer's name] was at school and a casual friend mentioned a party that was coming up the next weekend where there would definitely be alcohol and probably some marijuana. \_\_\_\_\_ didn't really want to go, partly because he/she had just

## Learning Activity #6 for Junior High and High School Students

signed a pledge at church to stay drug-free. However, \_\_\_\_\_ knew that a lot of people from school were going to the party and that everyone would be talking about it on Monday. Later when his/her best friend asked if he/she wanted to go to the party, \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Sure." (At this point the volunteer should step forward and take a weight from someone in the circle.)

When the weekend rolled around \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling pretty unsure about what to do. \_\_\_\_\_ knew that his/her parents and youth leader would be disappointed if he/she went to the party, but it also sounded fun and practically everyone from school was going to be there. \_\_\_\_\_ decided it was important to his/her social status to go to the party, however \_\_\_\_\_ was planning to not drink or use any drugs. \_\_\_\_\_ told his/her parents that he/she would be staying overnight at the best friend's house and the best friend told his/her parents the same thing. (Add another weight.)

At the party, someone handed \_\_\_\_\_ a beer right away. (Add a weight)

\_\_\_\_\_ pretended to drink it for a while and eventually started taking small sips. Soon the drink was gone and the best friend grabbed two more and handed one to \_\_\_\_\_. After a while, a group of people started playing a game that involved drinking shots of liquor. Someone called out \_\_\_\_\_ name and said, "Hey, you're no wimp, come and see if you can beat Alex." \_\_\_\_\_ was embarrassed and didn't want to make a scene. Plus he/she had sipped through the second beer and was starting to feel a bit more reckless. So, \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Sure I can," and walked over to the group. (Add a weight.)

After drinking a number of shots, \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling kind of funny and a little bit sick. Then \_\_\_\_\_ noticed someone that he/she had been wanting to ask out on a date for a long time. \_\_\_\_\_ stumbled over and slurred, "Hello." The potential date looked bothered and asked if \_\_\_\_\_ was drunk. \_\_\_\_\_ said, "No." It was obvious that \_\_\_\_\_ had been drinking and the potential date walked away. (Add a weight.)

The best friend smoked some marijuana and he/she and \_\_\_\_\_ ended up sleeping at the party. The next morning \_\_\_\_\_ felt awful. When \_\_\_\_\_ got home, his/her parents noticed that he/she didn't seem as spunky as usual. They asked if anything was wrong. \_\_\_\_\_ said "No." The next day at church \_\_\_\_\_ youth worker said that he had heard about the party and wondered if he/she knew anything about it. The youth worker was concerned that someone in the community was supplying drugs and alcohol to youth. \_\_\_\_\_ said that he/she had just been there for a little while and hadn't seen anyone drinking or using drugs. (Add a weight.)

## Laying Down the Burden of Lies cont.

### Step 3

By this time the volunteer will be loaded down with the heavy weights. Ask the volunteer how it feels to be holding so many weights. Then let everyone put down their weights. Sit in a circle and talk about the activity. Begin by asking if anyone noticed at what points the weights were added. They may or may not realize that every personal interaction in the story involved a lie. Point out that drugs and alcohol have many negative effects on the lives of young people and that one of those is that it almost always leads to situations in which young people feel they must lie to cover their activities. Then ask:

*Why do you think we used weights to represent lies?*

*Are some lies heavier than others?*

*How is carrying the burden of lies similar to carrying a burden of weights?*

*What happens to our bodies, minds and spirits when we carry the burden of lies?*

*What do you think would have happened if [volunteer] had told the best friend the truth in the first place (that he/she didn't really want to go to the party)?*

*Is it harder to lie or tell the truth? Why?*

*When is it harder to tell the truth?*

*What does our faith say about telling the truth, even when it's difficult?*

*What does our faith teach us about handling our burdens?*

*What would change in your life if telling the truth became an absolute?*

### Step 4 – Conclusion

By showing youth the connection between drug and alcohol use, and the heavy, weighted-down feelings brought on by lies, you may cause them to think twice the next time they are faced with a choice about whether or not to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

Encourage group members to think twice the next time they are in a situation in which their choice might cause them to lie – and to remember the uncomfortable burden lies make us bear.

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## Learning Activity #7 for Junior High and High School Students

### Media Images – Friend or Foe?

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will learn critical thinking skills about the media and determine whether media images support or conflict with their values and faith regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10 (NRSV)

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.  
Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able  
to stand against the wiles of the devil."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Flip chart or chalkboard
2. Paper and pencils for each person
3. Collection of print ads for tobacco, beer and wine from YouTube to show how alcohol, tobacco and drugs are portrayed in advertising or in media coverage
4. For **Pop Culture Critique, Option 2:** Find television shows, commercials, movie segments, Twitter, SnapChat or other social media platforms that illustrate the use of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs. Video tape these to be shown to the group to illustrate common media images. Arrange to have a TV or other appropriate media equipment in the room when you do this activity.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1 – Preparation

Contact a small group of junior high and senior high peer leaders several weeks before you plan to conduct this session. Review the content of this learning activity with them, explaining that you would like them to take leadership in presenting it. Decide who will help with which parts of the session. Ask them to help contact youth, or choose the television shows, commercials or movie segments that will be shown.

##### ***Option 1 – Prepared by students at home***

Prior to this session, ask youth to do the following:

*Watch a favorite TV show, video or go to a movie they've been wanting to see. Write down every reference in the show or film about alcohol, tobacco or drug use and what's going on in conjunction with the use of the substance.*

## Learning Activity #7 for Junior High and High School Students

*(Examples: smoking because the person is stressed out, having a beer after coming home from work, attending a party where socializing means drinking and/or drugs). If watching television, ask students to also make note of the commercials -- what is being sold and how? Also, make note of how persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are depicted, how males and females are portrayed and how sexuality issues are presented.*

You might want to provide students with a copy of the questions you are going to discuss to review as they watch the show or movie.

Collect several print ads for tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Bring the TV show or film report and the ads to the next class session.

### **Option 2 – Prepared by Youth Leaders**

Ahead of time, find television shows, commercials, movie segments, social media and YouTube videos that illustrate the use of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs. Show these clips/advertisements to the group to illustrate common media images.

Arrange to have a TV and appropriate media equipment in the room when you do this activity.

### **Step 2 – What Are Your Favorites?**

#### **Option 1**

Go around the room and ask students to name popular TV shows or movies they recall showing scenes of smoking, drinking or taking drugs. Make a list on a flip chart or chalkboard.

*Ask: Are some of these your favorites? Do you think these shows often portray the use of these substances in a favorable way? If so, explain?*

#### **Option 2**

A more active method of getting the same information as #1: Ask the youth to act out or play charades so that the rest of the group has to guess their favorite show or film.

### **Step 3 – Pop Culture Critique**

Present the information on media images that have been prepared ahead of time either by students or youth leaders. Depending on which option you chose, this could be:

*Reports from students on what they observed on TV shows, commercials and movies.*

*Tear sheets from magazines and newspaper print ads for tobacco and alcoholic beverages.*

*Video clips of shows and commercials recorded off TV or from rented movies.*

*Continued on page 72*

## Media Images – Friend or Foe cont.

### Step 4 - Let's Talk About It

Choose from the following **critical thinking questions** to guide the discussion:

*Who is the **intended audience** for this ad or show? **How does it 'hook'** (get the interest of) the audience?*

*In what ways does the ad, show or movie present a **realistic picture** of life? In what ways is it **unrealistic**? Is it OK to be unreal? Why or why not?*

*Were good **or bad consequences** to their choices presented? What were they?*

*What **choices** were the people making about the use of substances? About their sexual activity? About their relationships? About their use of violence?*

*Did the characters **talk** about their choices? If so, what did they say? If not, why not?*

*Was there a **difference** in how **males and females** were portrayed? How about persons of different **ethnic and racial groups**? Give examples.*

*Do **male and female** characters make different choices as far as their **use of substances** or their **sexual activity**? How about **adults versus teens**?*

*What is the role of **violence** in the show or movie?*

*In what ways does the ad, show or movie portray the **risks of using substances or of violence**?*

*Why do you **like** or **dislike** this ad, show or movie?*

*How did the show or ad relate to your values?*

*What does this ad, show or movie say about the things in life that make us **happy, joyful, and satisfy our needs**?*

*How does this show, movie or ad compare with **what you learn in your church about life**? Similar? Compatible? Very different? How do **you feel** about that?*



## Media Images – Friend or Foe cont.

### Step 5

#### Option 1

Distribute paper and pencils and ask students to draw two overlapping circles. In the left part of the left circle, have them summarize the previous media discussion. What do they remember? What did they learn? In the right part of the circle, they should write what they believe their faith teaches about the use of substances, male and female roles, sexuality, violence, and how to relate to persons of different cultures and racial backgrounds. In the center, where the circles overlap, they should write anything they feel fits into both categories. When does their faith overlap with what the media portrays?

Discuss the circles. Comment on anything you feel is missing, especially in the faith area.

#### Option 2

Look at the list you made earlier of favorite shows and movies. Ask the youth to rate each one on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the least realistic and 5 being the most realistic) in terms of the show's realistic portrayal of the following:

*Alcohol use*

*Illicit drug use*

*Tobacco use*

*Sex*

*Roles of men and women*

*What makes us truly happy*

### Step 6 - Wrap Up

Ask each student to make one statement about what they learned regarding media images and choices they make on a daily basis.

## Learning Activity #8 for Junior High and High School Students

### Taking the Sting Out of Stress

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will identify sources of stress, recognize the effects of stress, and learn new ways to manage stress.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10 (NRSV)

**"Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let  
your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Looking At Stress" activity sheet (Make copies of this handout)
2. "Stress Busters" activity sheet (Make copies of this handout)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Stress is nervous tension. It is normal and actually a good thing in our lives. It can as well be a problem when we have too much and when it takes over our lives. Often people will try to cope with the stress in their lives by using drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

Stress occurs when someone perceives a mental, emotional or physical threat. A person sees an outside situation or object and responds to it in a particular way. The situation may indeed be dangerous, such as the approach of a speeding car, but it is the person's perception of the situation or object and his or her reaction to it that produces the stress. Everyday examples of stressful situations include: arguments, overwork, family problems, being afraid of failing a test.

Reactions to perceived threats are often variations of the "fight or flight" syndrome, in which powerful hormones trigger an increased heart rate, blood vessels constrict, blood pressure rises, blood sugar and fatty acids increase, bronchi and the pupils dilate. Psychological effects of stress show up in a variety of ways and include such behaviors as: nail and lip biting, eating disorders, shyness, skin rashes, stomach ulcers, alcoholism and other addictions.

Some youth do not recognize feelings of stress in themselves, even though they are often in stressful situations and indeed do have stress reactions that they act out in various ways. To help young people become sensitive to stress and stressful situations, mention some common expressions for stressful feelings, such as "butterflies in my stomach," "shaking like a leaf" and "climbing the wall."

## Learning Activity #8 for Junior High and High School Students

Emphasize that although youth may not be able to control the situations that cause stress, they can learn to control how they react to it so that it is more manageable. Encourage them to memorize the breathing exercise described in Step 1 of this learning experience and to use it regularly.

You can also advise young people to use writing, drawing and physical exercise as ways to relieve stress. In addition, suggest that they choose and carry a small favorite object - such as a stone, a penny or a picture in their pockets or backpacks and to take it out when they feel anxious.

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Discuss with the group some of the key concepts included in the "Tips for Youth Leaders." Then, guide them through the following simple deep-breathing activity, which allows a person to calm down before attempting to solve a problem.

*Sit up straight in your chair, let your hands rest in your lap and make sure both feet are flat on the floor.*

*Close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing. Slowly count each breath - count "one" when you breathe out, then breathe in; and then count "two" when you breathe out again. Keep going up to "five" and then begin over again.*

*Each time you breathe, breathe deeper and deeper, letting your stomach stretch out like a balloon. When you breathe out, bring your stomach in, collapsing the balloon. Keep breathing and counting and pay close attention to your breath.*

*As you breathe this way, you will notice that you are getting calmer and calmer. If you find yourself counting "six, seven, eight..." just gently stop and go back to "one."*

#### **Step 2**

Distribute the **Stress Busters** activity sheet. Discuss some other ways to handle stress that may not be on the sheet. Direct the group to the blank boxes of the sheet and encourage them to fill in additional ways they manage their stress or ways to prevent it.

#### **Step 3**

Invite the group to move around the room with their "STRESS BUSTERS" activity sheet and find people to sign their name in the appropriate box — the box that has the stress buster they use to manage their stress. Encourage them to ask as many different people as there is time to sign their sheet next to the stress buster they use. When everyone has completed this process or the time you allotted is up, ask the youth to fill in the middle box, writing down their favorite way to manage stress.

*Continued on page 76*

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Step 4

Ask the group the following questions and encourage discussion:

*What are some of the symbols that remind us of our faith and help to calm us down or ground us?*

*What are some of the spiritual disciplines that do this?*

*Do people of faith feel stress more or less often than others?*

Hand out the "**Looking at Stress**" sheet. This is a take home sheet for their continued interest.

### Step 5 – Wrap Up

Go quickly around the group and invite each person to share their favorite stress buster they learned about today or one new stress buster they learned about that they will try.

Let the group know that being able to identify what the source of their stress is and how it affects them is very important to managing and/or preventing stress. Having ideas of ways to manage stress will make it easier to keep their mind and body healthy. Although some young people believe using drugs, alcohol or tobacco relieves stress, unfortunately it can only complicate and increase stress. Mostly, the person ends up with additional problems to deal with.

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Stress Busters – Activity Sheet

<i>Keeps a dream notebook, journal or diary</i>	<i>Rides a bike, rollerblades or ice skates</i>	<i>Meets with, phones or texts a friend</i>	<i>Spends time in the mountains, woods, beach or desert</i>	<i>Sings or plays a musical instrument</i>
<i>Spends time with or plays with a pet</i>	<i>Takes long walks, runs or jogs</i>	<i>Works in the garden or yard</i>	<i>Takes sunbaths or naps</i>	<i>Practices martial arts or practices yoga</i>
<i>Spends time with family</i>	<i>Eats natural healthy food</i>	<b><i>Your favorite</i></b>	<i>Meditates regularly</i>	<i>Does deep breathing exercises</i>
<i>Listens to music</i>	<i>Attends exercise classes</i>	<i>Enjoys a hobby</i>	<i>Goes hiking or camping</i>	<i>Enjoys a new sport</i>
<i>Participates in a support group or friendship group</i>	<i>Gets and/or gives massages</i>	<i>Reads a good book for enjoyment</i>	<i>Attends movies, concerts or plays</i>	<i>Practices gymnastics or dancing</i>
<i>Prays</i>	<i>Reads a devotional</i>	<i>Plays video games</i>		

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Looking at Stress – Activity Sheet

*This page is just for you. Keep it to yourself or share it if you like.*

These are some of the ways **people feel when they are under stress**.

Which ones do you feel sometimes?

<i>Afraid</i>	<i>Hopeless</i>	<i>Shy</i>	<i>Uptight</i>
<i>Angry</i>	<i>Lonely</i>	<i>Sick</i>	<i>Worried</i>
<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Nervous</i>	<i>Silly</i>	
<i>Helpless</i>	<i>Sad</i>	<i>Upset</i>	

Is there another feeling you want to add?

These are some of the ways **people behave when they are under stress**.

Which ones do you do sometimes?

<i>Bite fingernails</i>	<i>Eat too much</i>	<i>Not sleep</i>	<i>Use alcohol</i>
<i>Bully</i>	<i>Fight</i>	<i>Not talk at all</i>	<i>Use tobacco</i>
<i>Chew gum</i>	<i>Have trouble talking</i>	<i>Run away</i>	
<i>Cry a lot</i>	<i>Not pay attention</i>	<i>Talk a lot</i>	

Is there another feeling you want to add?

These are some of the **things that cause stress for people**:

<i>Arguments</i>	<i>Family problems</i>	<i>Moving to a new neighborhood</i>
<i>Being made fun of by peers</i>	<i>Getting a low grade</i>	<i>No way to earn money</i>
<i>Death of someone close</i>	<i>Loneliness</i>	<i>Parent(s) getting fired</i>

Is there another feeling you want to add?

What are some things that cause you stress?

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

## Learning Activity #1 for High School Students

### If I Don't Drink, What's In It for Me

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will identify the benefits and wisdom of not drinking alcohol.

#### Focus Scripture: Matthew 6: 19-21 (NRSV)

**"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Whiteboard or flip chart with markers
2. Paper
3. Pencils or pens

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

We tell young people not to drink alcohol and remind them that doing so is illegal. Often that is where the conversation ends and our youth wonder what the real benefits from not using alcohol are and how to say "no" facing the peer pressure in their lives.

In addition, our youth need to see the positive faith perspective of using their lives with a Christian purpose in mind as opposed to drinking and using drugs to fit in with their friends.

Certainly we can tell our young people about the risks of alcohol use. We can give clear examples of how alcohol use is unhealthy, unnecessary and inappropriate - as well as illegal. But beyond just avoiding risks, there are benefits of not drinking alcohol that we can and should talk about with young people.

The benefits to youth of not using alcohol are clear. While none of the benefits alone is likely to persuade a young person not to use alcohol, all together they can provide support and encouragement to youth to make the decision not to use. This information can be helpful to parents and other adults to share with youth that there are reasons not to drink beyond the fact that drinking alcohol is against the law.



## Learning Activity #1 for High School Students

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Have participants get into small groups of four or five. Be sure someone in each group has paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to brainstorm a list of the benefits of not drinking alcohol.

#### **Step 2**

When the groups have finished brainstorming, bring everyone back together and compile all the lists into one on the board or flip chart.

Use the handout sheet, "**Benefits Of Not Using Of Alcohol**" to complete the lists generated from the youth.

#### **Step 3 – Conclusion**

Once summarized, these benefits can be shared not only with other youth, but also with parents, teachers, relatives, church staff, coaches, and any other adult in the community.

Collectively, the same message by many messengers can make a powerful, positive influence on the choices young people make about alcohol use.

*Continued on page 82*

## If I Don't Drink, What's In It for Me cont.

### Benefits Of Not Using Alcohol – Handout Sheet

*I won't get arrested for underage drinking, smoking or for the possession of illegal drugs.*

*I won't become an alcoholic, a chain-smoker, or addicted to drugs.*

*I won't be driving a car while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and possibly cause a serious accident or get arrested.*

*I won't get violent due to being drunk.*

*I will learn how to deal with life's problems in a healthy way instead of using chemical crutches to escape them.*

*I won't lose a job because the boss smells alcohol on my breath or wonder why I can't concentrate on what I am doing.*

*I won't get pregnant or get a girl pregnant while under the influence.*

*I won't get AIDS or other STDs due to sex while under the influence.*

*I won't have to lie to my parents about whether I was drinking, smoking, or doing drugs.*

*I will be less likely to say or do things I might regret later.*

*I will feel good that I have made good choices unclouded by a mind-altering substance.*

*I won't have to hide the fact that I am drinking, smoking or doing drugs from friends, people at school, or my church.*

*I can be content to be able to have a lot of fun without it.*

*I can avoid doing the stupid things people do when they are drunk.*

*I can have the integrity of following what my faith teaches about taking care of my body and my mind.*

*I won't risk not being able to participate in extra-curricular school activities.*

*I won't have to lie to my parents when the topic comes up.*

*I will be able to have integrity when I talk to my kids some day about drugs.*

## If I Don't Drink, What's In It for Me cont.

### Teens & Alcohol – Reasons for Teens to NOT Drink

#### ***Talking Points for Adults***

- *Drinking before you turn 21 is illegal. You can receive a ticket and/or be arrested by the police for underage drinking*
- *Drunk driving kills about 4,000 teens each year*
- *Your brain is still developing and will continue to develop until your early twenties. Teens who drink alcohol have more memory impairment than those who do not drink*
- *Teens that drink are at a higher risk for dropping out of high school*
- *Starting to drink alcohol when you are a teen puts you at a higher risk for being addicted to alcohol at some point in your life*
- *Drinking alcohol leads to impaired judgement. You are more likely to place yourself in a risky situation than you normally would avoid*

<https://teens.webmd.com/teens-and-alcohol> (2018)

#### **Notes**

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## Learning Activity #2 for High School Students

### Giving Others A Helping Hand

#### Expected Outcome:

Young people will learn a process for helping and supporting a friend or family member whose use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco concerns them.

#### Focus Scripture: Proverbs 27:6 (NRSV)

**"Well meant are the wounds a friend inflicts,  
but profuse are the kisses of an enemy."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Chalkboard, whiteboard or flip chart and markers
2. Situation descriptions cut apart to assign to small groups
3. Blank index cards for each person in the group to write the six steps and local resources

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Many of us will have times when someone we love or care about is using drugs, alcohol or tobacco in risky or unhealthy ways. When this happens, what is our role? What should we do? What should we say? Many times, when it comes to friends, the result is to say nothing out of fear that it is not our place; we don't want to be judgmental, or we might say something wrong.

We need to understand that it is clearly the right and responsibility of caring, concerned people of faith to discuss such behavior with loved ones. We are our "brother's and sister's keepers." The difficulty often arises in not knowing what to say. Perhaps the key to overcoming this difficulty is to give others simple and honest feedback. The most appropriate response is directly telling the person what behavior you observed and expressing your reactions to that behavior. Many problems can be resolved because of the concern and feedback of others. (It is important to note that you should never confront someone about issues such as this when they are under the influence.)

##### Step 2

There is a six-step process that many people have used to help them talk to someone whose use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco concerns them. These steps help reduce denial and defensiveness because they focus on facts and behaviors that cannot be argued.

## Learning Activity #2 for High School Students

It's best to talk with someone about these important matters:

- when you feel comfortable,
- when you're not likely to be disturbed and others can't overhear your conversation,
- when you're not likely to be rushed, and
- when the other person has not been drinking alcohol or using other drugs

Write the **six key phrases** on the chalkboard or flip chart as you discuss them:

### #1 I CARE

*First things first: Say "I love you. I care about you. You're my friend. I want the best for you." This establishes a personal connection and reduces defensive feelings on the part of the person you are talking to. Don't just plunge into a list of complaints or grievances.*

### #2 I SEE

*Talk specifically about the behavior that concerns you. Above all, focus on the behavior, not the person. Present facts, not just impressions. Keep track of incidents. If a pattern emerges, that's a clear sign help is needed. (For example, "I see my friend drinking at parties, lying to parents and drinking under the influence...")*

### #3 I FEEL

*Be straight about how the behavior makes you feel. This will help remove any sense of blame from the interaction. It will also sound less judgmental and more caring. It's not necessary or helpful to make assumptions about the cause of the behavior; you don't have to diagnose anything or be an expert - you just need to be concerned. (For example, "I feel afraid when I see you drinking and driving. I'm fearful that you will be in an accident and hurt yourself or someone else.")*

### #4 I AM LISTENING

*Then be quiet and listen to what the person has to say. Respectfully allow him or her to share feelings, problems and explanations. Be prepared for a variety of responses potentially including silence, the disclosure of a significant problem, or even the simple hostility of saying, "Get out of my life."*

Continued on page 86

## Giving Others a Helping Hand

### #5 I WANT

*Be ready to be specific about what you want the person you are talking to do to change the behavior. From your perspective, suggest – don't demand – what you want to see happen. (For example, "I want you to quit using and make different choices about alcohol and drugs when you are with your friends.")*

### #6 I WILL

*Now be ready to say what you'll do to help the person change. A ride? Moral support? Arranging a meeting with someone who can help? More listening? Make it clear that you're willing to keep talking and if the person chooses to say nothing right now, that the door is open for future discussion.*

#### Step 3

Listed in the handout are eight situations involving either the use or potential use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco. The situations have been created to allow youth opportunities to practice the six-step process outlined above. While substance abuse is involved in each situation, it should be pointed out that this process works equally as well in situations where substance abuse is not the issue. Using one of the situations described, work through the application of the six steps.

#### Step 4

Have the young people move into small groups of three or four. Hand out the strips of paper that have the description of the situations. A group can deal with more than one situation. Instruct each group to begin by discussing whether or not they would say anything to the person involved in each situation. Then have them discuss what they would say using the six-step model. Encourage the groups to anticipate how the person involved might respond. Some groups may want to role play the situations. Give them five minutes to deal with the assigned situations.

#### Step 5

Now instruct each group to come up with situations that they either have been involved in or could envision happening. Give them time to discuss these situations by again using the six-step process.

#### Step 6

Finally, bring the group back together. Ask if any of the small groups would like to share their responses to any of the situations discussed. Ask for volunteers to role play some of the situations for the entire group.

## Giving Others a Helping Hand

### **Step 7**

Review the six-step process again. During Step 4, remember to expect a variety of responses. Many people will say nothing at all; others may share a very serious problem. Some will simply say, "Get out of my life."

Also, remember that our responses during Step 6 can range from simply being available to listen to helping arrange a meeting with someone who can help. If your friend or family member chooses to say nothing, let him or her know that the door is always open for future discussion.

Explain to the group that if behavior that concerns you does not change, you may discover a complex and serious problem that you are not prepared to handle. Or you may be confronted by an angry, upset or uncooperative person who chooses not to respond. If this happens, it is important to talk to a youth leader, school counselor, physician, parent, someone in AA or Al-Anon or someone trained in counseling. A determination of the nature and extent of the problem can then be made. Remember that it is not your responsibility to fix the problem. A referral for good professional help is often the most caring action we can take.

Ask the group if they have any questions about the six step process.

### **Step 8 - Conclusion**

Ask the group to share which step might be the most difficult to do and why. Hand out blank note cards. Ask the group to write down the key phrases of the Six Step Process. Encourage them to keep the card somewhere where they can easily get to it when they need to help a friend or family member. Also discuss, with the help of the group, local resources they could use to refer their friend or family member to for help.

## Giving Others a Helping Hand

### Situations – Handout Sheet

Print out and cut apart each “situation” into a separate strip to hand out.

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*After school one day you overhear some friends talking about a “keg party” being planned for next Friday night.*

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*You are at a party with several friends. After drinking several beers one of your friends embarrasses you by telling the group something very personal that should have been kept confidential.*

-----

*On three occasions over a two-month period you are aware of an older brother or sister coming home drunk.*

-----

*A member of your youth group at church is planning to bring some marijuana along on the upcoming weekend retreat.*

-----

*You see two elementary age kids from your neighborhood smoking a cigarette behind a garage.*

-----

*It's the fourth weekend in a row that your friend has been stoned when you come over.*

-----

*A friend is going to parties where people are drinking and smoking pot.*

-----

*Your friend continues to go out every weekend and use drugs. Her drug use has progressed to using cocaine. You are struggling with the decision to tell an adult about your concerns for your friend.*

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*Your friends at school have tried vaping and they say it's not harmful.*

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## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #3 for High School Students

### Feeling Good About Taking A Stand

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will think about their beliefs regarding drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and they will learn what some adults in their congregation believe about these topics. They also will discover what the Bible teaches about the use of these substances.

#### Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2 (NRSV)

**“And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.”**

#### Materials Needed

1. Paper and pens
2. Copies of the questionnaire for each participant
3. For **Connect To The Content, Option 2**: Smartphone with video capability

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1 – Preparation.

1. This lesson can be conducted in two sessions if you have the young people interview members of their church and then bring back their results.
2. For **Connect to the Content, Option 1**, you will need to invite members of your church to participate in a panel discussion.
3. For **Connect to the Content, Option 2**, you will need to make copies of the questions, so the young people can take them along on the interviews.
4. Think about your own history of substance use, including alcohol. How has your faith influenced (or failed to influence) your choices about substance use?

##### Step 2 – What Do Youth Think?

Read the statements below to the youth, and ask them to indicate what they believe about each statement. Some youth will clearly “agree” or “disagree.” However, some youth will have more of a “middle ground” response. Encourage the youth to discuss the “why” behind their beliefs no matter which response they give.

## Learning Activity #3 for High School Students

### **Statements:**

1. Most teens smoke. Most teens drink alcohol. Most teens use drugs.
2. I know what my religion says about using these substances.
3. It is difficult to be popular if you don't smoke, drink or use drugs.
4. There's not much I can do if one of my friends is into smoking, drinking, vaping or drugs.
5. I know someone I could talk to if I had questions about these substances, or if I or someone I knew was using them.
6. I know what I believe about these substances and I feel like my actions will support my beliefs.

Here are a few points you may wish to highlight during your discussion of the questions above. To help you prepare for specific drug questions, see the drug fact sheets in the adult activity section of this guide.

**Statement 1:** Although many people think that 'everyone does it,' the truth is that most young people do not use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke. According to the 2017 National Institute on Drug Abuse, use of illicit drugs, other than marijuana, reported the lowest levels in two decades. Despite the changing state laws, less than 10 percent of high school seniors report daily marijuana use and two out of three disapprove of smoking marijuana daily. Alcohol use and binge drinking use reflected a continued decline in the last five years. (More facts and statistics can be found at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov), 2017.)

**Statements 3 and 4:** Youth may or may not feel pressure to do these things to be popular, but you always have a choice. Nobody will force you to do it. It will take guts, but talking to your friends about not using drugs, drinking and smoking can make a difference in your decisions. More important than talking is what you actually do. Peer pressure can work both ways. If your friends like and admire you, even though you don't do these things, you will make an impression on them.

**Statement 5:** The person(s) you can trust may be someone in your congregation, a school counselor, a parent or another adult. Provide the names of community resources.

**Statement 6:** The first step toward being able to say "No" is deciding firmly what you believe - before you have to take a stand. When someone hands you a "joint" is not the time to be deciding what you believe.

Continued on page 92

## Feeling Good About Taking A Stand cont.

### Step 3 – Connect to the Content

#### **Option 1: Interview The Leaders**

Invite members of your congregation to participate in a panel discussion with youth about drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Panel members could include church staff, lay leaders, parents, youth leaders, teachers, coaches or law enforcement that would include an age span of older and younger members of the congregation. Give panel members a list of possible questions ahead of time and let them know that the youth will also be able to ask additional questions. Some possible questions:

- 1. What does our faith teach about drug, alcohol and tobacco use?*
- 2. Why do we have these views?*
- 3. What scriptures speak to the use of these substances? What do they say?*
- 4. What does our faith say about the occasional use of some of these substances as opposed to the abuse of them? What does it mean to abuse them?*
- 5. Is there a difference between youth and adults using these substances? What is it?*
- 6. Where can someone get good advice about dealing with the pressure to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco?*
- 7. How does drug use affect one's ability to develop a spiritually meaningful life?*

Lead the panel in discussing the answers to these questions and ask youth to contribute any other questions or comments they have.

#### **Option 2: Roving Reporters**

Using the same questions and possibly the same people as in Option 1, assign youth to go interview and videotape people responding to the questions with a smartphone. The youth should be in groups of 2-3. In addition to interviewing the people who have been contacted ahead of time, the youth might want to try some "on the street" interviews to see what kind of responses they get.

## Feeling Good About Taking A Stand cont.

### Step 4 – Take Away

#### **Option 1: What Have You Learned About Our Faith?**

Go around the room and ask each young person to state one thing that he or she believes about the use of drugs, alcohol, and smoking that is a result of their Christian faith. Continue until they run out of ideas.

#### **Option 2: What Have You Learned About Each Other?**

If the youth videotaped the interviews, watch the videos and discuss them. Questions to use in the discussion might include:

1. *Were you surprised by what people said? Why or why not?*
2. *Did everyone agree on what our faith teaches us? If they disagreed, why do you think that is?*
3. *Did people have strong opinions on this topic, or were they kind of wishy-washy?*
4. *Is there a difference in what our faith teaches about adults or youth using these substances?*

#### **Option 3: What Have You Learned About Substance Abuse?**

Ask each young person in the group to share two things that they know now about alcohol, drugs and smoking that they didn't know when the session started.

### Step 5 – Wrap Up

Hand out paper and pencils to each student. Ask them to write at the top of the page **"THIS I BELIEVE"** Below it, ask them to write what they now believe about the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Encourage the students to be honest and realistic in what they write down.

## Learning Activity #4 for High School Students

### Marijuana Game Show

**Expected Outcome:**

Youth will learn facts about marijuana to counter common myths and misconceptions.

**Focus Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:22 (NRSV)**

**“Shun youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”**

**Materials Needed**

1. [What is Marijuana handout](#) (Page 143-144)
2. [Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet](#) (Page 97)
3. [Marijuana Game Show Answer Sheet](#) (page 98)
4. [Prevalence of Marijuana Use Chart](#) (page 95)

**Tips for Youth Leaders**

There are many myths and a lot of misinformation about marijuana use. For example, most youth overestimate the number of people who smoke marijuana. It is important to let young people know that this perception is incorrect. In fact, most people do not smoke marijuana. Young people are more likely to use marijuana, alcohol or other drugs if they believe everyone else is using them.

The following activities will help clear up some of those inaccuracies through a game show format (taken from the Jeopardy Game). Using this format will make it easier, more fun for the group to participate in and retain the information.

## Learning Activity #4 for High School Students

### Activity Directions

#### Step 1

Briefly review the following definition of marijuana:

*Marijuana is a dried mixture of leaves, vines, seeds and stems of a hemp plant called cannabis sativa. It is generally used to make homemade cigarettes called "joints or reefers" which are smoked.*

#### Step 2

In small groups of three or four people, ask them to come up with the percentage of teens they believe use marijuana in the United States. Ask them also to discuss what percentage of their peers and/or classmates at their school they believe smoke marijuana.

#### Step 3

Give the small groups five minutes to complete the task. Ask each group to report their findings regarding national marijuana use. Record the percentages and have them compare those numbers to the actual percentages on the following chart.

Prevalence of Marijuana Use-Year 2017 Data*				
Marijuana use	combined	8th grade	10th	12th
Past month	10.1%	5.5%	15.7%	22.9%
Daily	1.1%	.08%	2.9%	6.0%

\*[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov), 2017

Then ask each team to report the percentage of teens in their church they guess smoke marijuana. Now do you think that is accurate? Why or why not? Be sure to tell the students that the majority of teens nationally and locally do not smoke marijuana and/or use other drugs. If you can obtain actual numbers for use at the community or school level, share those as well and compare.

#### Step 4 – Quiz Show Directions

Make two copies of the Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet. Cut each sheet into strips. Each strip contains one statement or fact.

Continued on page 96

## Marijuana Game Show cont.

Divide the group into two teams. Distribute a set of statements to each team.

As the youth leader, you will serve as "Quiz Show Host" for the Marijuana Game Show. The game show is based on the "Jeopardy" television show. You will read an "answer" aloud from the Game Show Marijuana Answer Sheet.

Team members will identify the statement corresponding to that fact (from their fact strips) and phrase a question from it, which can be answered by the fact that you read.

For example, you read, "The answer is, THC." Team members must find the corresponding fact statement and phrase a question, e.g., "What is the mind-altering or psychoactive ingredient of marijuana called?"

The teams score points for each right answer. Each team must come up with a unique sound to indicate they know the "question." (oinking like a pig, siren, etc)

After you read each answer, the team that makes their sound first gets the opportunity to respond. If they respond incorrectly, the other team takes their turn.

The team with the most points wins! But of course, everyone wins because they all learned the facts about marijuana.

### Step 5 – Conclusion

Congratulate both teams for their quick thinking in completing the Marijuana game. Remind the group that most young people report that their close friends would disapprove if they smoked marijuana even just once in awhile. Ask the group if they were surprised by any of the marijuana facts that they learned today. Have them finish the statement;

*"I was surprised to learn that marijuana or using marijuana \_\_\_\_\_"*



## Marijuana Game Show cont.

### Marijuana Game Show Fact Sheet

(These Facts need to be stated in the form of a question.)

1. Marijuana's psychoactive or mind-altering ingredient is called THC.
2. THC or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol determines the potency or the strength of the marijuana.
3. Marijuana smoke contains carbon monoxide and tar, causing the same problems as tobacco smoking.
4. Marijuana affects short-term memory and interferes with the ability to concentrate.
5. Marijuana users have a poor sense of time and space and this effect interferes with the ability to drive and perform other complex tasks.
6. Smoking marijuana causes the heart and pulse rate to increase up to 50%.
7. Marijuana that is available today is approximately ten times more potent than the marijuana that was available in 1975. This increased potency contributes to the dangers of using it on any regular basis.
8. When marijuana is smoked, the active ingredient, THC, is absorbed by many tissues and organs of the body and it can be identified in the body system for as long as one month after use.
9. Marijuana may temporarily make a person feel better. It cannot help a person to cope more effectively with life's problems. It usually makes the situation or problem worse.
10. There are serious legal, social and health consequences to using marijuana.
11. Most teens do not use marijuana.
12. Some people become very depressed, nervous or confused after smoking marijuana.
13. It is difficult to learn anything when using marijuana.
14. Like cigarettes, smoking marijuana regularly for many years can cause certain types of cancer.

## Marijuana Game Show cont.

### Marijuana Game Show Fact Answer Sheet

1. *THC*
2. *Determines potency of marijuana*
3. *Carbon monoxide*
4. *Short term memory*
5. *Poor sense of time and space*
6. *Up to 50%*
7. *10 times more powerful*
8. *Identified in the body system for as long as one month after use*
9. *Makes a person feel better but cannot cope more effectively*
10. *Legal, social and health*
11. *Most teens do not use marijuana*
12. *Very depressed, nervous or confused*
13. *Difficult to learn*
14. *Certain types of cancer*

## Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #5 for High School Students

### Avoiding Risky Business

#### **Expected Outcome:**

Youth will explore risky situations and the consequences of their actions and consider ways they might respond if they are ever in a similar situation.

#### **Focus Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33 (NRSV)**

**"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."**

#### **Materials Needed**

1. Copies of "A Ride to the River" (Make copies of the case study on pages 103-104.)

#### **Tips for Youth Leaders**

Youth are strongly influenced by peers and their need to fit in. Many youth find themselves in situations that involve the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco for which they are not prepared. By involving youth in discussions about situations similar to "A Ride to the River," we can help them think about potential risky situations and plan for a response if they ever find themselves in a similar situation.

Decision making can be defined as a process in which a person chooses from two or more alternatives. Every day, people are faced with situations that demand decisions. Because these decisions are so common, the process is taken for granted until a person has to make a serious decision that has long-term effects on his/her life.

Some decisions are difficult because the issue confronting us is truly complex, and the complexity of the issue creates a moral dilemma. Other decisions are difficult because we have conflicted feelings regarding an issue. The issue itself may be fairly simple and straightforward, but circumstances surrounding the issue and our feelings about these circumstances create the dilemma. Examples of the first kind of dilemma include issues of capital punishment, war and peace and biomedical ethics. Examples of the second kind of dilemma include a number of issues related to substance abuse.

It is fairly clear to many people that smoking cigarettes is probably unhealthy and not a good Christian stewardship of our bodies. The simplicity of the issue is overridden by the complexity of circumstances. Young people experience peer pressure to smoke and may

## Learning Activity #5 for High School Students

begin smoking experimentally only to find that cigarettes are addictive. What should have been no dilemma at all becomes a real dilemma because of circumstances and factors larger than the original issue.

The goal of Christian moral education, the path we usually term Christian discipleship, must embrace both kinds of dilemmas. We must provide solid information regarding the complexities of moral decision-making, and sensitivity to the personal/social circumstances that interfere with making clear decisions. Christian discipleship involves both understanding the complexity of issues and developing the character to resist social pressures that tend to cloud issues. We tend to make better decisions when we understand the facts and we are empowered to make Christian decisions when we become persons truthful enough and courageous enough to make such decisions.

When churches offer the opportunity for their teenagers to learn Christian decision-making skills, they offer the opportunity for a young person to learn how to reason through situations, to solve problems, and to direct behavior. Maturity empowers Christian decision-making. As they center their lives in Christ, young people reduce the amount of ambiguity in their choices and limit the degree to which outside influences affect their decisions. Learning Christian decision-making skills increases the likelihood that each person can achieve that which he/she most deeply values.

### Activity Directions

#### Step 1.

Have youth read through "A Ride to the River." (You may want to ask for a volunteer to read it aloud or you may want to read it). The situation involves three young people having a good time playing ball who are offered drinks by an older cousin and his friend and then are invited to go for a ride to the river.

#### Step 2.

Below are some possible questions for starting a conversation about the story. You may want to do this in a small group or with the whole group. Ask the group these questions and allow them to respond.

*Do you think the three younger people in this narrative were having a good time playing softball?*

*What are some of the problem situations in the story?*

*Did Tanner have more reason to drink than Tanisha or Carlos? Explain.*

*Why do you think Tanisha "faked" the drinking rather than saying "I don't want any?"*  
Continued on page 102

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

*How do you think Tanisha was feeling while they passed the bottle? Why was Carlos faking drinking?*

*How did the others feel about Carlos refusing to go to the river?*

*If Tanner had refused the drink, how might that have affected the situation for Tanisha and Carlos?*

*Alex said he had a quart of vodka at a party. Why do you think some people exaggerate how much they drink?*

*What are the choices that Tanisha can make in regard to going to the river?*

*Do you think they went to the river?*

*How would you have responded to this situation?*

*What does our faith say about situations like this one?*

*What types of situations cause you to feel the greatest amount of peer pressure – situations with alcohol, tobacco, vaping, marijuana, pills, or other substances?*

*What makes a choice easier or more difficult?*

### **Step 3**

The participants may have additional thoughts and questions that they want to discuss. Provide an opportunity for the youth to express any ideas or thoughts that they have. Ask youth if there are any situations similar to "A Ride to the River" that they have been in or can anticipate that they would like to discuss.

### **Step 4 – Conclusion**

You may find yourself in this kind of situation. Remind the youth that church can be a place where it is safe and fun to have activities or events free from drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Your faith can be the foundation for saying no. Ask the youth to share ways their beliefs have helped them in similar situations.

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

### “A Ride To The River” – Handout

#### **Situation**

Three young people are offered drinks by an older cousin and his friend and then are invited to go for a ride to the river. The characters are:

**Tanner** – Young boy who is teaching Tanisha how to hit a ball

**Carlos** – Tanner's friend who is pitching the ball

**Tanisha** – Young girl who is learning to bat

**Brian** – Tanner's older cousin who is smoking a cigarette

**Alex** – Brian's friend

*The scene is a beautiful summer day. Three friends are goofing around at a baseball field. Tanner and Carlos are helping Tanisha with her hitting. Tanner is catching and Carlos pitches the ball. Tanisha hits it to center field and Carlos gives her encouragement, “Nice hit, not bad, not bad. Now the pitch will come a little faster.” Tanisha smiles, pleased with her progress and obviously having a good time. Tanner leans toward her, helping her with her stance and says, “Wait a minute now, better choke up and get a better grip.” Tanisha connects again, and the boys shout enthusiastically, “All right, all right - sign her up for the team.”*

*All three heads turn as a car horn begins to blast. They look toward a car backing down the street toward them. Someone is leaning out the window shouting loudly. “Who’s that?” asks Carlos. “That’s my cousin Brian and his friend Alex,” responds Tanner. Carlos continues, “What does he want?”*

*Two older boys brazenly stagger toward the fence, yelling at Tanner, “Hey man, come over here. Come on, we ain’t got all day.” Brian has a cigarette in one hand and a bottle in the other. He takes a long swig from the bottle and hands it over the fence to Tanner. “Here,” he says, “I got something for you, drink up, come on.” Tanner looks at the bottle in his hand and sits down on the grass near the fence. Tanisha and Carlos join him.*

*Alex says in a slurred voice, “That’s it man, that’s right, sit down and make yourself comfortable.” Tanner then samples the booze and passes the bottle to Tanisha. Tanisha raises it to her lips as if to sample it, and then passes the bottle to Carlos.*

Continued on page 104

## Avoiding Risky Business cont.

Tanner asks Brian, "Hey, Brian, why weren't you at Uncle Joe's party?" Alex answers for Brian, "Me and Brian went to this concert." He looks at Tanner and says, "Why are you laughing man? It was good."

Carlos, who hesitated at first, takes a sip from the bottle. Brian looks at him and teases, "Hey Carlos, it's not mouthwash, swallow it! Don't gargle." Carlos swallows and passes the bottle back to Alex and Brian who also take a drink.

"The concert was definitely supreme," states Alex. Brian comments, "Oh yeah, he missed half of it because he passed out twice. I had to carry him back to the car." "What can I do after three quarts of vodka?" says Alex, bragging. Tanner smiles, and when the bottle is again passed to him, takes a drink from it. Tanisha sits quietly with eyes down, obviously uneasy with the conversation.

Alex continues talking. "You know why Brian wasn't at Uncle Joe's? He puked up!" "That's a lie," Brian says. "It was the cat that puked up, it was the cat." Alex asks, "Did fat old Uncle Joe wear a funny hat to the party again? What would you want to go there for? He's 47 years old and he runs around wearing Mickey Mouse hats."

The booze bottle is being passed again. Tanisha pretends to drink and passes it on to Carlos. Brian says, "Hey, anybody want to go to the river? Come on, I'll drive my car. How about it?"

Tanner looks at Carlos, "Want to go, Carlos?" Carlos replies, "No, that's all right. It's getting late. I've got to cut out." Brian says, "Hey, the river is great. Just because the gargler don't want to go!" He leans toward Tanner and teases, "Hey Tanner, take your girlfriend. We can go to the river. We can ride in my car, listen to the stereo, and get something to drink."

Tanner gives Brian a push and says, "She's not my girlfriend." Brian grins and says, "Oh come on. I'll bet she'd like to be." He looks at Tanisha and asks, "Like to be his girlfriend?" Tanisha smiles uncomfortably as Tanner asks, "You wanna go to the river?"



[illegible]

## Learning Activity #6 for High School Students

### Laying Down the Burden of Lies

#### Expected Outcome:

Young people will feel some of the emotional and spiritual burdens brought on by lying about drug or alcohol use.

#### Focus Scripture: Proverbs 15:14 (NRSV)

**"The mind of one who has understanding seeks knowledge,  
but the mouths of fools feed on folly."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Weights such as bricks, heavy stones or heavy books (one for each participant)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Young people will realize that the negative consequences of using drugs, alcohol or tobacco go beyond physical risks. They will see that using these substances almost always leads to lies, which can damage relationships and lead to emotional and spiritual burdens.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1

Invite each person in the group to pick up one of the weights (they won't all be used) and then form a group circle in the middle of the room. Ask for one volunteer from the group to put down her/his weight and step into the middle of the circle.

Explain that you are going to tell a story about the volunteer. With each event described in the story, the volunteer will take one of the weights from a person in the circle and continue to hold it until the story is finished.

##### Step 2

Read the following story (or make one up of your own) inserting the volunteer's name in the appropriate places:

\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert volunteer's name] was at school and a casual friend mentioned a party that was coming up the next weekend where there would definitely be alcohol and probably some marijuana. \_\_\_\_\_ didn't really want to go, partly because he/she had just signed a pledge at church to stay drug-free. However, \_\_\_\_\_ knew that a lot of

## Learning Activity #6 for High School Students

people from school were going to the party and that everyone would be talking about it on Monday. Later when his/her best friend asked if he/she wanted to go to the party, \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Sure." (At this point the volunteer should step forward and take a weight from someone in the circle.)

When the weekend rolled around \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling pretty unsure about what to do. \_\_\_\_\_ knew that his/her parents and youth leader would be disappointed if he/she went to the party, but it also sounded fun and practically everyone from school was going to be there. \_\_\_\_\_ decided it was important to his/her social status to go to the party, however \_\_\_\_\_ was planning to not drink or use any drugs. \_\_\_\_\_ told his/her parents that he/she would be staying overnight at the best friend's house and the best friend told his/her parents the same thing. (Add another weight.)

At the party, someone handed \_\_\_\_\_ a beer right away. (Add a weight.)

\_\_\_\_\_ pretended to drink it for a while and eventually started taking small sips. Soon the drink was gone and the best friend grabbed two more and handed one to \_\_\_\_\_. After a while, a group of people started playing a game that involved drinking shots of liquor. Someone called out \_\_\_\_\_ name and said, "Hey, you're no wimp, come and see if you can beat Alex." \_\_\_\_\_ was embarrassed and didn't want to make a scene. Plus he/she had sipped through the second beer and was starting to feel a bit more reckless. So, \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Sure I can," and walked over to the group. (Add a weight.)

After drinking a number of shots, \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling kind of funny and a little bit sick. Then \_\_\_\_\_ noticed someone that he/she had been wanting to ask out on a date for a long time. \_\_\_\_\_ stumbled over and slurred, "Hello." The potential date looked bothered and asked if \_\_\_\_\_ was drunk. \_\_\_\_\_ said, "No." It was obvious that \_\_\_\_\_ had been drinking and the potential date walked away. (Add a weight.)

The best friend smoked some marijuana and he/she and \_\_\_\_\_ ended up sleeping at the party. The next morning \_\_\_\_\_ felt awful. When \_\_\_\_\_ got home, his/her parents noticed that he/she didn't seem as spunky as usual. They asked if anything was wrong. \_\_\_\_\_ said "No." The next day at church \_\_\_\_\_ youth worker said that he had heard about the party and wondered if he/she knew anything about it. The youth worker was concerned that someone in the community was supplying drugs and alcohol to youth. \_\_\_\_\_ said that he/she had just been there for a little while and hadn't seen anyone drinking or using drugs. (Add a weight.)

Continued on page 108

## Learning Activity #6 for High School Students

### Step 3

By this time the volunteer will be loaded down with the heavy weights. Ask the volunteer how it feels to be holding so many weights. Then let everyone put down their weights. Sit in a circle and talk about the activity. Begin by asking if anyone noticed at what points the weights were added. They may or may not realize that every personal interaction in the story involved a lie. Point out that drugs and alcohol have many negative effects on the lives of young people and that one of those is that it almost always leads to situations in which young people feel they must lie to cover their activities. Then ask:

*Why do you think we used weights to represent lies?*

*How is carrying the burden of lies similar to carrying a burden of weights?*

*What happens to our bodies, minds and spirits when we carry the burden of lies?*

*What do you think would have happened if [volunteer] had told the best friend the truth in the first place (that he/she didn't really want to go to the party)?*

*Is it harder to lie or tell the truth? Why?*

*What does our faith say about telling the truth, even when it's difficult?*

*What does our faith teach us about handling our burdens?*

### Step 4 – Conclusion

By showing youth the connection between drug and alcohol use, and the heavy, weighted-down feelings brought on by lies, you may cause them to think twice the next time they are faced with a choice about whether or not to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

Encourage group members to think twice the next time they are in a situation in which their choice might cause them to lie – and to remember the uncomfortable burden lies make us bear.

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #7 for High School Students

### Media Images – Friend or Foe?

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will learn critical thinking skills about the media and determine whether media images support or conflict with their values and faith regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10 (NRSV)

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.  
Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able  
to stand against the wiles of the devil."**

#### Materials Needed

1. Flip chart or chalkboard
2. Paper and pencils for each person
3. Collection of print ads for tobacco, beer and wine from magazines to show how alcohol, tobacco and drugs are portrayed in advertising or in media coverage
4. For **Pop Culture Critique, Option 2:** Find television shows, commercials or movie segments that illustrate the use of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs. Video tape these to be shown to the group to illustrate common media images. Arrange to have a TV and appropriate media equipment in the room when you do this activity.

#### Activity Directions

##### Step 1 – Preparation

Contact a small group of junior high and senior high peer leaders several weeks before you plan to conduct this session. Review the content of this learning activity with them, explaining that you would like them to take leadership in presenting it. Decide who will help with which parts of the session. Ask them to help contact youth, or choose the television shows, commercials, or movie segments that will be shown.

##### Option 1 – Prepared by students at home

Prior to this session, ask youth to do the following:

*Watch a favorite TV show, video or go to a movie they've been wanting to see. Write down every reference in the show or film about alcohol, tobacco or drug use and what's going on*

## Learning Activity #7 for High School Students

*in conjunction with the use of the substance.*  
(Examples: smoking because the person is stressed out, having a beer after coming home from work, attending a party where socializing means drinking and/or drugs.) If watching television, ask students to also make note of the commercials -- what is being sold and how? Also, make note of how persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are depicted, how males and females are portrayed, and how sexuality issues are presented.

You might want to provide students with a copy of the questions you are going to discuss to review as they watch the show or movie.

Collect several print ads for tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Bring the TV show or film report and the ads to the next class session.

### **Option 2 – Prepared by Youth Leaders**

Ahead of time, find television shows, commercials or movie segments that illustrate the use of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs. Video tape these to be shown to the group to illustrate common media images.

Arrange to have a TV and appropriate media equipment in the room when you do this activity.

### **Step 2 – What Are Your Favorites?**

#### **Option 1**

Go around the room and ask student to name popular television shows or movies they recall showing scenes of smoking, drinking or taking drugs. Make a list on a flip chart or chalkboard.

*Ask: Are some of these your favorites? Do you think these shows often portray the use of these substances in a favorable way? If so, explain?*

#### **Option 2**

A more active method of getting the same information as #1: Ask the youth to act out or play charades so that the rest of the group has to guess their favorite show or film.

### **Step 3 – Pop Culture Critique**

Present the information on media images that have been prepared ahead of time either by students or youth leaders. Depending on which option you chose, this could be:

*Reports from students on what they observed on TV shows, commercials and movies.*

*Tear sheets from magazines and newspaper print ads for tobacco and alcoholic beverages.*

*Continued on page 112*

## Media Images – Friend or Foe? cont.

*Video clips of shows and commercials recorded off TV or from rented movies.*

### **Step 4 - Let's Talk About It**

Choose from the following **critical thinking questions** to guide the discussion:

*Who is the intended audience for this ad or show? How does it 'hook' (get the interest of) the audience?*

*In what ways does the ad, show or movie present a **realistic picture** of life? In what ways is it **unrealistic**? Is it OK to be unreal? Why or why not?*

*Were good **or bad consequences** to their choices presented? What were they?*

*What **choices** were the people making about the use of substances? About their sexual activity? About their relationships? About their use of violence?*

*Did the characters **talk** about their choices? If so, what did they say? If not, why not?*

*Was there a **difference** in how **males and females** were portrayed? How about persons of different **ethnic and racial groups**? Give examples.*

*Do **male and female** characters make different choices as far as their **use of substances** or their **sexual activity**? How about **adults versus teens**?*

*What is the role of **violence** in the show or movie?*

*In what ways does the ad, show or movie portray the **risks of using substances or of violence**?*

*Why do you **like** or **dislike** this ad, show or movie?*

*How did the show or ad relate to your values?*

*What does this ad, show or movie say about the things in life that make us **happy, joyful and satisfy our needs**?*

*How does this show, movie or ad compare with **what you learn in your church about life**? Similar? Compatible? Very different? How do **you feel** about that?*



## Media Images – Friend or Foe? cont.

### Step 5

#### Option 1

Distribute paper and pencils and ask students to draw two overlapping circles. In the left part of the left circle, have them summarize the previous media discussion. What do they remember? What did they learn? In the right part of the circle, they should write what they believe their faith teaches about the use of substances, male and female roles, sexuality, violence, and how to relate to persons of different cultures and racial backgrounds. In the center, where the circles overlap, they should write anything they feel fits into both categories. When does their faith overlap with what the media portrays?

Discuss the circles. Comment on anything you feel is missing, especially in the faith area.

#### Option 2

Look at the list you made earlier of favorite shows and movies. Ask the youth to rate each one on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the least realistic and 5 being the most realistic) in terms of the show's realistic portrayal of the following:

*Alcohol use*

*Illicit drug use*

*Tobacco use*

*Sex*

*Roles of men and women*

*What makes us truly happy*

### Step 6 - Wrap Up

Ask each student to make one statement about what they learned regarding media images and choices they make on a daily basis.

## Learning Activity #8 for High School Students

### Taking the Sting Out of Stress

#### Expected Outcome:

Youth will identify sources of stress, recognize the effects of stress and learn new ways to manage stress.

#### Focus Scripture: Ephesians 6:10 (NRSV)

**"Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid."**

#### Materials Needed

1. "Looking At Stress" activity sheet (Make copies of this handout on page 118)
2. "Stress Busters" activity sheet (Make copies of this handout on page 117)

#### Tips for Youth Leaders

Stress is nervous tension. It is normal and actually a good thing in our lives. It can as well be a problem when we have too much and when it takes over our lives. Often people will try to cope with the stress in their lives by using drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

Stress occurs when someone perceives a mental, emotional or physical threat. A person sees an outside situation or object and responds to it in a particular way. The situation may indeed be dangerous, such as the approach of a speeding car, but it is the person's perception of the situation or object and his or her reaction to it that produces the stress. Everyday examples of stressful situations include: arguments, overwork, family problems, being afraid of failing a test.

Reactions to perceived threats are often variations of the "fight or flight" syndrome, in which powerful hormones trigger an increased heart rate, blood vessels constrict, blood pressure rises, blood sugar and fatty acids increase, bronchi and the pupils dilate. Psychological effects of stress show up in a variety of ways and include such behaviors as: nail and lip biting, eating disorders, shyness, skin rashes, stomach ulcers, alcoholism and other addictions.

Some youth do not recognize feelings of stress in themselves, even though they are often in stressful situations and indeed do have stress reactions that they act out in various ways. To help young people become sensitive to stress and stressful situations, mention some common expressions for stressful feelings, such as "butterflies in my stomach," "shaking like a leaf" and "climbing the wall."

## Learning Activity #8 for High School Students

Emphasize that although youth may not be able to control the situations that cause stress, they can learn to control how they react to it so that it is more manageable. Encourage them to memorize the breathing exercise described in Step 1 of this learning experience and to use it regularly.

You can also advise young people to use writing, drawing, and physical exercise as ways to relieve stress. In addition, suggest that they choose and carry a small favorite object - such as a stone, a penny or a picture-in their pockets or backpacks and to take it out when they feel anxious.

### *Activity Directions*

#### **Step 1**

Discuss with the group some of the key concepts included in the "Tips for Youth Leaders." Then, guide them through the following simple deep-breathing activity, which allows a person to calm down before attempting to solve a problem.

*Sit up straight in your chair, let your hands rest in your lap, and make sure both feet are flat on the floor.*

*Close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing. Slowly count each breath - count "one" when you breathe out, then breathe in; and then count "two" when you breathe out again. Keep going up to "five" and then begin over again.*

*Each time you breathe, breathe deeper and deeper, letting your stomach stretch out like a balloon. When you breathe out, bring your stomach in, collapsing the balloon. Keep breathing and counting and pay close attention to your breath.*

*As you breathe this way, you will notice that you are getting calmer and calmer. If you find yourself counting "six, seven, eight..." just gently stop and go back to "one."*

#### **Step 2**

Distribute the "STRESS BUSTERS" activity sheet. Discuss some other ways to handle stress that may not be on the sheet. Direct the group to the blank boxes of the sheet and encourage them to fill in additional ways they manage their stress or ways to prevent it.

#### **Step 3**

Invite the group to move around the room with their "STRESS BUSTERS" activity sheet and find people to sign their name in the appropriate box — the box that has the stress buster they use to manage their stress. Encourage them to ask as many different people as there is time to sign their sheet next to the stress buster they use. When everyone has completed this process or the time you allotted is up, ask the youth to fill in the middle box, writing down their favorite way to manage stress.

*Continued on page 116*

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Step 4

Ask the group the following questions and encourage discussion:

*What are some of the symbols that remind us of our faith and help to calm us down or ground us?*

*What are some of the spiritual disciplines that do this?*

*Do people of faith feel stress more or less often than others?*

Hand out the "**Looking at Stress**" sheet. This is a take home sheet for their continued interest.

### Step 5 – Wrap Up

Go quickly around the group and invite each person to share their favorite stress buster they learned about today or one new stress buster they learned about that they will try.

Let the group know that being able to identify what the source of their stress is and how it affects them is very important to managing and/or preventing stress. Having ideas of ways to manage stress will make it easier to keep their mind and body healthy. Although some young people believe using drugs, alcohol or tobacco relieves stress, unfortunately it can only complicate and increase stress. Mostly, the person ends up with additional problems to deal with.

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Stress Busters – Activity Sheet

<i>Keeps a dream notebook, journal or diary</i>	<i>Rides a bike, rollerblades or ice skates</i>	<i>Meets with, phones or emails a friend</i>	<i>Spends time in the mountains, woods, beach or desert</i>	<i>Sings or plays a musical instrument</i>
<i>Spends time with or plays with a pet</i>	<i>Takes long walks, runs or jogs</i>	<i>Works in the garden or yard</i>	<i>Takes sunbaths or naps</i>	<i>Practices martial arts or practices yoga</i>
<i>Spends time with family</i>	<i>Eats natural healthy food</i>	<b><i>Your favorite</i></b>	<i>Meditates regularly</i>	<i>Does deep breathing exercises</i>
<i>Listens to music</i>	<i>Attends exercise classes</i>	<i>Enjoys a hobby</i>	<i>Goes hiking or camping</i>	<i>Enjoys a new sport</i>
<i>Participates in a support group or friendship group</i>	<i>Gets and/or gives massages</i>	<i>Reads for pleasure</i>	<i>Attends movies, concerts or plays</i>	<i>Practices gymnastics or dancing</i>
<i>Prays</i>	<i>Reads a devotional</i>			

## Taking the Sting Out of Stress cont.

### Looking at Stress – Activity Sheet

*This page is just for you. Keep it to yourself or share it if you like.*

These are some of the ways **people feel when they are under stress.**

Which ones do you feel sometimes?

<i>Afraid</i>	<i>Hopeless</i>	<i>Shy</i>	<i>Uptight</i>
<i>Angry</i>	<i>Lonely</i>	<i>Sick</i>	<i>Worried</i>
<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Nervous</i>	<i>Silly</i>	
<i>Helpless</i>	<i>Sad</i>	<i>Upset</i>	

Is there another feeling you want to add?

These are some of the ways **people behave when they are under stress.**

Which ones do you do sometimes?

<i>Bite fingernails</i>	<i>Eat too much</i>	<i>Not sleep</i>	<i>Use alcohol</i>
<i>Bully</i>	<i>Fight</i>	<i>Not talk at all</i>	<i>Use tobacco</i>
<i>Chew gum</i>	<i>Have trouble talking</i>	<i>Run away</i>	
<i>Cry a lot</i>	<i>Not pay attention</i>	<i>Talk a lot</i>	

Is there another feeling you want to add?

These are some of the **things that cause stress for people:**

<i>Arguments</i>	<i>Family problems</i>	<i>Moving to a new neighborhood</i>
<i>Being made fun of by peers</i>	<i>Getting a low grade</i>	<i>No way to earn money</i>
<i>Death of someone close</i>	<i>Loneliness</i>	<i>Parent(s) getting fired</i>

Is there another feeling you want to add?

What are some things that cause you stress?

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activities for Youth and Adults

# Drug Prevention in Our Community — What Can We Do?

### Focus Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16 (NRSV)

*"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."*

### Materials Needed

1. A large candle should be burning in the center or front of the room when participants arrive. You will need small candles for each participant.
2. Flip chart and markers

### Activity Directions

#### Step 1 – Preparation

Write the two questions from the FOCUS section on flip chart paper.

Invite persons in your congregation and/or community who work with youth, such as teachers, school counselors, coaches, drug prevention or treatment counselors, police officers, parole officers, other persons in law enforcement, etc. to participate. They can serve as informal resources for your discussions.



## Learning Activities for Youth and Adults

### Step 2 – Focus on Information

Divide into groups according to age: Junior High, Senior High, and Adults. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and marker. Do not tell each group the questions that the other group is answering.

#### Junior High and Senior High groups answer these questions.

Put summary statements on the sheets of paper:

*How have you learned about drugs, alcohol and tobacco? How much of it is from peers or parents and how much is from drug-education resources and church?*

*How does the information from peers and from educators or parents differ?  
Be honest about the value of information from both sources.*

#### Adults answer these questions.

Put summary statements on the sheets of paper:

*When you were young, how did you learn about drugs, alcohol and tobacco?  
How much of it was from peers and how much was from school, your parents and the church?*

*How did the information from peers and from church, parents and school differ?  
Be honest about the value of information from both sources.*

## Learning Activities for Youth and Adults cont.

### Step 3

When each of the groups have recorded their answers to the two questions, instruct them to have a discussion on the following points.

#### **Junior High and Senior High school groups discuss the following and record their answers.**

- 1. What do you hear or see modeled by adults in this congregation that you appreciate with regard to the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco?*
- 2. What do you hear or see demonstrated by adults in this congregation that you do not appreciate with regard to the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco?*
- 3. Imagine you are an adult talking to someone your age about these topics. What would you tell them?*
- 4. Senior High school students – Based on your experience and knowledge, what do you think Junior High school students should know about this topic?*

#### **Adults discuss the following and record answers:**

- 1. What should this congregation's stance be on the use of alcohol? Drugs? Tobacco?*
- 2. How could this be communicated to the young people in the church?*
- 3. What is happening in our community in terms of education on substance abuse?*
- 4. What are some of the programs? In what ways are they working? How could they be more successful? How can the church be involved?*

## Learning Activities for Youth and Adults cont.

### Step 4

Give the two groups ample time to complete their discussion and answers. Then call them back together into one group. Have a spokesperson from each group report the highlights of their discussion. Then, use the following questions to encourage discussion within the entire group.

*How are the adults of this community (within and outside the church) doing in educating youth about alcohol, tobacco and drugs?*

*How are we doing in helping youth stay safe?*

*What is our congregation's role in addressing the struggles of the youth in our church?*

### Step 5 – Wrap up

Dim the lights and pass out a small candle to each participant. Have the entire group form a circle in the room.

Ask one participant to light his/her candle from the large candle burning in the center of the room, and then light the candle of the person next to him/her until the light has been passed all the way around the circle. When all candles are lit, a leader shares something like the following:

*"Look around the group. The single candle that was burning when you came here today has now been multiplied. Look around the room. Your many individual lights all came from one source. Isn't this much more beautiful than the one light alone? Working together, we can spread education and support for the prevention of substance abuse in our congregation and community. One light alone can't illuminate this room, but that light can be passed on to others and multiply.*

*Let's go out and share our light. Let's make a difference in our world."*

## Learning Activity #1 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Parent Helps

#### Parents – The Number One Anti-Drug

Have you ever questioned just how much influence you have with your children, especially their decisions about use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs? You hear about peer pressure and see all the beer commercials on television and the question arises. How can parents ever compete with all of this? Parents can and they must. Recent studies show that clear and consistent messages from parents to children about drugs, alcohol and tobacco do make a very important difference. As your child's number one anti-drug influence, it is important for you to know that what you say and what you do makes a difference in your child's life.

**Do you listen** to your child's concerns and problems?

**As a parent, do you and your spouse agree** on expectations about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by your children?

**Do you explain your position** on drugs, alcohol and tobacco use to your children? Are there family rules? Do you let your values and faith show and do you talk about them?

The goal is to prevent problems with drugs, alcohol and tobacco before they arise. It is much easier to prevent problems than to struggle with the solutions to a problem. Here are some further suggestions of what you can do.

##### **Know the Facts.**

Attend substance abuse information meetings at your school or church. Read drug information literature and browse informative websites on substance use trends. Join a parent group. The more you know about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the more you will be able to help your child make healthy decisions. Because new studies about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs continue to be made, keep as current as you can to know the latest facts. This will give you more credibility with your child.

##### **Talk with your child.**

Talk with your child on a regular basis about your values and attitudes about drugs, alcohol and tobacco use. Sharing your values will influence your children in a positive way. Let your child know it is NOT okay with you if they use drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Explain why you feel this way.

## Learning Activity #1 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### **Establish clear rules and consequences.**

Talking with your child includes listening as well. Children are much more willing to talk honestly and openly if they feel they are being heard.

### **Model the kind of behavior you want of your children.**

Do not follow the old saying; "Do as I say and not as I do". Your life needs to be a living example of your faith and the expectations that you have for your kids.

### **Keep informed.**

Get to know your child's friends and their parents. Stay informed about who your child spends time with and what activities they participate in.

### **Encourage alternative activities.**

Talk with your child about games to play, places to go, things to make, things to do, items to collect and ways to volunteer. Some of these activities can be done alone, and some with friends and family. The key is to teach children that there are many healthy and productive ways to have fun and feel good, alone or with friends.

Spending time with your children is a vital part of building healthy relationships. Cultivate natural opportunities to share your life values with them and to provide factual up-to-date information about the dangers and the consequences of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. Information truly is empowering.

Many young people find themselves in situations where they will have to make an important decision about drinking, smoking or using drugs. It helps to have discussed these issues before that temptation is presented to them so they can understand the consequences of their choices.

Consider the following typical situations kids might face. Then apply the questions about how to respond. This will help you be prepared when you have opportunities to talk with your child.

## Parent Helps cont.

### *What If This Happens to You?*

*You and your friends are hanging out at the park. One of your friends takes out a pack of cigarettes and dares everyone to smoke one. You kind of want to try one and you really don't want to be the only one to say no.*

*You just found out that you did not make the basketball team. You were close but didn't make it. You really are bummed and don't want to be around your friends. You know where your older brother keeps some marijuana. You are thinking that maybe the marijuana will make you not feel as bad.*

*A good friend of yours tells you that his older sister smokes marijuana at parties sometimes and can buy some for you to try. He says that she told him that she really likes feeling high.*

*You go to a party at a friend's house and you see kids taking some pills.*

*You know the party this weekend will have beer and other drugs available. Your friends really want to go and they want you to come.*

*Your friends ask you to get some marijuana. They know your brother sells it.*

*Your friend Jason's brother had a high school graduation party and the parents served beer to all who attended.*

*At the yearly youth group camping trip, one of the older boys told you he had some marijuana hidden out in the woods. He wants you to join him that afternoon.*

### *Self-Questions Every Youth Should Ask*

1. Is this behavior illegal or immoral? Is it likely to get you in trouble with the law, school officials or your family?
2. Could this behavior negatively affect your health, diminish your ability to make good decisions or put you or others in possible danger of physical harm?
3. Is this behavior contrary to your family's values, your religious beliefs or what you know God wants for you?
4. Your friends are all vaping at a party. They tell you that it's not harmful and you should do it. Do you believe them? Do you try it?

## Parent Helps cont.

### *Love: The Anti-Drug*

You love your kids and want what's best for them, but sometimes it can be hard to demonstrate how much you love them, particularly as they grow up and become more independent. Picture the scene: you take your daughter to the mall and she doesn't want to walk too close to you, or you drop off your son at practice and he leaps out of the car practically before it's come to a stop.

Research shows that one of the best ways you can help your kids avoid drug use is by spending time with them. Here are some helpful suggestions for knowing what's going on in your child's world when they seem to close every door to you. Be involved in your children's lives. According to behavioral scientist, Tony Biglan, Ph.D., there are simple ways to be part of your child's life:

**Create "together time."** Start a tradition or weekly routine to do something fun with your child, such as going out for ice cream.

**Eat meals together as often as possible.** Mealtime is a great opportunity to talk about the day's events, unwind and reinforce a family bond. Studies show that kids whose families eat together at least five times a week are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol. Also, remember that families can talk more when the television is turned off while eating together.

**Try to be home after school.** The "danger zone" for drug use and other risky behavior is between 4 and 6 p.m. If you can, arrange to have flextime if it's available at your workplace. When your child will be with friends, make sure there is adult supervision. Engage with them by playing a video game or participating in some outdoor activity with them.

### *Communication: The Anti-Drug*

As a parent, you want what's best for your kids. And you know as your kids grow up they will face many temptations, including drugs. According to a study conducted by the *Partnership for Drug-Free Kids*, only 22 percent of teens say they're learning a lot at home about the risks of drugs — although virtually all parents in the United States say they've talked with their children about drugs.

This isn't an issue you can handle by having "the talk." When it comes to dangerous activities such as drug use, you need to have an ongoing discussion with your child. This can be difficult to do considering the numerous demands of work, school, after-school activities and religious and social commitments. However, the more time you take to communicate with your child about drugs and other sensitive subjects, the more at ease your child will be coming to you with questions or problems.

## Parent Helps cont.

The following are suggestions that can help you become a more effective communicator, according to behavioral scientist, Tony Biglan, Ph.D.:

**Be a better listener** — Ask questions and be willing to listen to what your child has to say. Paraphrase what your child says to you to make sure you understood what they meant.

**Give honest answers** — Don't make up what you don't know. If your child asks you something and you don't know the answer, offer to find out — better yet, make it a project to find out the answer together.

**Don't react in a way that will cut off further discussion** — If your child makes statements that shock you or are counter to your beliefs, try to turn them into a calm discussion of why your child thinks the way he or she does. This can be a challenge. A negative reaction to one subject may make your child apprehensive to start future discussions about other difficult subjects.

The most important thing for you to remember is to love your children and to tell them that you love them often.



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## Learning Activity #2 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Building Positive Self-Image in Teens

When, as parents and youth leaders, we talk about a person's **self-concept**, we are talking about the total perception an individual has about himself or herself, that is, being able to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "Who am I in relation to others and to God?"

If we stop to think about it, we realize that our behavior is based on our perceptions of reality (or self-concept) rather than reality itself. Our self-esteem affects our decision-making, our ability to take calculated risks, our coping ability and our spiritual lives.

Adolescence is a developmental period in which young people are very vulnerable to negative self-concepts brought on by rapid physical and emotional change. They are only beginning to reason abstractly. They are preoccupied with their appearance and behavior. They feel like everyone is watching them and that their feelings are unique. Peers often times become more important than family. Because of all this rapid change, the teenager's self-concepts are extremely fragile.

One of the primary reasons young people use drugs is because they feel worthless and powerless. The drugs act as a crutch to deal with others and to cover up their fears and insecurities.

These children feel empty inside. "I can't" is one of their favorite phrases. They don't feel loved and will follow the crowd hoping to gain acceptance. Taking appropriate risks is just too overwhelming. They lack the motivation. Life is too scary.

How do we address such important yet complex needs in our young people? We must focus on taking positive steps to mentor their growth and healthy development. Consider the following important principles:

#### **1. Young people need to experience a living and growing relationship with God.**

We must find creative ways to instill in youth that they are God's children. They need to realize that they are unique individuals with a purpose God has given them. They should know within their hearts that they have an active faith. It's important for teenagers to know that God loves them unconditionally. Young people need to understand that if they believe and embrace this word of grace, God will not only guide and direct them through troubled, difficult times, but grant them a life worth living.

## Learning Activity #2 for Parents and Youth Leaders

**2. Young people need to feel loved and know that in this love they can love others.**

It is important that our church communities teach our children that God wants them to take the risk of loving others as He has loved us.

**3. Young people need to learn how to recognize and cope with their feelings and emotions.**

Our youth need to learn that there are eight basic feelings in life (glad, sad, fear, angry, lonely, shame, guilt and hurt), and it is perfectly normal and "okay" to feel and express each one of these feelings. Young people need to learn different ways to express these feelings and to know when each expression is appropriate.

**4. Young people must learn what strengths and weaknesses they possess and know that it is perfectly normal to have weaknesses.**

We should teach our children that their personal walk with Christ will help them to cope with their weaknesses and use them as an opportunity for learning and growing. We need to teach our children to understand and utilize the power they have within themselves to change those weaknesses they do not like by utilizing the strengths that God has given them.

**5. Young people must learn to function in a group and to be comfortable alone.**

We must teach our children how to cooperate and compromise with others. These skills are crucial to their quality of life.

**6. Young people need to learn how to relate successfully to the world around them.**

We must teach our children how to communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas and questions to people of all types and personalities.

**7. Young people need positive role models and mentoring relationships with mature adults.**

As parents and youth leaders, we need to relate to youth in ways that will help them feel free to ask questions, state opinions or make observations without fears of reprisal or ridicule.

*Continued on page 132*

## Building Positive Self-Image in Teens cont.

We need to allow young people the freedom to be themselves, to find an accepted place within the church setting and encourage them to respect the rights and privileges of others. Through our role modeling as church members and as a supportive family, we need to demonstrate to our youth how to be positive toward one another. While criticism is important for their learning experience, it should be kept positive.

### *Self Image and Teens*

**Who am I?**

***"Here I am, Lord standing here on the stage all alone.  
I feel funny in this role, all dressed up in this silly mask.  
But my parents, my friends put me here  
And now they are sitting on the front row prompting me  
On what to say and do.***

***Is it wrong Lord, to want to be ME? To play the role you gave me?  
I long for the chance to rip off the mask,  
TO BE ME.  
But who am I, Lord?"***

Developing a positive self-image and learning to love oneself is one of the major tasks of adolescence. Many days, teens wake up to the thought of hating themselves and the person they see in the mirror. The negative self-image is enhanced throughout the day as the teen struggles to deal with complicated peer relationships at school.

Several factors contribute to a negative self-image in teens. First, they are keenly sensitive to what their peers might think of them and whether they feel accepted in a group. Unfortunately, interactions with peers often negatively define what teens believe about themselves. In addition, unfinished business in relationships and overwhelming expectations and "to do" lists can create feelings of hopelessness in adolescents and lead to an unhealthy view of self. Problems never go away, and teens need to learn how to work their way through them. Most importantly, broken relationships can negatively impact the way teens see themselves. Boy/girl problems, being left out socially and hurtful gossip can cause deep pain and damage an adolescent's self-concept.

## Building Positive Self-Image in Teens cont.

It is important to help teens see themselves as God sees them. As children of God, they are precious and honored in His sight. The Bible says that God loves us in spite of our performance and deals with us according to grace. If teens can understand that their relationship with God is based on unconditional love, they can form their self-image in the reality of God's love. When teens are faced with failure and poor choices, they can be encouraged to accept responsibility for their choices, face their problems and rely on God's love to cope with their problems. Their self-image should be defined by God's evaluation and not the evaluation of their peers.

## Building Positive Self-Image in Teens cont.

### Practical steps adults can take to help students develop a positive self-image

1. Teach children to change their demands to preferences. There is a difference between working toward a goal and perfectionism, creating such a high standard they can not be successful
2. Teach children to choose friends that will have a positive influence – lift each other up vs. put each other down
3. Learn to laugh
4. Teach kids healthy ways to manage conflict
5. Affirm the strengths of the child/teen
6. Teach children to behave in such a way that they treat others as they would want to be treated by their friends

#### ***A child or teen with healthy self-esteem will be able to:***

- *act independently*
- *assume responsibility*
- *take pride in accomplishments*
- *tolerate frustration*
- *attempt new tasks and challenges*
- *handle positive and negative emotions*
- *offer assistance to others*

#### ***A child or teen with low self-esteem:***

- *avoids trying new things*

## Building Positive Self-Image in Teens cont.

- *feels unloved and unwanted*
- *blames others for their shortcomings*
- *feels, or pretends to feel, emotionally indifferent*
- *is unable to tolerate a normal level of frustration*
- *puts down their own talents and abilities*
- *is easily influenced*

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### Notes

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## Learning Activity #3 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Developing Good Communication Skills

Because interpersonal communication directly influences the very foundation of our existence and potential growth, it is important that our young people learn the appropriate skills to become good communicators. It is important for them to learn that people communicate both verbally and nonverbally — not only with words but also with their bodies. It is important for youth to realize that individual experiences influence our communication with others and that these experiences are unique to each individual. Young people need to learn how to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas to others in a straightforward, honest manner rather than giving double-level messages.

The apostle Paul spoke of this when he said, "Therefore putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25). Again in Ephesians 4:29, he admonished us, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

Many studies and surveys have pointed out that young people turn to substance abuse when they are in stressful situations and they don't know how to tell others how they feel. By mastering these skills, our youth are better equipped to deal with daily life stresses without turning to drugs, alcohol or marijuana as an escape.

#### **Communication with Adolescents**

Since most of us commonly experience difficulty in communication, adults have no trouble understanding that communication with adolescents is very difficult. Break-downs in communication are both frustrating and frequent because communication is the key to all relationships and people have such a broad variety of desires, needs and expectations as they deal with one another. This is especially true of intergenerational communication. Many times we can gain more understanding from adolescents by watching and listening how they communicate.

There are several things adolescents want and need to communicate. First, they want to talk about their daily lives to someone who will listen and who is genuinely interested.

Second, they want to be able to share their feelings. Sometimes it's hard to share on this level with an adult if the adult is prone to lecture or be over reactive to the feelings that the adolescent is sharing.

Third, adolescents want to have a safe place to ask questions. Hopefully, adults can provide this place by listening and communicating well. Adolescents need to be able to ask heart-felt questions and be supported in finding answers.



## Learning Activity #3 for Parents and Youth Leaders

Fourth, adolescents want to talk about their fears. The critical developmental years of junior and senior high school require young people to make big adjustments. They are struggling to find their way socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Most of the time adolescents carry around some fear of growing up despite what they communicate to their parents.

Finally, it's important for adolescents to be able to connect with adults who they know they can talk to if they are in trouble. This can be a parent, teacher or a youth worker in their church. Every teen needs to know there is someone they can count on who will listen and care about them.

### *10 Hints for Effective Communication with Adolescents*

- 1. Remember that actions speak louder than words.** Adolescents are watching how we act. Be careful that we are not sending them double messages by not matching our talk with our walk.
- 2. Focus on what is important.** Every communication is limited, so pick your topics well. Don't waste time on unimportant issues.
- 3. Try to make your communication positive.** Give them hope for the future. Saying to the adolescent that he has "ruined his life" or he is "grounded forever" does not provide a hope that a relationship and trust can be restored at some point.
- 5. Be very clear and specific.** Avoid vague language. It's important to remember that in dealing with conflict you need to stay focused on the issue. Don't let fear drive you to "beat around the bush." Be direct.
- 6. Test all of your assumptions verbally and personally.** Don't let your presumptions become judgments. Be fair by seeking the facts. In other words, clarify, clarify and clarify.
- 7. Respect the individuality of every person.** Recognize that the same event can be seen from different viewpoints and honest disagreements should be expected.
- 8. Be fair-minded.** Recognize that being an expert on others and their behavior is easy, but not constructive. Learn to be an expert on yourself, your actions and your communication.

*Continued on page 138*

## Developing Good Communication Skills cont.

- 9. Seek to prevent discussions from turning into destructive arguments.** It's important to utilize time outs for everyone when the communication gets tense.
- 10. Be open and honest about your feelings.** Attempt to use statements like "I feel."
- 11. Avoid unfair communication techniques.** Issuing ultimatums, heavy-handed blame, manipulation and other attack methods will drive others away or provoke angry responses.

### Verbal Roadblocks to Good Communication

If we are to be good communicators, we should always choose our words carefully and pay attention to the way we deliver them. In the heat of the moment or under the pressure of stress and frustration, it is all too easy to say things that can be hurtful to young people and negatively affect their self-concept. When dealing with young people, avoid the following communication roadblocks:

#### 1. Ordering, directing, commanding

"Just sit down and shut up until you hear what I have to say."

"Take out the trash, clean your room, and don't give me any more of your lip!"

#### 2. Warning, threatening

"Turn that music down or I'm going to come in there and smack you."

"If you do that one more time and you may as well not bother to come home."

#### 3. Lecturing

"You have it pretty easy here. Why, when I was your age . . ."

"Your older sister made the honor roll and there's no reason why you . . ."

#### 4. Advising

"If I were you, I would . . ."

"Why don't you try . . ."

Giving advice can be a helpful mode of communication if it is asked for and welcomed, but not if it seems to be controlling or is a put down.

#### 5. Judging, criticizing, blaming

"You should have known better, that was a stupid thing to do."

"You never seem to do anything right."

#### 6. Name calling, ridiculing, shaming

"You dummy. Are you too dense to figure that out?"

"Nice going Bozo, you just embarrassed the entire family."

## Developing Good Communication Skills cont.

## 7. Interpreting, psychoanalyzing

"You're just angry at me because you know that I'm right."

"You're afraid of failing and that's why you won't even try."

## 8. Teaching, instructing

"Stand back and let me show you how to do this."

"You are doing it all wrong. Watch me now and I'll show you the right way."

**9. Communicating** important information only through text

## Notes

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## Learning Activity #4 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Hard Facts About Drugs

#### **Alcohol: Ethyl Alcohol, Ethanol**

Drug group: *Depressant*

Street names: *Booze, brew, juice, hooch, liquor, beer, wine, or the product brand names*

Appearance: *Liquid*

Packaging: *Bottles and cans*

Method of use: *Oral*

Paraphernalia: *Flasks and fake IDs*

Duration: *4-12 hours*

Dependence: *Moderate to high*

Possible effects: *Relaxation, decreased alertness, impaired coordination, euphoria, mood swings, blurred vision, altered perceptions, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. Chronic use damages the brain, liver, and digestive tract; extended use results in high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, ulcers, colitis, muscle cramps, sleep disturbances and cirrhosis of the liver.*

Other facts: *Alcohol is the number one gateway drug. Alcohol is burned by the body at the rate of 1/2-ounce per hour, and nothing speeds this process. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 1/2-ounce glass of hard liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol.*

#### **Amphetamines: Benzedrine, Dexedrine, Desoxyn, Biphentamine**

Drug group: *Stimulant*

Street names: *Speed, uppers, pep pills, black beauties, footballs, dexies*

Appearance: *Pills, capsules, tablets or white powder*

Packaging: *Pill bottles, plastic bags or paper packets*

Method of use: *Oral in pill form, inhaled as powder or injected*

Paraphernalia: *Hypodermic needles, spoons, belts or tubes; straws or razor blades*

Duration: *4-12 hours*

Dependence: *High*

Possible effects: *Increased alertness, anxiety, excitation, insomnia, appetite loss, dilated pupils, irritability, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, loss of coordination, delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, collapse; overdose can result in high blood pressure, fever, elevated heart rate, stroke or heart failure.*

Other facts: *Laboratory animals will self-administer amphetamines until death.*

*Although users think they can perform better with amphetamines, they cannot.*

#### **Anabolic Steroids: Anavar, Anadrol-50, Maxibolin, Dianabol**

Drug group: *Synthetic*

Street names: *Steroids, 'roids*

Appearance: *Liquid or pills*

Packaging: *Vials, prescription bottles*

Method of use: *Injection or oral*

Paraphernalia: *Syringe, belt or rubber hose*

Duration: *Varies with use*

Dependence: *Varies with use*

Possible effects: *Quick weight and muscle gain, aggressiveness, acne, jaundice, purple or red body spots, swelling in feet and lower legs, trembling, stunted growth, bad breath, blood poisoning, stomach pains, bone pain, muscle cramps, chills, nausea, vomiting, fever, continuous headache, insomnia, hives, rash, sore*

## Learning Activity #4 for Parents and Youth Leaders

*tongue, unnatural hair growth, heart disease, kidney damage and various cancers.*

*Other facts: Steroids are a synthetic form of the male hormone testosterone, which regulates growth. Too much testosterone causes the body to shut down its own growth mechanisms.*

*Steroids were originally developed to maintain strength in aging men, but some weight lifters and other athletes started using them to excel in competition.*

*Today, the only legitimate use of steroids is for burn victims and anemics.*

### **Barbiturates: Amytal, Butisol, Nembutal, Phenobarbital, Seconal, Tuinal**

*Drug group: Depressants*

*Street names: Downers, barbs, yellows, red or blue devils, rainbows*

*Appearance: Capsules or pills which may be red, yellow, blue, or white*

*Packaging: Pill bottles or plastic bags*

*Method of use: Oral*

*Paraphernalia: Pill bottles*

*Duration: 2-12 hours*

*Dependence: High*

*Possible effects: Relaxation, decreased alertness, impaired coordination, slurred speech, disorientation, sleep; overdose can cause dilated pupils, shallow respiration, clammy skin, weak and rapid pulse, brain and liver damage, coma or death.*

*Other facts: Barbiturates are often used in conjunction with alcohol, a deadly combination that often leads to coma or death.*

### **Cocaine**

*Drug group: Stimulants*

*Street names: Coke, blow, white, snow, snort, flake, nose candy, cane, Bolivian marching powder*

*Appearance: White crystalline powder or powder chunks*

*Packaging: Small foil or paper packets; small clear vials*

*Method or use: Inhaled, smoked or injected*

*Paraphernalia: Straws, razor blades, rolled dollar bills, mirrors, glass pipes, needle and syringe, spoons and belts.*

*Duration: 4-8 hours*

*Dependence: High*

*Possible effects: Euphoria, increased alertness, feelings of confidence and well-being. Can cause irritability, personality changes, depression, fatigue, psychosis, dilated pupils, runny nose, and elevated heart rate, respiration and body temperature. Overdose can cause extreme agitation, respiratory failure and death.*

*Other facts: Laboratory animals will self-administer cocaine until death. Cocaine blocks the body's ability to reabsorb adrenaline, which can result in heart failure.*

### **Crack Cocaine**

*Drug group: Stimulants*

*Street names: Crack, rock, hubba*

*Appearance: White to tan pellets or chunks*

*Packaging: Small clay or clear plastic or glass vials*

*Method of use: Smoked in small pipes*

*Paraphernalia: Pipes made from glass jars, cardboard cylinders or glass base pipes*

*Duration: Immediate high lasting a few minutes to a few hours*

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

Dependence: *High and immediate*  
Possible effects: *Euphoria, high energy, insomnia, appetite loss, dilated pupils, and elevated heart rate, respiration and body temperature. Prolonged use can result in irritability, depression, paranoia, convulsions and death.*  
Other facts: *The "high" effect of crack is felt within seven seconds of use.*

### **Diet Pills: Didrex, Fastin, Tenuate, Baccaratte, Ionamin, Tepanil**

Drug group: *Amphetamines*  
Street names: *Same as amphetamines*  
Appearance: *Pills, capsules or tablets*  
Packaging: *Vials, paper packets, pill bottles*  
Method of use: *Swallowed*  
Paraphernalia: *Pill bottles*  
Duration: *4-12 hours*  
Dependence: *High*  
Possible effects: *Increased wakefulness, alertness, initiative, decreased appetite. May cause irritability, restlessness, psychosis and depression.*  
Other facts: *Although developed to aid in weight loss, the effects are fruitless unless dietary habits are changed.*

### **Hashish**

Drug group: *Cannabis Sativa*  
Street names: *Hash or hash oil*  
Appearance: *Gold, brown or black gummy substance compressed into cakes*  
Packaging: *Small chunks or balls wrapped in foil, oil sold in small vials*  
Method of use: *Smoked, eaten or added to cigarettes*  
Paraphernalia: *Small, odd-shaped pipes*  
Duration: *2-6 hours*

Dependence: *Moderate*  
Possible effects: *Relaxation, euphoria, memory deficit, increased pulse, alteration of perceptions and inhibitions, bloodshot eyes, dry mouth and throat, increased appetite, dream-like state, acute sensations and paranoia. Higher doses result in hallucinations, synesthesia, anxiety and paranoia.*  
Other facts: *Hashish is extremely high (10 to 15 percent) in the active ingredient THC. Effects of THC on the human brain are multiple and negative.*

### **Heroin**

Drug group: *Opiates*  
Street names: *Smack, junk, sugar, mud, tar, brown, China white, black tar, Mexican brown*  
Appearance: *White to brown powder or black tar-like substance*  
Packaging: *Small foil or paper packets, toy balloons, cellophane wrappers*  
Method of use: *Injected into the veins, inhaled through the nose or smoked*  
Paraphernalia: *Hypodermic needles, spoons, belts and cotton balls*  
Duration: *2-4 hours*  
Dependence: *High*  
Possible effects: *Euphoria, drowsiness, relaxation, mental impairment, decreased coordination, constricted pupils, nausea and possible vomiting. Overdose can result in slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma and death.*  
Other facts: *Pure heroin is rarely sold on the streets and is usually only 5% pure. Overdoses are common.*

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

### **Inhalants: Amyl nitrite/ Butyl nitrite, Nitrous oxide, Gasoline, Glue, Correction fluid, Paint thinner, Aerosols**

Drug group: *Inhalants*

Street names: *Gas, bullet, poppers, snappers, rush, bolt, locker room*

Appearance: *Any substance that emits vapors*

Packaging: *Spray cans, glue containers, bullet-shaped cartridges, household product containers*

Method of use: *Inhaled*

Paraphernalia: *Any product that emits toxic odors or fumes, cloth rag, plastic bag, balloons*

Duration: *1-3 hours*

Dependence: *High*

Possible effects: *Hallucination, poor coordination, stupor, impaired thought processes, violent behavior, decreased body temperature, lowered blood pressure, psychosis, nausea, sneezing, nosebleeds, fatigue, death.*

Other facts: *Most deaths occur from choking or suffocation.*

### **LSD: Lysergic Acid Diethylamide**

Drug group: *Hallucinogens*

Street names: *Acid, LSD microdot, blotter, trips, cubes, white lightning*

Appearance: *Clear liquid, colored pills, white powder, or soaked into paper, stamps or candy*

Packaging: *Blotter paper squares, gelatin squares, pills in plastic bags, vials, small paper squares*

Method of use: *Oral*

Paraphernalia: *Small vials or paper packets, sheets of blotter paper*

Duration: *8-16 hours*

Dependence: *Low*

Possible effects: *Hallucinations, synesthesia (cross-confusion of senses), distorted sense of sight, taste, and smell, dilated pupils, high blood pressure, fever sweating, chills and clammy skin. "Bad trips" can result in confusion, panic, paranoia, anxiety, loss of control and psychosis.*

Other facts: *LSD is many thousand times more powerful than other hallucinogens and will produce "flashbacks", or recurrence of hallucinations, that sometimes result in psychosis.*

### **Marijuana**

Drug group: *Cannabis sativa*

Street names: *Pbt, ganja, grass, weed, reefer, nickle, dime, splif, smoke, joint, Acapulco Gold*

Appearance: *Tobacco-like, dried flowers and leaves (buds) on stems, often with seeds*

Packaging: *Plastic bags, joints (hand rolled cigarettes) or foil packages*

Method of use: *Smoked as joints, in pipes*

Paraphernalia: *Odd-shaped pipes, water*

bongs, cigarette papers, roach clips

Duration: *2-6 hours*

Dependence: *Moderate*

Possible effects: *Relaxation, euphoria, increased pulse, alteration of perceptions and inhibitions, bloodshot eyes, dry mouth and throat, increased appetite, dream-like state, acute sensations and paranoia. Chronic use affects reproductive organs, memory, thought processes and other brain functions, lungs and lung functions, suppression of the immune system and*

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

*creates a loss of self-identity.*

*Other facts: Marijuana is the number two gateway drug. The most active ingredient in marijuana is THC. THC is fat soluble, storing itself in fat cells, and taking 4-6 weeks to be eliminated from the body.*

### **Methamphetamines**

*Drug group: Stimulants*

*Street names: Crystal, crystalmeth, meth, speed, crank, methadrine. In smokable form, called "ice".*

*Appearance: White to tan powder, capsules*

*Packaging: Small foil or paper packets, plastic bags*

*Method use: Injected, swallowed or inhaled*

*Paraphernalia: Hypodermic needles, spoons, belts or tubes; straws or razor blades; glass pipes*

*Duration: 4-12 hours*

*Dependence: High*

*Possible effects: Increased alertness, anxiety, excitation, insomnia, appetite loss, dilated pupils, irritability, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, loss of coordination, delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, collapse; overdose can result in high blood pressure, fever, elevated heart rate, stroke and heart failure.*

*Other facts: Methamphetamine is more stimulating than amphetamines and users rapidly reach a state of dependence.*

### **Organic Hallucinogens: Mushrooms, Peyote, Mescaline**

*Drug group: Hallucinogens (organic)*

*Street names: 'Shrooms, cactus, mesc, buttons*

*Appearance: Hard brown discs, tablets or capsules (Mescaline and Peyote); fresh or*

*dried mushrooms, purplish or greenish in color*

*Packaging: Plastic bags*

*Method of use: Chewed and swallowed; smoked or taken orally (Mescaline)*

*Paraphernalia: Plastic bags, pill bottles*

*Duration: 1-12 hours*

*Dependence: Low*

*Possible effects: Altered senses, tremors, panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety, loss of control, dilated pupils, fever, increased heart rate and blood pressure, loss of appetite, psychosis.*

*Other Acts: Organic hallucinogens were used by primitive and Native American cultures in religious ceremonies.*

### **PCP: Phencyclidine**

*Drug group: Hallucinogens*

*Street names: Angel dust, supergrass, KJ, rocket fuel, embalming fluid, killerweed, sherms, crystal*

*Appearance: Clear liquid, white to brown powder or a gummy mass*

*Packaging: Tablets and capsules or clear liquid applied to marijuana or cigarettes*

*Method of use: Swallowed or smoked*

*Paraphernalia: Dark cigarettes*

*Duration: 1-6 hours*

*Dependence: Moderate*

*Possible effects: hallucinations; distorted sense of sight taste and smell; high blood pressure and heart rate; fever sweating, chills or clammy skin; rapid and involuntary eye movement; exaggerated walk; extraordinary strength; a sense of invulnerability; and image distortion.*

*"Bad trips" can result in confusion, panic paranoia, anxiety, loss of control and psychosis. Extended use can result in*



## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

*impaired breathing, heart and lung disease.*

*Other facts: Commercial use is as a large animal tranquilizer. There is no antitoxin for the effects of PCP, and because of the unpredictability of its effects, it is one of the most dangerous of "street" drugs.*

### **Synthetic Hallucinogens: LSD, PCP, ADA, MDMA, 1301~1, DMT**

*Drug group: Hallucinogens (synthetic)*

*Street names: Lunch hour trip, businessman's special, STP ecstasy, heaven, angel dust, loveboat, lovely, hog, killer weed, acid, microdot, white lightning, blue heaven, sugar cubes*

*Appearance: Synthetically manufactured hallucinogens appear as liquid, capsules or pills; or as small bits of paper soaked in liquid*

*Packaging: Vials, tablets, capsules, paper squares, gelatin squares or pills in small plastic bags*

*Method of use: Oral or injected*

*Paraphernalia: Syringe, belt or rubber hose*

*Duration: 4-12 hours*

*Dependence: Low to moderate*

*Possible effects: Hallucinations, distorted senses, breakdown of inhibitions, relaxation, dilated pupils, high blood pressure, fever, chills, panic, paranoia, anxiety, loss of control, loss of appetite, psychosis.*

*Other facts: PCP was developed for use as a large animal tranquilizer; LSD is many thousand times more powerful than other hallucinogens, and can produce "flashbacks" or reoccurring hallucinogenic experiences.*

### **Tobacco**

*Drug group: Tobacco*

*Street names: Cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff*

*Appearance: Dried leaf of varying texture and color*

*Packaging: Commercial packaging*

*Method of use: Smoked, chewed or snorted*

*Paraphernalia: Matches and lighters, rolling papers*

*Duration: Time varies*

*Dependence: High*

*Possible effects: Euphoria, lightheadedness, diminished sense of smell and taste, elevated heart and respiration rates, tingling sensation in hands and feet, chronic cough, heart and lung disease, cancers, gastrointestinal disease, eating disorders and allergic reactions.*

*Other facts: Tobacco is the number three gateway drug. It is often used in conjunction with the other gateway drugs (alcohol and marijuana). The use of tobacco products is responsible for approximately 500,000 premature deaths each year and another 16 million Americans are living with a serious illness caused by smoking (2018, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), "Office on Smoking and Health"). Cigarette smoke contains about 4,000 chemicals, several of which are carcinogens (known cancer-causing agents). Cigarette smoke also contains nicotine, a highly addictive substance that reinforces and strengthens the urge to smoke.*

### **MDMA (Ecstasy)**

*MDMA (3-4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine) is a synthetic, psychoactive drug chemically similar to the stimulant methamphetamine and the hallucinogen*

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

mescaline. Street names for MDMA include Ecstasy, Adam, XTC, hug, beans and love drug. In 2002, an estimated 676,000 people in the U.S. age 12 and older used MDMA.\*

Research in animals indicates that MDMA is neurotoxic; whether or not this is also true in humans is currently an area of intense investigation. MDMA can also be dangerous to health and, on rare occasions, lethal.

MDMA exerts its primary effects in the brain on neurons that use the chemical serotonin to communicate with other neurons. The serotonin system plays an important role in regulating mood, aggression, sexual activity, sleep and sensitivity to pain.

### Health Hazards

**Cognitive Effects:** Chronic users of MDMA perform more poorly than nonusers on certain types of cognitive or memory tasks. Some of these effects may be due to the use of other drugs in combination with MDMA, among other factors.

**Physical Effects:** In high doses, MDMA can interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature. This can lead to a sharp increase in body temperature (hyperthermia), resulting in liver, kidney and cardiovascular system failure.

Because MDMA can interfere with its own metabolism (breakdown within the body), potentially harmful levels can be reached by repeated drug use within short intervals.

Users of MDMA face many of the same risks as users of other stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines. These include increases

in heart rate and blood pressure, a special risk for people with circulatory problems or heart disease and other symptoms such as muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, and chills or sweating.

**Psychological Effects:** These can include confusion, depression, sleep problems, drug craving and severe anxiety. These problems can occur during and sometimes days or weeks after taking MDMA.

**Neurotoxicity:** Research in animals links MDMA exposure to long-term damage to neurons that are involved in mood, thinking and judgment. A study in nonhuman primates showed that exposure to MDMA for only 4 days caused damage to serotonin nerve terminals that was evident 6 to 7 years later. While similar neurotoxicity has not been definitively shown in humans, the wealth of animal research indicating MDMA's damaging properties suggests that MDMA is not a safe drug for human consumption.

### Hidden Risk: Drug Purity

Other drugs chemically similar to MDMA, such as MDA (methylenedioxyamphetamine, the parent drug of MDMA) and PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine, associated with fatalities in the U.S. and Australia) are sometimes sold as ecstasy. These drugs can be neurotoxic or create additional health risks to the user. Also, ecstasy tablets may contain other substances in addition to MDMA, such as ephedrine (a stimulant); dextromethorphan (DXM, a cough suppressant that has PCP-like effects at high doses); ketamine (an anesthetic

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

*used mostly by veterinarians that also has PCP-like effects); caffeine; cocaine; and methamphetamine. While the combination of MDMA with one or more of these drugs may be inherently dangerous, users might also combine them with substances such as marijuana and alcohol, putting themselves at further physical risk.*

Extent of Use: Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG)\*\*

*CEWG members monitor drug use data sources for 21 metropolitan areas nationwide. In many of these areas monitored by CEWG members, MDMA once used primarily at dance clubs, raves and college scenes, is being used in a number of other social settings.*

*The number of MDMA emergency department (ED) mentions decreased in 11 CEWG areas from the first and/or second half of 2001 to the first half of 2002, with a significant increase reported only in New Orleans. The highest numbers of MDMA ED mentions in the 2002 period were in Philadelphia, Miami, San Francisco, Atlanta, Los Angeles and New York.*

2017 Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)\*\*\*

*MDMA use decreased in each grade, continuing the decline that began in 2002. Past year use among 8th-graders*

*decreased from 1.0 percent to 0.9 percent; from 1.8 percent to 1.7 percent among 10th-graders; and from 2.7 to 2.6 percent among 12th-graders.*

*For more information, please visit [www.ClubDrugs.org](http://www.ClubDrugs.org), [www.Teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.Teens.drugabuse.gov), and <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>.*

*The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), produced by DHHS's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, creates a new baseline for future national drug use trends. The survey is based on interviews with 67,942 respondents who were interviewed in their homes. The interviews represent 53.3 percent of the U.S. population age 12 and older. Findings from the 2016 NSDUH are available online at [www.nsdweb.rti.org](http://www.nsdweb.rti.org).*

### **Prescription Drugs and Pain Medications**

*Prescription drugs make complex surgery possible, relieve pain for millions of people, and enable many individuals with chronic medical conditions to control their symptoms and lead productive lives. Most people who take prescription medications use them responsibly. However, the non-medical use of prescription drugs is a serious public health concern. Nonmedical*

\*\*CEWG researchers meet twice yearly to share emerging trends in drug abuse for 21 major U.S. metropolitan areas. This report was based on data published in the CEWG Advance Report for June 2003. CEWG reports are on NIDA's Web site at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).

\*\*\*Conducted annually since 1975, MTF assesses drug use and attitudes among 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders, college students, and young adults nationwide. The survey is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and is funded by NIDA. Copies of the latest published survey are available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or may be downloaded from [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org).

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

use of prescription drugs like opioids, central nervous system (CNS) depressants, and stimulants can lead to abuse and addiction, characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use.

Addiction rarely occurs among people who use a pain reliever, CNS depressant, or stimulant as prescribed; however, inappropriate use of prescription drugs can lead to addiction in some cases. Patients, healthcare professionals, and pharmacists all have roles in preventing misuse and addiction. For example, if a doctor prescribes a pain medication, CNS depressant or stimulant, the patient should follow the directions for use carefully, and also learn what effects the drug could have and potential interactions with other drugs by reading all information provided by the pharmacist. Physicians and other health care providers should screen for any type of substance abuse during routine history-taking with questions about what prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines the patient is taking and why.

**Trends in Prescription Drug Abuse**  
In 2016, an estimated 11.5 million people age 12 and older reported using prescription drugs non-medically within the past year (2018, "Survey Data," [www.nsduhweb.rti.org](http://www.nsduhweb.rti.org)). Every day, 115 Americans die from abusing prescription drugs (2018, "Opioid Overdose Crisis," [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)).<sup>1</sup> While prescription drug abuse affects many Americans, some trends of particular concern can be seen among older adults, adolescents and women.

The misuse of prescribed medications

may be the most common form of drug abuse among the elderly. Older people are prescribed medications about three times more frequently than the general population and have poorer compliance with directions for use.

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse numbers indicate that the sharpest increases in new users of prescription drugs for non-medical purposes occur in 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 year-olds. Among 12 to 14 year-olds, psychotherapeutics (e.g., pain killers, tranquilizers, sedatives, and stimulants) were reported to be one of two primary drugs used.

**Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs**  
While many prescription drugs can be abused or misused, these three classes are most commonly abused:

**Opioids** — often prescribed to treat pain  
**CNS Depressants** — used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders

**Stimulants** — prescribed to treat narcolepsy and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder

### **Opioids**

Opioids are commonly prescribed because of their effective analgesic or pain-relieving properties. Many studies have shown that properly managed medical use of opioid analgesic drugs is safe and rarely causes clinical addiction, which is defined as compulsive, often uncontrollable use. Taken exactly as prescribed, opioids can be used to manage pain effectively.

Among the drugs that fall within this class —

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

sometimes referred to as narcotics — are morphine, codeine, and related drugs. Morphine is often used before or after surgery to alleviate severe pain. Codeine is used for milder pain. Other examples of opioids that can be prescribed to alleviate pain include oxycodone (OxyContin-an oral, controlled release form of the drug); propoxyphene (Darvon); hydrocodone (Vicodin); hydromorphone (Dilaudid); and meperidine (Demerol), which is used less often because of its side effects. In addition to their effective pain relieving properties, some of these drugs can be used to relieve severe diarrhea (Lomotil, for example, which is diphenoxylate) or severe coughs (codeine).

Opioids act by attaching to specific proteins called opioid receptors, which are found in the brain, spinal cord and gastrointestinal tract. When these drugs attach to certain opioid receptors in the brain and spinal cord they can effectively block the transmission of pain messages to the brain.

In addition to relieving pain, opioid drugs can affect regions of the brain that mediate what we perceive as pleasure, resulting in the initial euphoria that many opioids produce. They can also produce drowsiness, cause constipation, and, depending upon the amount of drug taken, depress breathing. Taking a large single dose could cause severe respiratory depression or be fatal.

Opioids may interact with other drugs and are only safe to use with other drugs under a physician's supervision. Typically, they

should not be used with substances such as alcohol, antihistamines, barbiturates or benzodiazepines. These drugs slow down breathing, and their combined effects could risk life-threatening respiratory depression.

Chronic use of opioids can result in tolerance to the drugs so that higher doses must be taken to obtain the same initial effects. Long-term use also can lead to physical dependence - the body adapts to the presence of the drug and withdrawal symptoms occur if use is reduced abruptly.

Symptoms of withdrawal can include restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps ("cold turkey") and involuntary leg movements.

Options for effectively treating addiction to prescription opioids are drawn from experience and research on treating heroin addiction. Some examples follow.

**Methadone**, a synthetic opioid that blocks the effects of heroin and other opioids, eliminates withdrawal symptoms and relieves drug craving. It has been used for over 30 years to successfully treat people addicted to opioids.

**Other medications include LAAM** (levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol), an alternative to methadone that blocks the effects of opioids for up to 72 hours. Naltrexone is a long acting opioid blocker often used with highly motivated individuals in treatment

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

programs promoting complete abstinence, and also to prevent relapse.

**Buprenorphine**, another synthetic opioid, will soon be available. Also, naloxone counteracts the effects of opioids and is used to treat overdoses.

### CNS Depressants

CNS depressants slow down normal brain function. In higher doses, some CNS depressants can become general anesthetics.

CNS depressants can be divided into two groups, based on their chemistry and pharmacology:

**Barbiturates**, such as mephobarbital (Mebaral) and pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal), which are used to treat anxiety, tension and sleep disorders.

**Benzodiazepines**, such as diazepam (Valium), chlordiazepoxide HCl (Librium), and alprazolam (Xanax), which can be prescribed to treat anxiety, acute stress reactions and panic attacks. Benzodiazepines that have a more sedating effect, such as triazolam (Halcion) and estazolam (ProSom) can be prescribed for short-term treatment of sleep disorders.

There are many CNS depressants, and most act on the brain similarly - they affect the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that facilitate communication between brain cells. GABA works by decreasing brain activity. Although different classes of CNS depressants work in unique ways, ultimately it is their ability to increase

GABA activity that produces a drowsy or calming effect. Despite these beneficial effects for people suffering from anxiety or sleeping disorders, barbiturates and benzodiazepines can be addictive and should be used only as prescribed.

CNS depressants should not be combined with any medication or substance that causes sleepiness, including prescription pain medicines, certain over-the-counter cold and allergy medications, or alcohol. The effects of the drugs can combine to slow breathing or slow both the heart and respiration, which can be fatal.

Discontinuing prolonged use of high doses of CNS depressants can lead to withdrawal. Because they work by slowing the brain's activity, a potential consequence of abuse is that when one stops taking a CNS depressant the brain's activity can rebound to the point that seizures can occur. Someone thinking about ending their use of a CNS depressant, or who has stopped and is suffering withdrawal, should speak with a physician and seek medical treatment.

In addition to medical supervision, counseling in an in-patient or out-patient setting can help people who are overcoming addiction to CNS depressants. For example, cognitive-behavioral therapy has been used successfully to help individuals in treatment for abuse of benzodiazepines. This type of therapy focuses on modifying a patient's thinking, expectations and behaviors while simultaneously increasing their skills for coping with various life stressors.

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

*Often the abuse of CNS depressants occurs in conjunction with the abuse of another substance or drug, such as alcohol or cocaine. In these cases of polydrug abuse, the treatment approach needs to address the multiple addictions.*

### **Stimulants**

*Stimulants are a class of drugs that enhance brain activity - they cause an increase in alertness, attention and energy that is accompanied by increases in blood pressure, heart rate and respiration.*

*Historically, stimulants were used to treat asthma and other respiratory problems, obesity, neurological disorders, and a variety of other ailments. As their potential for abuse and addiction became apparent, the use of stimulants began to wane. Now, stimulants are prescribed for treating only a few health conditions, including narcolepsy, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and depression that has not responded to other treatments. Stimulants may also be used for short-term treatment of obesity and for patients with asthma.*

*Stimulants such as dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine) and methylphenidate (Ritalin) have chemical structures that are similar to key brain neurotransmitters called monoamines, which include norepinephrine and dopamine. Stimulants increase the levels of these chemicals in the brain and body. This, in turn, increases blood pressure and heart rate, constricts blood vessels, increases blood glucose and opens up the pathways of the respiratory system. In addition, the increase in*

*dopamine is associated with a sense of euphoria that can accompany the use of these drugs.*

*Research indicates that people with ADHD do not become addicted to stimulant medications, such as Ritalin, when taken in the form prescribed and at treatment dosages. However, when misused, stimulants can be addictive.*

*The consequences of stimulant abuse can be extremely dangerous. Taking high doses of a stimulant can result in an irregular heartbeat, dangerously high body temperatures, and/or the potential for cardiovascular failure or lethal seizures. Taking high doses of some stimulants repeatedly over a short period of time can lead to hostility or feelings of paranoia in some individuals.*

*Stimulants should not be mixed with antidepressants or over-the-counter cold medicines containing decongestants. Antidepressants may enhance the effects of a stimulant, and stimulants in combination with decongestants may cause blood pressure to become dangerously high or lead to irregular heart rhythms.*

*Treatment of addiction to prescription stimulants, such as methylphenidate and amphetamines, is based on behavioral therapies proven effective for treating cocaine or methamphetamine addiction. At this time, there are no proven medications for the treatment of stimulant addiction. Antidepressants, however, may be used to manage the symptoms of depression*



## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

that can accompany early abstinence from stimulants.

Depending on the patient's situation, the first step in treating prescription stimulant addiction may be to slowly decrease the drug's dose and attempting to treat withdrawal symptoms. This process of detoxification could then be followed with one of many behavioral therapies. Contingency management, for example, uses a system that enables patients to earn vouchers for drug-free urine tests; the vouchers can be exchanged for items that promote healthy living. Cognitive-behavioral therapies are proving beneficial and recovery support groups may also be effective in conjunction with a behavioral therapy.

### **Steroids (Anabolic-Androgenic)**

Anabolic-androgenic steroids are man-made substances related to male sex hormones. "Anabolic" refers to muscle-building, and "androgenic" refers to increased masculine characteristics. "Steroids" refers to the class of drugs. These drugs are available legally only by prescription to treat conditions that occur when the body produces abnormally low amounts of testosterone, such as delayed puberty and some types of impotence. They are also prescribed to treat body wasting in patients with AIDS and other diseases that result in loss of lean muscle mass. Abuse of anabolic steroids, however, can lead to serious health problems, some irreversible.

Today, athletes and others abuse anabolic steroids to enhance performance and also to improve physical appearance. Anabolic steroids are taken orally or injected, typically in cycles of weeks or months (referred to as "cycling"), rather than continuously. Cycling involves taking multiple doses of steroids over a specific period of time, stopping for a period and starting again. In addition, users often combine several different types of steroids to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing negative effects (referred to as "stacking").

**Health Hazards:** In addition, people who inject anabolic steroids run the added risk of contracting or transmitting HIV/AIDS or hepatitis, which causes serious damage to the liver.

Scientific research also shows that aggression and other psychiatric side effects may result from abuse of anabolic steroids. Many users report feeling good about themselves while on anabolic steroids, but researchers report that extreme mood swings also can occur, including manic-like symptoms leading to violence. Depression often is seen when the drugs are stopped and may contribute to dependence on anabolic steroids. Researchers report also that users may suffer from paranoid jealousy, extreme irritability, delusions, and impaired judgment stemming from feelings of invincibility.

Research also indicates that some users might turn to other drugs to alleviate some of the negative effects of anabolic steroids. For example, a study of 227 men



## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

admitted in 1999 to a private treatment center for dependence on heroin or other opioids found that 9.3 percent had abused anabolic steroids before trying any other illicit drug. Of these 9.3 percent, 86 percent first used opioids to counteract insomnia and irritability resulting from the anabolic steroids.

### Reference

National Institute on Drug Abuse.  
Research Report Series: Prescription Drugs/  
Abuse and Addiction, April 2001.

1. These data are from the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). NHSDA is an annual survey on the nationwide prevalence and incidence of illicit drug, alcohol and tobacco use among Americans age 12 and older. The 1999 NHSDA also provides estimates of State and Washington, D.C. data. For detailed information from of the latest survey, visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) or order a copy from 1-800-729-6686.
2. The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and is funded by National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health. The survey has tracked 12th graders' illicit drug use and related attitudes since 1975; in 1991, 8th and 10th graders were added to the study. For the 2000 study, 45,173 students were surveyed from a representative sample of 435 public and private schools

nationwide. The student response rate was 86 percent. For the latest survey results, please visit the NIDA website at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).

3. L. Simoni-Wastila, *The Use of Abusable Prescription Drugs: The Role of Gender*, *Journal of Women's Health and Gender-based Medicine* 9(3):289-297, 2000.
4. The latest findings on drug abuse related hospital visits (emergency room data) and deaths (medical examiner data) are from the 1999 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). For detailed information from of the latest survey, visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) or order a copy from 1-800-729-6686.
5. Nora Volkow, et al., *Dopamine Transporter Occupancies in the Human Brain Induced by Therapeutic Doses of Oral Methylphenidate*, *Am J Psychiatry* 155:1325-1331, October 1998.

### Extent of Use

Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)\*: MTF annually assesses drug use among the Nation's 8th, 10th and 12th grade students. The 2017 report revealed past year\*\* use of anabolic steroids saw a slight increase among 8th graders and 12th graders while 10th graders remained stable. Peak rates of past year use occurred in 2002 for 12th-graders (2.5 percent), in 2000 and 2002 for 10th-graders (2.2 percent) and in 1999 and 2000 for 8th-graders (1.7 percent). In 2003, steroid use by 10th-graders declined significantly to 1.7 percent. The

## Hard Facts About Drugs cont.

**Anabolic Steroid Use by Students  
Year 2017 Monitoring the Future Survey**

	8th grade	10th	12th
Ever used	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%
Used in past year	1.4%	1.7%	2.1%
Used in past month	0.7%	0.8%	1.3%

rate among 12th-graders, 2.1 percent, was also down from 2002, but not significantly. Among 8th-graders, 1.4 percent reported steroid use in the past year. Therefore, current trends seem to indicate a continued overall decrease from the report of use almost two decades ago [2018, [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org); 2018, "Steroids (Anabolic)," [www.nida.org](http://www.nida.org).]

Most anabolic steroids users are male, and among male students, past year use of these substances was reported by 0.6 percent of 8th-graders, 0.8 percent of 10th-graders, and 1.4 percent of 12th-graders in 2017.

1. Pope, H.G., and Katz, D. L. Affective and psychotic symptoms associated with anabolic steroid use. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 145(4):487-490, 1988.
2. The New England Journal of Medicine 320:1532, 2000.

\*These data are from the 2003 Monitoring the Future Survey, funded by the

National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, DHHS, and conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The survey has tracked 12th-graders' illicit drug use and related attitudes since 1975; in 1991, 8th- and 10th-graders were added to the survey. The latest data are online at <http://www.drugabuse.gov>.

\*\*"Lifetime" or "ever used" refers to use at least once during a respondent's lifetime. "Past year" refers to an individual's drug use at least once during the year preceding their response to the survey. "Past month" refers to an individual's drug use at least once during the month preceding their response to the survey.

Please also visit NIDA's steroids-specific Web site for further information on the effects of anabolic-androgenic steroids and information on healthy alternatives – <http://www.steroidabuse.org>

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Learning Activity #5 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Drug Misuse and Abuse

#### What is the difference between drug use, misuse and abuse?

We use drugs daily in our lives. Whether it is drinking a cup of coffee to help us wake up or taking an aspirin to relieve pain, the important consideration is how and why people use drugs. Almost every drug created has a medicinal purpose. It is people who decide whether they are going to use drugs in a positive, healthy manner or misuse them. In presenting drug information, it is important to distinguish between the following terms:

**Drug use:** the use of a chemical for medicinal purposes under the supervision of a physician or as directed in the instructions provided by the manufacturers of over-the-counter drugs.

**Drug misuse:** chemical use without the supervision of a physician or not following manufacturer's directions.

**Drug abuse/chemical dependency:** when an individual physically and/or psychologically cannot quit using specific chemicals. The individual's drug use has become a disease. It is progressive, predictable and treatable.

#### General Symptoms of Drug Misuse and Abuse

1. Changes in school attendance and conduct
2. Changes in academic performance and/or drop in grades
3. Change in dress and personal hygiene; poor physical appearance
4. Change in level of patience; short-tempered
5. Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times to conceal dilated or constricted pupils (Note: Allow for current fashion trends which promote the donning of sunglasses while indoors.)
6. Routine wearing of long-sleeved shirts even in hot weather
7. Change in peer group, particularly those labeled as drug users
8. Finding a young person in unusual places for no apparent reason (i.e., closets, storage rooms, basements, attics, garages)

## Learning Activity #5 for Parents and Youth Leaders

9. Stealing small items
10. Sudden change in personal finances and spending (either too much money or too little money)

### *Characteristics of Specific Drug Use*

#### **The Inhalant/Solvent Abuser**

Odor of the chemical inhaled is apparent on user's breath and clothing  
Unusually frequent presence of plastic or paper bags in user's possession  
Unusually excessive runny nose and watery eyes  
Poor muscular control and slurred speech (acts drunk)  
Drowsiness or unconsciousness  
Unusually recurring bad breath

#### **The Depressant Abuser**

Symptoms of alcohol intoxication without any apparent odor on user's breath (i.e., staggering, slurred speech, disorientation)  
Frequently sleeping at inappropriate times (i.e., school, work)  
Apathetic attitude towards school and/or work  
Displays difficulty in concentrating on work

#### **The Stimulant Abuser**

Unusually hyperactive  
Displays excessive behavior which is unusually irritable, argumentative, and/or anxious  
Dilated pupils  
Unusually talkative and excitable  
Goes long periods of time without eating and/or sleeping  
Possible displays of hallucinations and feelings of paranoia  
Chain smoking  
Chronic bad breath  
Dry mouth and nose which frequently cause the user to lick lips and rub and scratch nose

## Drug Misuse and Abuse cont.

### **The Narcotic User**

In early stages, presence of empty bottles of paragoric and/or cough medicine containing codeine in wastebasket

Unexplained scars on the arms or on the backs of hands, feet or between toes (caused by injections)

Constricted, fixed pupils

Frequently scratches body

Loss of appetite other than for sweet foods (candy, cookies, sodas)

Unusually frequent runny nose, watery, red eyes, and cough

Unexplained syringes, bent spoons, cotton, needles, metal bottle caps, and medicine droppers

Unexplained white powder around the nostrils caused from inhaling heroin

Often lethargic and drowsy; may go on the "nod" which is an alternating cycle of dozing and awakening

If withdrawing from the drug, the user may be nauseated, vomit and display flushed skin, frequent yawning and muscular twitching

### **The Marijuana User**

In early stages, the user appears animated, displaying rapid, loud talking with frequent laughter

In later stages, the user appears sleepy

Dilated pupils, bloodshot eyes

Sweet, mushy odor on hair and clothes

Distortion of depth and time perception

### **The Hallucinogen Abuser**

Dilated pupils

Users may sit or recline quietly in a trance or may appear paranoid

Increase in blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar while under the influence

Unexplained nausea, chills, flushes, irregular breathing, sweating and trembling while under the influence

The user may experience changes in sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell and time while under the influence

## Drug Misuse and Abuse cont.

**Drug addiction has clear characteristics. Some of these are:**

1. An adaptative alteration in the body such that the presence of the drug in the system is necessary to maintain normalcy
2. Occurrence of withdrawal symptoms that usually do not occur when the drug is used appropriately and the drug is discontinued or decreased
3. Craving for the effects produced by a drug; the user thinks it is necessary for his/her psychological well-being to continue its use
4. Condition of anxiety, depression and sometimes a psychotic state brought on by withdrawal
5. Development of tolerance, i.e., the user has to increase the drug dosage in order to achieve the same effect

**Individuals who suffer from alcoholism experience slightly different symptoms. They are:**

1. Loss of control over alcohol intake
2. Presence of physiological, psychological, economic, familial and/or social problems
3. Use of alcohol as a "crutch" in order to keep his/her life from falling apart
4. Increased tolerance (need for more to produce effects) and repeated withdrawal symptoms when alcohol is not consumed

### ***Factors That Determine Drug Effects***

It is important to remember that there are three basic rules concerning the action of drugs on the human body. First of all, the action of a drug is always mediated by a naturally occurring process of the body. A drug can minimize, facilitate or antagonize a normally occurring biological action. Secondly, a drug has one of three basic effects on body cells: increase, decrease or disrupt a cell's normal activity. There are many factors that influence an individual's response to a drug. No one factor determines how a drug will affect an individual. The factors to consider are as follows:

## Drug Misuse and Abuse cont.

### **Type of drug used:**

Different types of drugs bring on different responses in the body. Every drug has its own specific action on the body which is distinct from other drugs. Every drug also has potential side effects.

### **How a drug is taken:**

The way a drug is taken into the body will greatly affect its speed, intensity and length of the effects. A drug that is taken by intravenous injection will produce effects within 15 seconds since the drug enters the circulatory system directly. A drug that is taken orally takes longer to take effect because it has to be broken down in the stomach and intestines before it can be absorbed into the bloodstream. The method by which a drug is taken depends a great deal upon the desired action and the chemical and physical properties of the drug. Some drugs do not lend themselves to be taken orally but work well if given by injection.

### **Dosage:**

Dosage is very important in determining drug effects. For example, if aspirin is taken in appropriate doses (1-2 tablets), it may relieve pain. Taken in larger doses, aspirin may cause adverse effects, such as tinnitus, stomach distress, bleeding, belching and delay in clotting time.

### **Body weight:**

The body weight of the user has much to do with the effects of a drug. People who are heavier than average may be able to take a greater amount of a drug. People lighter than average may be adversely affected by the same amount.

### **Age:**

The age of the user oftentimes determines his/her sensitivity to a drug. Children are more sensitive to any drug than an adult even if their body weight is the same. With some drugs, it takes only one-fourth the adult dosage to be fatal to a child. The elderly are also more sensitive to drugs.

### **Mind-Set:**

When a person takes a drug, his/her psychological expectations have an influence on the effects of the drug. The emotional state of the user can also affect the reactions he/she has, especially with hallucinogens.



## Drug Misuse and Abuse cont.

### **Setting:**

The environment in which a person takes a drug has a substantial influence on its effects. The user's feelings of discomfort, the temperature and the altitude of the surroundings can affect the drug activity in the body and the way a person reacts physically to the chemical.

### **Sex:**

Anatomically, men's and women's bodies have differences in fat and water content. Since some drugs are fat-soluble while others are water-soluble, there are often different drug effects in men and women. For example, most women are more affected by alcohol than men even if their weight is the same.

### **Tolerance:**

If a person uses a drug continuously over a period of time, the dosage has to increase in order to achieve the same desired effects. Some of the drugs that a person can develop a tolerance to are Demarol, Percodan (both painkillers), Seconal, Nembutal (both depressants), Benzedrine, Dexedrine (weight control pills), caffeine, nicotine and alcohol. Even some over-the-counter drugs, such as sleep-aid preparations, carry a potential for tolerance if used long enough.

### **Absorption and metabolism rates:**

Individual metabolic rates and food can alter the rate at which a drug is absorbed and how effective it is in the body.

### **General health:**

Any disease, allergy or medical problem can interfere with the body's ability to deal with the problems that might come about by taking certain drugs. A person who is very nervous can be resistant to high doses of tranquilizers or sedatives. A patient who is running a fever may experience stimulation rather than pain relief when morphine is administered.

### **Mental health:**

If a drug user has a mental disorder, the drugs that he/she uses can have a different effect other than what is the normal effect. For example, an opiate may ease the delusions of a person suffering from paranoia.

## Learning Activity #6 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Laws Regarding Underage Drinking

#### Laws On Underage Drinking and Driving – Zero Tolerance Bill

Automatic Driver's License Suspension for Age Laws

The zero tolerance bill, Senate Bill 35 authored by Royce West and the Senate Committee on Juvenile Driving While Intoxicated Laws, took effect September 1, 1997. What does the passage of this bill mean for Texas? It significantly strengthens the consequences to a minor for underage drinking. It is now illegal for a minor to drive while having any detectable amount of alcohol in the minor's system.

**The consequences for the minor on the first offense of the zero tolerance law:**

- Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$500

- Attendance at an alcohol awareness class

- 20 to 40 hours of mandatory community service

- 60 days driver's license suspension. The minor would not be eligible for an occupational license for the first 30 days.

**A second offense increases the consequences to:**

- Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$500

- Attendance at an alcohol awareness class at the judge's discretion

- 40 to 60 hours of mandatory community service

- 120 days driver's license suspension. The minor would not be eligible for an occupational license for the first 90 days.

**A third offense is not eligible for deferred adjudication. The minor's driver's license is suspended for 180 days and an occupational license may not be obtained for the entire suspension period. If the minor is 17 years of age or older, the fine increases from \$500 to \$2,000, confinement in jail for up to 180 days or both.**

#### *Changes To Other Alcohol Related Age Laws*

Senate Bill 35 also significantly strengthened other minor-related laws and added automatic driver's license suspension to the penalties. Minors who purchase, attempt to purchase, possess or consume alcoholic beverages, as well as minors who are publicly intoxicated or misrepresenting their age to obtain alcoholic beverages face the following consequences:

## Learning Activity #6 for Parents and Youth Leaders

Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$500

Alcohol awareness class

8 to 40 hours community service

30 to 180 days loss or denial of driver's license

**If a minor is seventeen years of age or older and the violation is the third offense, the offense is punishable by a fine of \$250 to \$2,000, confinement in jail for up to 180 days or both, as well as automatic driver's license suspension.**

### *Sale or Giving Alcohol to a Minor*

Adults and minors who give alcohol to a minor or buy the alcohol for the minors also face a stiffer penalty. The punishment for making alcoholic beverages available to a minor has been increased from a class C misdemeanor (fine of \$0 to \$500) to a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$4,000, confinement in jail for up to a year or both.

Sale to a minor is a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$4,000, confinement up to a year in jail or both.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

It is important to discuss with adolescents the reality of what happens if they are arrested for drinking and driving, stress that if the adolescent is drinking and driving, they do risk arrest and if they are arrested, they will be handcuffed, taken to jail, processed through the system, fingerprinted, parents called and they will have to go through the legal process.

Their parents will be affected by coming to pick up their adolescent at jail, paying a bail bondsmen to get them out, pay for an attorney and go to the trial with the adolescent. Throughout the process, the adolescent loses trust with the parents and experiences consequences legally, socially and in the family unit.

In addition, if an adolescent is riding in the car where alcohol is present or at a party where alcohol is being served, they can be charged with minor in possession which will put them in the legal system and experience the consequences of their choices.

## Learning Activity #7 for Parents and Youth Leaders

# A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs

**T. Furman Hewitt, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary**

Prepared for the North Carolina Dept. of Human Resources

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## Attitudes Toward Alcoholic Beverages in The Bible

The Production and Use of Wine and Beer in the Near East

The use of wine and beer as a beverage was widely practiced in the Near Eastern world. Although beer is not mentioned in the Bible, the brewing of that product was known from Egypt to Mesopotamia for at least 3,000 years before Christ. Both written records and implements for the straining of beer recovered in excavations attest to its use.

Wine is mentioned in the Bible, and its use is assumed. Indeed, the Egyptian "Tale of Sinuhe," which describes Palestine as having "more wine than water", indicates that the quantity of wine produced from the vineyards of Palestine and Syria has long been famous (Pritchard, 1955, pp. 849-852). As they do even now, grapes grew in abundance in Palestine--note the reaction of the Israelites to the large clusters of grapes which they found when spying out the land during the Exodus (Num. 13:21-27). Grapes harvested in August or September in connection with the Feast of Booths (Deut. 16:13), were pressed by foot or heavy stones in wine vats, a series of pits connected by channels hewn in solid rock. An example of a wine vat system can be seen today on "The Garden Tomb" grounds in Jerusalem. The treading of the grapes was a joyous time (d. Is. 16:10; Jer. 25:30). It is possible that three of the Psalms (8, 81, and 84) were specifically used at the vintage time; the term "Gittath" in the superscription may derive from the Hebrew term for "wine press" (gath), and thus be the name of a tune sung at vintage (McCullough, "The Book of Psalms, Introduction," p. 9).

Fermentation of the grape juice began in the lower vat rather quickly after pressing. The wine was then transferred to jars or new wineskins (Jer. 13: 12; Mark 2:22) with a vent left for the escape of gases resulting from the fermentation process (cf. Job 32:18-19). The clear references to the fermentation process means that a product with some alcoholic content was being considered, not plain grape juice. Although there are several Hebrew and Greek words used to refer to "wine" or "strong drink," there is little doubt that they refer to wine as we know it, that is, a product with about 10-12% alcohol.

### The Use of Wine Among the Hebrews

## Learning Activity #7 for Parents and Youth Leaders

The most obvious thing one can say is that the production, buying, selling and drinking of wine was an accepted occurrence for the biblical writers. There are over 220 references to wine or strong drink in the Old Testament alone, most of which speak matter-of-factly of the beverage as a staple in the average person's diet along with wheat and oil (cf. II Chr. 32:28; - Gen. 27:28; Is. 36:17; etc.). Archaeologists have recovered many potsherds that served as receipts in the buying and selling of wine in large quantities.

In this setting, one can clearly discern two attitudes toward the use of wine that, while not necessarily mutually exclusive, can be profitably distinguished as forerunners of the tension sometimes felt in our own society:

### 1. Wine as the gift of God.

***Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
And plants for man to cultivate,  
That he may bring forth food from the earth,  
And wine (yayin) to gladden the heart of man,  
Oil to make his face shine,  
And bread to strengthen man's heart.  
(Psalm 104:14-15)***

These words of the Psalmist characterize a strand of thought in which wine is considered along with other produce from the earth as one of God's gifts to mankind. So closely is wine linked to the care of God the Creator that its availability could be regarded as one of the signs of the Day of the Lord, that is, the age when God's will would be perfectly realized on earth. In that day, wrote Amos, "the mountains shall drip sweet wine (asis)," the people of Israel will rebuild ruined cities, "they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine (yayin), and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit" (Am. 9:13-14). The fourth century prophet Joel looked forward to vats overflowing with wine (tirosh) and oil, to mountains dripping sweet wine (Jl. 2:24-; 3:18), while an apocalyptic section of Isaiah anticipated "a feast of fat things, a feast of wine" (25:6), and a time when "foreigners will not drink your wine (tirosh) for which you have labored" (6:28; cf. Jer. 31:12).

Apparently, wine was for the Hebrews a symbol of that which was joyous and good. "Wine gladdens life," wrote the author of Ecclesiastes. "Eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already approved what you do" (Ec. 10:19; 9:7).

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

Proverbs, another representative of Israel's Wisdom literature, portrayed wine (yayin) as an ingredient in the lavish feast which Wisdom offers to entice the simple (Prov. 9:2,5). The writer of the Song of Solomon went so far as to compare love with wine--though love got higher marks (S. of S. 1:2, 4; 4:10).

As one of God's good gifts, wine had an accepted part in Israel's cultic life. Wine (yayin) was offered at the daily burnt offering along with a lamb, flour, and oil (Ex. 29:40; cf. Num. 28:7-14); it was also offered as part of the offering of first fruits after the barley harvest in April (Lev. 23:13) and again at the festival of Weeks, the wheat harvest, later known as Pentecost (Lev. 23:18). At the harvest festival the individual worshipper feasted "before the Lord" on "oxen, or sheep or wine and strong drink, whatever your appetite craves" (Dt. 14:26). Even the Passover ritual eventually employed the use of ritual cups of wine in addition to bitter herbs, unleavened bread and lamb (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible III*, p. 665). Wine, along with flour, oil and incense were kept in the temple (I Chron. 9:29); it was also considered part of the offering regularly given for the personal use and support of the priestly tribe of Levi (Dt. 18:4).

The use of wine was, in short, an accepted part of Israel's daily life and religious observance. Bread and wine were convenient shorthand symbols for their daily diet (cf. Lam. 2:12; Gen. 27:37; I Sam. 16:20; etc.), so that prosperity and success, God's favor or the lack thereof, could be described in terms of enjoying the product of one's vineyard (Mic. 6:15; Is. 24:7, 11; Dt. 28:39; etc.). As the writer of Proverbs put it: "Honor the Lord with...the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will be bursting with wine (tirosh)" (Prov. 3:9-10).

### 2. Warnings Against Drunkenness.

In spite of an obvious tendency to rejoice in the good gift of wine, the Hebrews were aware of the ugly side of the use of that product. The words of Jesus ben Sirach in the second century B.C. express the dilemma:

***Wine drunk in season and temperately is rejoicing of heart and gladness of soul.***

***Wine drunk to excess is bitterness of soul, with provocation and stumbling.  
(Ecclesiasticus 31:28-29. Emphasis added)***

The oft-quoted words of Proverbs 20:1 "Wine (yayin) is a mocker, strong drink (shekar) a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" point to a keen sensitivity to the dangers inherent in the use of wine. From Noah's shameless drunkenness (Gen. 9:20 ff.) to Isaiah's warning's against those who consume wine and strong drink (shekar) from dawn to dusk (Is. 5:11-12; 28:7), the biblical writers do not shirk from naming the dreadful results of excess. Drunkenness is blamed

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

for the incest between Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:20-38) as well as being linked with those who "acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right" (Is. 5:22).

We can understand why the Nazirites and Rechabites identified the drinking of wine as one of the corrupting influences of Canaanite culture (which was agricultural) and vowed to abstain from the use of wine as one of their attempts to reinstate what they interpreted as the older, simpler nomadic way of life (Num. 6:3; Am. 2:12; Jer. 35). No wonder, too, that laws eventually developed forbidding the use of wine by priests actively serving at the altar (Lev. 10:9). Israel had seen too much of prophets and priests reeling, staggering, confused, erring in vision, and stumbling in giving judgment (Is. 28:7-8).

While strong drink (shekar) and wine (yayin) are said by the wise men to be useful as an opiate for the distressed and poor, kings should forego such drinks "lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and pervert the rights of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4-7). In this latter case, at least, the argument against drinking goes beyond individual morality to a concern for the welfare of the entire community (i.e., the rights of all the dispossessed), the same point also made in Isaiah 5:22 and Hosea 4:11 and 7:5.

The writer of Proverbs warns that drunkenness and financial responsibility are incompatible (Prov. 20:1; 21:17), and reminds us poignantly of the tragic circumstances of the drunk in his stupor. His mind beset by "strange things," the drunkard does not even "feel" the blows of his attackers. The wine which goes down smoothly ends up biting like a serpent (Prov. 23:29-35).

As we have seen, the words "wine" and "strong drink" in the English text actually translate several different Hebrew words. That fact led to the hypothesis, popular in the 19th century, that the Bible actually speaks of two wines: fermented and unfermented, one praised as a gift of God and the other condemned. As early as 1887, Alvah Hovey, writing in the *Baptist Quarterly Review*, dismissed that theory by clearly demonstrating that the same words could be used in both an approving as well as a disapproving way. In spite of his support for abstinence, Hovey feared that "bad arguments injure even a good cause," and he worked to set the record straight (Hovey, 1887, pp. 151-18, Silces, 1887).

To sum up, let us remember that the issue for the Hebrews was drunkenness, not drinking as such. To be sure, our circumstances are not the same as theirs. For a variety of reasons, some might wish to advocate total abstinence in a way never anticipated by the Hebrews, but that does not justify an attempt to read a particular theory about the alcoholic content of wine into the scripture.

### The Use of Wine by Jesus and the Early Church

The New Testament clearly reflects the Old Testament's affirmation of the drinking of wine as a

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

normal, accepted activity while at the same time warning of its potential misuse. Abstinence is not demanded, but drunkenness is condemned.

### 1. Wine as an Accepted Part of Daily Life

It is clear that neither Paul nor Jesus before him preached total abstinence. For medicinal purposes, Paul could prescribe "a little wine for your stomach's sake..." (1 Tim. 5:23; cf. Prov. 31:6f). Jesus did not preach against the use of wine; rather, He shared a significant meal with His disciples at which the common cup of wine became a symbol of the Kingdom of God (Mt. 26:29).

So far was Jesus from being a total abstainer that Luke (Lk. 7:33-35) reports Jesus as distinguishing between himself and John the Baptist at the point of "eating" and "drinking wine (oinos)." John, a Nazirite, did not drink wine, but Jesus did. This difference between Jesus' and John's drinking practices was seized upon by Jesus' enemies; to slander him, they accused Jesus of being "a glutton and a drunkard (oinopotes)." There is, of course, no evidence that the charge was true. The Pharisees were simply trying to exploit the popularity of the ascetic John in order to discredit Jesus; the cynicism of the argument and the baseness of the motives behind the argument are illustrated in 7:33 when Jesus points out that John's asceticism had also been rejected as proof of demon possession. Clearly, neither drinking nor non-drinking was the real issue with the Pharisees--nor was it an issue with Jesus. The story does give further proof that Jesus drank wine, however; the slanderous charge would have been pointless if Jesus had been known as an abstainer.

John 2:1-11 tells the story of the first of Jesus' Messianic "signs," the turning of water into wine (oinos) at the wedding feast in Cana. According to Dodd (1953), even those who argue that the story should not be taken at face value as an historic incident would have to admit that, at the least, the story shows the early Church as easily conceiving of Jesus' fitting into the merriment and conviviality of a wedding feast with its attendant drinking of wine (p. 227). Certainly, no negative connotation to wine-drinking is implied in the story, and it may even reflect the Old Testament view that wine is the creation of God.

The last meal that Jesus shared with His disciples included sharing a cup of wine. While the text (Mk. 14:23-25) does not use the term "wine," such is clearly implied by the term "fruit of the vine" in v. 25, the comparison of the content to Jesus' blood in v.24, and the lamentable fact that some later Christians got drunk at the "love feast" modeled that last meal (cf. 1 Cor. 11:21).

### 2. Warnings Against the Abuse of Wine

Just as the Old Testament writers portrayed drunkenness as leading to sexual immorality (Jl. 3:3), turning one away from God (Is. 5:12), and resulting in a blunted conscience and weakness of will (Is. 28:7; Hos. 4:11), so the New Testament writers issued their warning against the abuse of wine.



## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

When Paul listed those common sins the Christian was to avoid, drunkenness appears as one of the feared and prohibited items (Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21). Drunkenness, which is sufficiently serious to exclude one from the Kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10), was so dangerous that Paul advised the Corinthian church to forego association with drunkards as well as robbers or idolaters (I Cor. 5: 11) as a way of purifying the Church. Paul was aghast that drunken revelry had even invaded the worship of the Church at its love feasts (I Cor. 11:21; d. II Pt. 2:13), and he appealed for greater sensitivity to the needs of the poor and hungry in the Church as well as the requirements of worshipful decorum. Surely, back of Paul's concern was a feeling that drunkenness was too similar to practices in the cult of Dionysus (a popular fertility religion in Greece) and, therefore, not appropriate to a Christian celebration. Christian fullness of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18) was to be contrasted to the "orgiastic enthusiasm" of Greek religions, not emulate it (Preisker, "Drunkenness," p. 548)!

"Do not get drunk with wine (oinos), for that is debauchery," warned the author of Ephesians (5:18). Christians should not be like those whose sleep at night is brought on by a drunken stupor (I Th. 5:7). Older women in the Church are urged to "teach what is good" by word as well as deed; this means that they should not be "slanderers or slaves to wine (oinos)" (Tit. 2:3). The Pastoral Epistles most specifically warn against excessive drinking by leaders in the Church. I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 stipulate that a bishop must be temperate, orderly, and not given to lingering long beside his wine (paroinos). Deacons, likewise, are not to be "addicted to too much wine" (I Tim. 3:8).

Paul's advice about the disciplining of drunkards and other wayward church members in I Corinthians 5:9-13 seems, to some, rather severe on the surface. Excommunication for the sins listed there is sometimes questioned in terms of its effectiveness and tendency to drive folk forever out of the reach of the Church. Paul, on the other hand, was taking seriously the needs of the fledgling community of believers in Corinth that might be endangered by the presence of such individuals. "A little leaven leavens the whole hump" (5:6).

Perhaps the severity of Paul's advice is softened when we remember that the lower alcoholic content of wine (10-12%) as opposed to the distilled liquors of today (35-50%), the customary use of wine as a meal time beverage, and the practice of diluting the wine with water meant that in the first century one would have to "work harder" at drinking enough to become drunk.

Thomas Price (October, 1975) agrees with Douglas Jackson, the author of *Stumbling Block*, that drunkenness is condemned in the Bible because those who became intoxicated chose to become intoxicated. This is quite different from the modern concept of alcoholism, which is defined as "loss of control" over when one will drink or how much. In this view, choosing to become intoxicated is beyond the reach of a person addicted to alcohol. Price's statement is not meant to deprive the 20th century alcohol abuser of his or her responsibility, and the statement that intoxication is not a matter of choice may be questioned. Nevertheless, we do understand

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

more about the dynamics of alcoholism today and, therefore, might be a bit more understanding than prior generations. Because of this new insight, some might consider altering Paul's methods even while sharing his redemptive intentions.

Additional passages that deal specifically with drinking could be listed, but they would merely reinforce the point that the New Testament, like the Old Testament, is more concerned with faith and its fruits than with alcohol or wine as such. Focusing on man's relationship to God and the requirement to live in responsible love with one's neighbor, Jesus and the early Church could accept the use of wine as a food item as well as an ingredient in religious and social celebration. At the same time, and without exception, excessive drinking and drunkenness was condemned.

As a consequence, those who wish to "proof text" the Bible on this issue are in a dilemma, for those on both sides of the issue of drinking can find--if they read selectively enough--some portion of scripture which seems to support their position.

As an illustration of the difficulty we encounter when we read the Bible selectively, let us look at a passage which seems, on the face of it, to forbid drinking:

***It is right not to eat meat or drink wine or  
do anything that makes your brother stumble.  
(Rom. 14:21; cf. I Cor. 8:1-13)***

On the one hand, this text could be used to shore up an "example" theory of Christian morality. That is, one should not eat meat offered to idols or drink wine because one never knows when this may be setting an example for a "weak" brother (I Cor. 8:10) who might be destroyed in following another's example. The point made by Paul was that eating meat offered to idols, while morally neutral in itself, could convey to a less discerning person the false notion that a committed Christian was now worshipping in a pagan temple (where the "meat offered to idols" was sold to the public) and thus be made to think that this new "faith was either of no consequence or could be easily blended with traditional paganism.

On the other hand, we must admit that Paul could also be quoted in terms of his rejection of all legalistic restraints on his life. Paul felt free, for example, to violate Jewish tradition by dining with Gentiles and eating meat that had been offered to idols. The only restraint he felt was not to the law, but to the needs of another human being--the weaker brother. Even that obligation may have had limits. I Corinthians 10:29, "why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples," may be interpreted as Paul's wrestling with the other side of his obligation to the weak (cf. 10:28-29), that is, his obligation to himself. Is Paul suggesting that there might be

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

times when the "scruples" of another are not a sign of weakness, but an effort on the part of the overscrupulous "to beat his liberal brother over the head" and "curb Christian liberty"? William Baird (1964) thinks that it is precisely these "fastidious brethren" of whom Paul complains, and he cites Jean Hering to the effect that "just as the strong cannot judge the weak, so Paul forbids 'the weak to judge the strong.'"

It is one of the ironies of history that Paul's statement about eating meat or drinking wine (Rom. 14:1) has been made into an absolute rule on the grounds that we never "know" when we might be influencing a weaker brother. In the words of Arnold Cone (1964), "This is the kind of legalistic reduction of Christian faith and 'quenching of the Spirit' that Paul fought against with all his might." Under Christ, Paul felt free to be all things to all men, to be "under the law" in one setting and "outside the law" in another (I Cor. 9:19-23). Only Paul's love of Christ and desire to add to the "glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31) determined his action. He insisted on freedom--not license to do as he pleased, but freedom from the shackles of law, freedom to respond creatively to new situations as they arose (pp. 58, 69).

The struggle for freedom was not easily won in the early Church. I Timothy 4:1-4 warns against those who depart from the faith, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected with thanksgiving. This warning against a legalistic element in the Church is echoed by Paul in Colossians 2:16-23 when he points to the ineffective "air of wisdom" of those who promote "self-abasement and severity to the body." The Christian, reminds Paul, has died to human "regulations" such as: "Do not handle. Do not taste. Do not touch." "Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food or drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath." The weaker brother, the legalist within the Christian fellowship, must be cared for, but Paul implies that he must not be allowed to erect his moralistic fences in such a way as to restrict the freedom of the Christian community as a whole.

It would be extraordinarily difficult, therefore, to arrive at a rule for drinking wine based on Romans 14:21 and I Corinthians 10:27-31 which would be valid under any and all circumstances. Paul indicates that there is more than one choice when he says:

***So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God  
(I Cor. 10:31; cf. Rom. 14:6)***

Either style has the potential for being "to the glory of God" if done out of loving concern for the neighbor.

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

On the one hand, wrote Paul, we are not to pass judgment on our brothers and sisters, for both those who eat and those who abstain from eating certain foods do so in honor of their Lord (Rom. 14:20). Everything is "clean," that is, allowable to the believer; therefore, despising another for his or her choice is an arrogant usurpation of God's prerogative (Rom. 14:3-4). On the other hand, such freedom should not be deliberately used to cause another to stumble, for the strong (those aware of their freedom and able to control themselves) have an obligation to the weak just as Christ adapted himself to the needs of the human race (Rom. 15:1-3; Phil. 2:5-8). Consequently, the believer is called to walk that ill-defined but narrow and necessary line between personal freedom and responsibility to the neighbor.

### *Helpful Biblical and Theological Principles*

We have seen that the Bible does not answer the question of the use of drugs (specifically wine) in a kind of proof-text fashion, though it does give clear and unequivocal warning about the dangers of excess. But what about the modern question of whether or not one should drink/take drugs at all? Is it enough merely to note that moderate drinking was allowed in the biblical world? Are there some biblical principles or insights, not associated in their original context with drinking, which might also help us?

### **Differences Between the Ancient World and Ours**

Before we list and discuss these principles, we must be candid enough to note some differences between the biblical world and ours that may make some difference in the way we then interpret certain texts or principles.

1. The first difference is one often cited, but actually is not particularly relevant. Wine drinking in the biblical world is often "excused" for health reasons on the grounds that "they had a poor water supply in those days," a condition no longer true in the civilized western world where "pure" water (chemically treated) is readily available. As a matter of fact, the water supply in the Near East is not materially different today (except in a few metropolitan areas) than it was 2,000 years ago. That wine is not required to cope with this impure water is demonstrated by the fact that the Muslim community has survived quite well in the area for over 1,200 years--and Muslims do not drink wine!
2. A more genuine difference between the biblical world and ours is the customary way in which wine came to be drunk in the Near East--it was drunk "mixed" or diluted with water. Robert H. Stein (1975) has clearly demonstrated the practice of mixing wine and water among the Greeks, the Jews of the rabbinic period, and the early Church Fathers. Stein illustrates how among the Greeks wine was poured into large bowls where, according to Greek philosophers and dramatists, it was mixed with water at a ratio as high as 3:1. Stein illustrates the same Jewish practice from II Maccabees 15:39 ("It is harmful to drink

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

wine alone. . .while wine mixed with water is sweet...") and the Talmud, where the tractate Pesachim directs the wine for the Passover ritual to be mixed three parts of water to one part of wine. The Talmudic reference implies that the wine of Jesus' Last Supper--held at Passover season and filled with Passover images--was also diluted with water. From the Early Church Fathers we have the testimony of Hippolytus, Justin Martyr, Cyprian, and Clement of Alexandria, all of whom refer to wine mixed with water at the Church's eucharistic or Lord's Supper observances ("Wine Drinking in New Testament Times," 1975, pp. 9-11).

Clearly, to speak of drinking in the biblical world, where drinking wine mixed with water was often the norm, may be far different from speaking of drinking in today's society where distilled spirits have an alcoholic concentration three to five times higher than unmixed wine and many times higher than mixed wine. Stein's conclusion illustrates the point:

*To consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine, one would have to drink over twenty-two glasses. In other words, it is possible to become intoxicated from wine mixed with three parts of water, but one's drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind (Stein, pp.9-11).*

3. A third difference between our society and the biblical world is the degree of urbanization and mechanization. This means that errors in judgment or decline in reaction time, which may not be apparent to the drinker and certainly not appear as drunkenness, are magnified by the size and speed of the machinery we operate. There are very good reasons, for example, why airplane pilots are not permitted to drink any alcoholic beverage or take any drug which might affect perception or reaction time within a specified period several hours before take-off. In like manner, the ability to drive a car may be impaired even if the legal levels of intoxication have not been reached. Driving a donkey was not so delicate a task!

### Helpful Biblical Principles

Having noted some of the differences that complicate a comparison of attitudes toward drinking in the biblical world and in ours, we turn now to some biblical insights which, though not related to a discussion of drinking in their original contexts, may shed valuable light on our own situation. Remembering that the use of alcoholic beverages in the first century is not necessarily determinative for the twentieth century United States because of radical social differences, we still must consider the possibility that there are valid principles that cut across differences of time and culture.

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

1. The first principle which must be affirmed is the goodness of the created order. The writer of the creation account in Genesis spoke of God's calling forth vegetation, plants and fruit trees, "and God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1:12; cf. 2:9).

The Psalmist certainly pointed to this side of God in that great hymn to God the Creator, Psalm 104. Referring to God's creation of the heavens (v.2), the sea (v. 6-7), the mountains (v.8), springs (v.10), grass and plants (v.14), the Psalmist says it was so that man may "cultivate," "may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man" (v.15). Wine, at least, was seen as good because it was part of a larger good, the created world declared "good" by its creator.

The biblical doctrine of creation means, in the words of Langdon Gilkey (1959), "since all that is comes from God's will as its sole source, nothing in existence can be intrinsically evil." All that God has created is essentially good and has a "capacity by nature to be directed and transformed by God's recreative power (p. 52)."

On this basis, one might be tempted to affirm, without further question, the goodness of alcohol and other drugs as part of God's created order. There is another side to this, however! Biblical writers, and the theologians who have interpreted them, have also pointed to the fallenness, the disruption and corruption of God's creation. If God's good creation does not produce as God intended, if gardens produce thorns and drugs produce addicts, one is forced to ask why. Specifically, why do alcohol and other drugs cause so much harm if they are essentially good?

Two approaches have been taken to answer this question. First, it has been pointed out that each creature, each element in the created order, has its own nature and mode of behavior. Within the context designed by God, all is well; put in another setting, used contrary to their purposes, the tendency of all things to act according to their nature could be disruptive. For example, it is the nature of milk to produce certain bacteria when left at room temperature. The sickness that results from drinking such milk would not be regarded as good, but it would certainly be natural! The way to avoid it would be to pay attention to the "nature of milk."

In like manner, alcohol is a natural product, but it has its own mode of behavior. It has various kinds of predictable impacts on other objects, substances, or persons with which it comes in contact. Wise moral choices about the use of alcohol--or any drug--involve an intelligent look at the nature of the substance and its impact in various dosages on human beings. To what extent do the circumstances under which it is used make an item "good by creation" into a "natural evil"?

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

A second approach used to account for the evil's resulting from the use of part of God's good creation, has been to point to the impact of human freedom. The biblical writers viewed man as the "distorter" of creation rather than its victim. If creation is good (no one disputed that), evil (such as drug addiction or drunkenness) "could arise only from the capacity to misuse what is good, namely from human freedom (Gilley, 1959, p. 185).

If human freedom has the capacity to mar or destroy God's good creation, we are helped in an attempt to understand where the blame ultimately lies when people over-indulge in alcohol, drugs, or any thing. The problem may not be with the product, but with the person, and our attempts to deal with the problem should perhaps be focused on the person. It is open to question whether laws prohibiting certain drugs--required though they may be--are the only or even the most effective way of ministering to a social problem.

2. Another principle upon which all could agree is the ultimate value of persons, all of whom are made in the "image of God" (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6). The Judeo-Christian tradition is united in its belief that persons have inherent worth before God and, therefore, before other persons. Consequently, any use of drugs is wrong to the extent that it contributes to a destruction of personality or relationships. Jesus was remembered for saying, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). The goal of "abundant life" surely points to a potential for developing personhood, the blocking of which would be immoral.

The moral question, then, is whether and to what extent drug use is abusive in its effect on either the physical or emotional wellbeing of persons. According to Howard Clinebell (1968), "practically all of the widespread, chronic dependence on self-prescribed drugs constitutes abuse and is inconsistent with the Christian view of life." Aside from drug-induced accidents or acts of violence, physical damage of various sorts can result from alcoholism, amphetamine dependency, and excessive use of tobacco and other drugs. Tragically, the damage is not always obvious and, in fact, may result in genetic or other damage to unborn children. Drug use to the extent that it damages one's body, or the body of another, is incompatible with a responsible stewardship of life or an affirmation of the goodness of creation (pp. 11-12).

Personality is also harmed by drug dependence, says Clinebell, in at least three ways: First, the legitimate use of drugs to reduce tension may move subtly to the point where drugs become "a substitute for coping with the problems and challenges of living" when, in fact, "constructive coping" with feelings and problems is part of producing character (Clinebell, 1968, pp. 11-12).

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

Second, that which is most distinctively human about persons is their "rationality, awareness, consciousness, and ethical sensitivity," in other words, the contribution of the cerebral cortex, that outer layer of the brain which is also the first affected by the injection of outside substances. If the cerebral cortex is numbed by alcohol or other psychotropic drugs, the individual takes a step back toward the animal level from which he or she has evolved. Because depressing the cerebral cortex renders one less capable of responding to either the real environment or the real needs of the self or others, it is a condition in which individuals may feel pleasure but still be less than fully human. It is for that reason, says Hunter Beckelhymer (1970), that it is the use of psychotropic drugs, not their misuse, that is the moral issue. It is precisely their intended effect, not just their side effects that we must ponder (p. 268).

It is the "intended effect" of retreating from the real world on a more or less permanent basis that is the moral issue. (Note: this is a very different thing from the use of medically prescribed pain relievers so that one may function more responsibly and effectively.) Beckelhymer reminds us that, in contrast to the "brave new world" envisioned by Aldous Huxley where the wonder drug "soma" dehumanized people by wafting them away from reality, Jesus at the cross refused the offer of the anesthetic, "wine mingled with myrrh." Such an act did not reflect a martyr-like asceticism, but a realism which prefers the tension of "a real man interacting with other real men and the real God of the real World" to the euphoria of chemically induced escape (Beckelhymer, 1970, p. 268).

Of course, we must be sensitive to the pain and anxiety which drive people to search for a chemical Nirvana, but we must also be aware that, if taken to the excess, "personality is being damaged further by the chemical means chosen (Clinebell, 1968, p. 12)."

Third, Clinebell warns that while relationships are central to human wholeness, as implied in the command to love God and love our neighbor, they too may be crippled by drug dependency. Of course, some people might be more constructive in their relationships and responsibilities if permitted "occasional chemical comfort" in moderation. On the other hand, immoderate or unwise use of drugs can build a "chemical wall." "Even the overt, physical intimacy of a 'pill party' [or cocktail party] is probably pseudointimacy on a psychological level." Clinebell goes on to say that

*personhood can find its true fulfillment and continuing wholeness only in genuine relationships-ie., relationships which strengthen mutual trust, integrity, self-esteem, cooperation, intimacy, mutual nurturing, and affection. Generally speaking, chronic drug dependency not only fails to strengthen these qualities in relationships, but it also tends to foster their opposites – mutual distrust, dishonesty, self-rejection, and self-centeredness (Clinebell, 1968, p. 14).*



## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

Clinebell adds a fourth effect of drug dependency on personality which is particularly significant to the Church--that is, the effect of drugs on the relationship between a person and God. While some use of chemical hallucinogens is explicitly aimed at a search for "chemical salvation," there is a sense in which "any addiction is a form of idolatry in that something other than God is made the object of highest value and ultimate concern."<sup>21</sup>

3. A third principle is that of personal freedom, most specifically the freedom of the believer from the law as a source of justification or salvation. It is not the keeping of rules that renders us acceptable to God, but rather His gracious love which accepts us in spite of our failure and pretension of goodness.

Paul addressed this issue when he wrote to the Church at Galatia concerning their tendency to fall back upon the rite of circumcision as an indispensable element for justification:

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law (Gal. 5:1, 4).*

In 1520, Martin Luther (1957) addressed the same issue in his Treatise on Christian Liberty (p. 34). The first of his two seemingly opposite propositions concerning Christian freedom was:

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. The believer, in other words, does not obey rules and regulations in a petty, slavish way as if his worth depended on such unswerving obedience. Luther had tried the way of the law for the law's sake or the law for the sake of salvation, and he found it wanting!

On the other hand, Luther was not naive enough to think of freedom in terms of being able to do whatever one wished. Men and women do have their obligation to society. Thus, he wrote,

*A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.*

The Christian, said Luther, may live "in Christ through faith," but he "lives in his neighbor through love." Inwardly, he may be free from works to make him righteous, but outwardly each man is a "servant" and obligated to all manner of good works (Luther, 1957, p. 34). Is this not the same point made by Paul to the Galatians?

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another... Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Gal. 5:13, 16)

Clearly, it is possible to be free, yet use that "freedom" (that is, the realization that we are not justified by our works) in a destructive way. Here again we find helpful insight for dealing with alcohol and drugs. The thoughtful believer knows that he or she is not made more righteous or good by not drinking, nor is he or she barred from the Kingdom of God because of an incidental use of drugs or alcohol. In that sense, we are "free." But that freedom is always freedom within boundaries, within limits set by what James 2:8 calls the "royal law":

*You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (cf. Lev. 19:18, Mk. 12:31)*

The word "love" here (agape) means a consistent, unselfish concern for the other person's welfare without regard to whether we like them or not. Such love is positive and creative, always concerned about the wellbeing of the other.

Liberty, in other words, stops at the point of being unloving by doing damage to another (cf. Mt. 18:6). The question for the believer is this: When does an act of indulgence done out of personal freedom run counter to one's obligation to the neighbor? The answer may not be clearly agreed upon, but the question cannot be evaded.

4. The command to "love your neighbor as yourself" leads us to a fourth principle which should be taken into consideration, the reality of social responsibility. Of course, the fact that our social obligations are a "reality" is beyond question though it is open to question whether the nature of those obligations is "obvious." The themes of social solidarity and social responsibility were consciously acknowledged by the Hebrews to say: "I don't care what you think or do, just let me do my thing." Such a blatant individualism is not only relatively recent in our world's history, it is also tragically misleading.

So seriously did the Hebrews take both individual and social responsibility that tradition tells us of occasions when entire families or tribes were punished for the sins of a few individuals (cf. Num. 16:1-35; Jos. 7:6-26; I Chr. 21:1-17). The commandment in Leviticus 19:18, "love your neighbor as yourself," which Jesus chose as a part of his summary of the Law, was a predictable part of a religious tradition which insisted that we are our "brother's keeper" (Gen. 4:9).

H. H. Rowley (1961) noted that there are important corollaries to the view that the wellbeing of the individual is "bound up with the wellbeing of the society of which he

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

forms a part." It is important for both the individual and society "to be in harmony with God's will." Consequently, sin, which consists in disharmony with the will of God, is not simply an individual concern. Nor can any individual be wholly indifferent to the sin of those around him (pp. 122-123).

The prophets were good examples of those whose concern for morality was not limited to the individual, and the early Church preserved that tradition. Social responsibility meant not only sharing one's property and skills with the community--for example, the sacrificial sharing related in Acts 2:44-45 (cf. Acts 5:1-11) it also meant a concern for the influence one's actions might have upon the community.

It is out of this kind of thinking that Paul deals with the question of eating meat that had been offered to idols. In actual fact, Paul says eating such meat is not wrong; food in itself neither condemns us nor commends us (I Cor. 8:8). Paul knows this to be true, but his concern is with weaker brethren who, coming from a tradition of idol worship, do not "possess this knowledge" (v. 7) and run the risk of spiritual, emotional and intellectual turmoil if lured into such a practice by those whose "knowledge" has freed them from such scruples. At this point, the important thing is not "knowledge" or personal freedom (the significance of which has already been discussed), but an attitude of love for the brother. Or, as Paul put it, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (8: 1).

In I Corinthians 10:23 ff. Paul refers to the subject of eating meat offered to idols and urges, "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor" (10:24). Here, and in I Corinthians 6, Paul gives advice on how to deal with the question of those things that are technically "lawful" but potentially unloving.

"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. (I Cor. 10:23) "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything." (I Cor. 6: 12. Emphasis added)

These verses, plus the setting described by Paul in I Cor. 10:25-29, give us three criteria helpful in judging the appropriateness of an act which is morally disputed:

The first criterion has to do with the public versus private nature of an act. Paul clearly implies one should feel free to eat meat which had been offered to idols when invited out to dinner (10:27) unless there is someone there who would genuinely be offended by the act (10:28-29). That there are things appropriate in private, but not in public, is customarily accepted. One would not, for example, undress in public or offend others by engaging in certain kinds of sexual activity. The acts are not morally wrong in themselves, of course; it is the setting that is crucial.

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

Just so, in the issue of drinking or use of drugs, one consideration is whether it is done in a public setting where its meaning cannot be explained to a person of tender conscience who happens to be passing by. It may be that an act which a person has decided is right for him or her should still be kept private. This is not a matter of hypocrisy or lying, but a matter of careful attention to the danger of giving genuine offense to another.

Obviously, this principle of "privacy" does not excuse the "closet alcoholic" who drinks in secret: nor does it, in itself, justify any particular act as moral. It merely points out that part of the situation that must be taken into account in determining the appropriateness of an act is its private or public nature.

A second criterion is that of "helpfulness." It is possible for an act to be innocent from a negative standpoint--"it doesn't hurt me"--but remain a problem in that it does not "build up" or is not "helpful." It is not enough just to say "I don't get drunk." One must go on to consider a more positive, more constructive criterion. This is not to say that everything we do must "build up" the community or others--Saturday fishing trips hardly do that, but they are not necessarily wrong--it is to say, however, that concern for contributing to common good of the religious community and society should be a factor in our deliberations. It is not just ourselves with whom we are concerned, but the whole of society, and our moral considerations should not be limited by a rabid or selfish individualism.

A third criterion is the question of "enslavement." Decisions about drinking or the use of drugs must keep in mind the degree of potential danger that the freedom to enjoy may end in the bondage of "enslavement" or addiction. If, for example, there is available data which indicates that a person with a particular physical or emotional situation is more likely to become addicted to alcohol, it is increasingly difficult to justify that person's taking the risk of drinking.

5. A fifth principle is found in Isaiah's distinction between the thoughts of God and man (Is. 55:8), in Paul's realistic understanding of his own limitations ("For now we see in a mirror dimly...Now I know in part..." I Cor. 13:12), as well as in the Christian affirmation of the need for the Holy Spirit as a source of continuing divine guidance (Jn. 14:26). That principle, in short, is the incompleteness or relativity of many of our moral judgments. How could it be otherwise? Our moral judgments emerge from a unique set of circumstances with which we are faced.

Have not we all noticed how sometimes we instinctively reject a legalistic application of a rule or law to a particular? "Ordinarily, the rule would apply," we argue, "but this situation

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

is different." It is the exceptional case, when love or justice would not obviously be served by applying a universal rule, that forces us to question whether moral issues can always be reduced to a legal pronouncement.

In like manner, an act that is considered right in one situation or in one culture may not be so considered in another. This writer remembers hearing of a group of women from a European country who attended a religious gathering in the United States. Reporting on their trip when they returned home, the ladies expressed absolute horror at seeing American Christians who grew tobacco and even smoked! Hearing this, their amazed listeners gasped and took another sip of the wine they were drinking! It seems that the differences of opinion within the Church that created the discussion over eating meat offered to idols are still a reality even if the issues have changed.

Having pointed out the reality of culturally conditioned moral responses, we must also warn against using such "conditioned judgments" in a legalistic way--a kind of legalistic use of relativity. G. Aiken Taylor makes this very point when he warns against the kind of moral reasoning that uses the fact that the Bible forbids only the immoderate use of alcohol as an easy justification for drinking.

According to Taylor (1974), Christians who use the Bible to support permissiveness toward alcohol are practicing the same principles of interpretation once used to support slavery. It can be shown that the Bible tolerates slavery, but the Church long ago concluded that slavery violates personhood designed to be conformed to the image of God's Son (p. 14).

By the same token, says Taylor, if the empirical evidence warrants it, one might decide to shun alcohol even without a biblical polemic to support such a position; one would not wish to be shackled without question to a culturally conditioned viewpoint, even a culturally conditioned biblical viewpoint.

If our moral judgments are "conditioned" in some way, a certain degree of humility is called for. Dogmatic claims to infallibility must give way to candid sharing of the truth as we see it and a genuine listening to those who disagree with us. The ultimately tentative nature of many of our decisions must not paralyze us, only force us to a more careful examination of all the facts and circumstances which affect our moral judgments.

6. A final principle that should be remembered is the fact that biblical writers viewed moral demands as emerging from the character and redemptive activity of God. In the Old Testament, for example, the right to demand certain forms of behavior was based in God's prior activity in bringing Israel out of the land of Egypt (cf. Ex. 20:2-17), while God's redemptive activity in Jesus of Nazareth, clearly implied that the standard of behavior for

## A Biblical Perspective on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs cont.

the Church was a style of life "worthy of the gospel" which had come through Christ (Phil. 2:27). Consequently, actions were right insofar as believers followed "in his steps" (I Pt. 2:21) and loved others in the same sacrificial way Christ had loved his followers (I Jn. 4: 11).

To be sure, New Testament writers such as Paul gave content to this command to love our neighbor as ourselves according to the specific issue or congregation being addressed. These moral injunctions are vitally important to us as examples of the never-ending struggle" to specify what it means to "love one another as I have loved you" (I Jn. 15: 12).

Nevertheless, the crucial issue for us is not so much the specific applications of the first century A.D., but the example of loving servanthood set by Jesus. Moral demands are not settled by merely citing historical precedent as a legal constraint, but by responding faithfully out of a sense of personal obligation to the love of God revealed in Christ. Questions about the use of alcohol and other drugs are not resolved by citing this or that text, but by the more difficult struggle of asking, as Luther put it, what it means to be "Christ to my neighbor," what it means to be a loving servant in the twentieth century.

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## Learning Activity #8 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### Foundational Virtues

#### The Meaning of Community

***For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit... But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.***

***I Corinthians 12:12-13, 24-27***

In the middle of the first century, the Corinthian church was fractured into several competing factions. The apostle wrote these words to remind the congregation that the reality of their unity in Christ was greater than the reality of their divisions. The few verses quoted above are only part of a detailed analogy comparing the Body of Christ to the human body. Just as it is unthinkable to contemplate the members of a healthy physical body struggling with each other to the detriment of the whole body, says Paul, so it is with Christ's Body, which is the church. The divisive spirit at work in the Corinthian congregation was not merely unfortunate or regrettable, but was an assault on Christ's Body and so an affront to Christ Himself. The message which Paul was attempting to communicate was that the Corinthian Christians should not think or act as factions with vested interests and competing claims, but as a community whose single interest and common claim is the Reign of God in Christ.

This message and way of thinking is almost like a foreign language in the modern landscape. We think of ourselves primarily as individuals who profess Christ as Lord and secondarily as communities of faith. The worldview of scripture reverses this order; the biblical writers think of themselves and those they address first as a community. While there are varied and complex reasons for this strong contemporary tendency toward individualism, it is undeniably the case that we do not readily connect with the communitarian emphasis which Paul presses in the passage above. We may be able to grasp the theory, but we struggle to embody the practice.



## Learning Activity #8 for Parents and Youth Leaders

It is important for us to take this difficulty seriously, because the Bible's first reference point is communitarian, revolving around their address to the people of God. While the people who constituted this community regularly struggled with disagreements and hostilities which developed in their communal life, they nonetheless conceived of themselves primarily as a community and only secondarily as individuals—a reality which made their divisions all the more serious. Paul regarded the existence of competing Corinthian factions as quite literally a threat to the continued existence of the Corinthian church. We too are uncomfortable with hostilities and disagreements which divide churches, but we construe and react to such problems differently because of our individualistic orientation—sometimes by moving from one congregation to another, sometimes by starting new congregations, sometimes by just dropping out of sight.

The reason that the absence of community orientation in contemporary society is important for issues like substance abuse is that these issues are clearly social issues. Substance abuse and addiction is not simply a threat to individual lives, but to groups—to families, to schools, to neighborhoods, to cities, to churches. For a number of important reasons, it is critical that churches recover and practice a vital sense of community.

*We cannot rightly apprehend the meaning of scripture absent a strong communal orientation.*

*We cannot fully appreciate the harms of substance abuse and are less likely to engage the social problem of substance abuse as the people of God without a strong sense of communal identity and responsibility to the world.*

*We cannot truly recover from abuse and addiction—whether we are abusers and addicts or the loved ones of abusers and addicts—unless we embrace critical responsibilities and accountabilities we bear to the communities that frame our lives.*

## Foundational Virtues cont.

### The Meaning of Courage

***Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.***  
***(I Cor. 16:13)***

***In the world you face persecution.***  
***But take courage; I have conquered the world!***  
***(John 16:33)***

***...suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope...***  
***(Romans 5:3-4)***

Many of the references to courage in the Bible occur in military contexts. For example, Judges 20:22 says, *"The Israelites took courage, and again formed the battle line in the same place where they had formed it on the first day."* Indeed, throughout human history courage has been extolled as a highly prized military virtue. Many of us are familiar with stories of battlefield courage which propelled soldiers to succeed in the face of overwhelming odds and extraordinary danger.

Some of the most compelling narratives in literary history chronicle the courage of the most unlikely protagonists against the most formidable enemies. Readers of every age are captivated by the grand vision of the cosmic struggle between good and evil in which the struggle turns on the courage of a few souls who seem not to possess conventional power, but who make all the difference as the story unfolds. There is the tiny hobbit Frodo who carries the ring of power against the mighty Sauron in the ***Lord of the Rings***. There are the children who venture through the magical wardrobe in the ***Chronicles of Narnia*** and eventually play a pivotal role in the undoing of the wicked witch who holds Narnia in her icy grip. There is Jesus of Nazareth, born to a peasant couple in southern Palestine under the nose of Herod the Great and on the fringe of the Roman Empire, who quite literally turns the world upside down.

In crucial moments in each of these narratives, the protagonists are overwhelmed with fear and dread, and all appears to be lost. Frodo is weighted down and nearly seduced by the power of the ring. The children are daunted by the strange world of Narnia and the unfamiliar roles of responsibility thrust upon them. Jesus is pursued by religious authorities, misunderstood by his own disciples and feels desolation and abandonment in the shadow of the cross. Yet in every case, courage makes the critical difference: the courage to choose a seemingly impossible road for the sake of a higher cause, the courage to forsake personal comfort for the good of the many, the courage to face death because of an unshakable belief in the One who defines the mission.

## Foundational Virtues cont.

While the familiar passage quoted above from Romans does not mention courage, it tells us something important about every Christian virtue, including courage. Courage is not a talent with which we are born, but a quality which certain experiences train us to acquire. We begin to learn courage by seeing it displayed in other lives and determining to follow their examples. We learn courage in the context of our own life struggles. When we move past the fear and apprehension that haunt every major endeavor, when we mount the strength to rise to daunting challenges, when we refuse to allow set-backs and failures to deter us, we acquire courage. This is the sense of the Romans text: *suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope*. This sequence delineates a difficult road, beginning with suffering and ending with hope. Courage and the strength of character that embodies courage do not come easily. Courage is acquired through difficulty, pain, hardship, adversity and tragedy. Those who possess courage do not necessarily *feel* courageous, but the courage implicit in their lives nonetheless propels them through their deepest fears.

The Romans text and its place in the context of Paul's message to the church at Rome also remind us of the difference between courage and foolhardiness. Foolhardiness is reckless and impulsive, often the expression of momentary whims. Courage, on the other hand, is borne out of a commitment to something larger than our own impulses and narrow visions. It is in fact the quality of choice that allows us to overcome our selfishness and narrowness to pursue a grander mission for the sake of a greater good.

We glimpse the deepest sense of courage in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' decision to go to Jerusalem:

***While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands." But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying... When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.***

***Luke 9:44, 45, 51***

## Foundational Virtues cont.

The critical clause is the last one: *he set his face to go to Jerusalem*. Even though he knew what awaited him there, Jesus determined to journey to a dangerous destination because of his commitment to his calling and the One who called him. Jesus believed that the mission which framed his life was more important than his sense of impending doom. "He set his face to go to Jerusalem" is not an example of foolhardiness, but the embodiment of courage. This and every other genuine lesson about courage reminds us that we can never become courageous people until we willingly subordinate our lives to something greater than our lives. For Christians this means giving ourselves to the One who called us into being and gave Himself in our behalf.

On still another occasion, just a few verses before the passage quoted above, Jesus told his disciples about his death and the significance of the journey to Jerusalem:

***Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?"***

**Luke 9:23-25**

For most of us who are strongly inclined toward self-preservation, the phrase "*let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me*" seems daunting and counterintuitive. Like Jesus, we are all too aware of the dangerous places and circumstances to which this calling may lead us. In all of the big and little ways we manage to "take up our crosses daily," we understand and learn courage.

### **Discussion topics:**

*What does courage have to do with:*

- using or not using drugs;*
- recovering from drug dependence and addiction;*
- living with loved ones who are drug abusers or addicts.*

**Suggestion:** The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (and Alanon, etc.) have played and continue to play a pivotal role in recovery. Thinking through the "courage requirements" of the Twelve Steps is one way to develop this discussion.

### The Meaning of Truthfulness

***You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.  
(Exodus 20:16)***

***Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all... Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No;" anything more than this comes from the evil one.***

***(Matthew 5:33, 34, 37)***

***But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ... So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.***

***(Ephesians 4:15, 25)***

***You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.  
(John 8:32)***

Telling the truth seems simple enough. Just be honest, forthright and don't lie. At one level, this basic intuition certainly captures the essence of truth-telling. Yet, as the above passages show, the biblical mandate to tell the truth is multi-faceted and calls us to pay close attention to

- several aspects of truth-telling:
- we should not bear false witness against another;
- we should not swear falsely, and further, we should not swear at all;
- we should speak the truth in love;
- we should put away falsehood and speak the truth to one another;
- we are liberated by truth.

## Foundational Virtues cont.

The teaching that we should *not bear false witness* is one of the Ten Commandments and is rooted in the legal traditions of ancient Israel. The crime of perjury was so serious for the Hebrews that bearing false witness against someone charged with a capital offense was itself punishable by the death penalty. The contemporary application of this teaching reaches far beyond legal contexts to the broad arena of truth-telling *about others*. We are enjoined never to speak falsely regarding another person, so as to injure that person's legal standing, reputation, relationship with another person or in any other way. In fact, because we can never know or accurately predict the impact of lies about others, we are never to tell such lies, *period*. That bearing false witness violates God's own person is reflected in the self-disclosure which prefaces the Ten Commandments: "*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery*" (Exodus 20:2).

The injunctions against swearing reveal another aspect of truth-telling, i.e., plain speech. Against the background of first-century practices of bolstering the veracity of one's speech by taking oaths (swearing), Jesus says let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no." We live at a time when plain speech has virtually become a lost art. Advertising campaigns make extraordinary claims for products and services. Political campaigns make grandiose appeals regarding candidates and platforms. Marketing strategies have so penetrated the ecclesiastical sphere that exaggerated speech about church statistics is dismissed as harmless with the phrase, "ministerially speaking." Ordinary conversation is littered with phrases like "honest to God" and "as God is my witness" with such frequency that at least in some contexts the absence of these oaths tends to diminish the credibility of the speaker.

Jesus teaches his followers to speak forthrightly and directly, without resorting oaths of any kind. The New Testament says that the credibility of our speech must flow from the integrity of our character, i.e., that we must be the kind of people whose plain speech is convincingly sufficient.

The admonition to *speak the truth in love* reminds Christians that truthfulness must always be attended by love. This teaching serves as a hedge against both "honest brutality" and "dishonest kindness." It is wrong for Christians to verbally assault others with the explanation, "I was just being honest," as it wrong never to hold people accountable in the name of kindness. Speaking the truth in love is both honest and loving.

*Putting away falsehood and speaking the truth to one another* also embodies the qualities of honesty and forthrightness, but suggest one other aspect of truth telling, namely, promise-keeping. An inevitable part of our communications with others involves the

## Foundational Virtues cont.

articulation of promises. Some promises are solemn and life changing, like marriage and parenting. Others are more casual and short term, like the promise to pay back a debt or the promise to return a phone call. Truth-telling implies for Christians that we are not careless with our promises, that every promise we make – implied or spelled out, direct or indirect, written or spoken – is a promise we take seriously.

A final element of truthfulness conveyed in the familiar verse from the Gospel of John cited above is that *the truth is liberating and (by implication) that lies are enslaving*. This teaching resonates with our own experience; one lie leads to another until we are encircled and trapped by our own lies. The context of this teaching in John centers on finding ultimate truth in Jesus Christ, but one immediate application to truth-telling is that the Word of God which confronts us in Christ demands and allows us to face the truth about *ourselves*.

Many of the lies we tell about others are rooted self-deception. Unable to face the truth about ourselves (e.g., our sinfulness, our mortality, our inadequacies), we live the lies of over-reaching (pride), under-reaching (sloth), and wrongful-reaching (lust). Living the lie, we are ensnared in a web of deception from which only the truth can set us free. That truth, says John, is the good news that comes to us in Jesus Christ: God loves us, forgives us and makes us new so graciously and so radically that our experience of receiving this truth can only be described as being born again. Knowing the truth sets us free indeed.

In the end, truth-telling is central to Christian witness. It is certainly the case that our verbal witness to Christ has credibility only if we are known to be truthful people, but the issue of truthfulness runs even deeper than the credibility of our personal testimonies. In a world laden with lies, truthfulness is itself a witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the world identifies Christians as persons who tell the truth because their characters require them to tell the truth, the world is gifted with a faithful witness to the truth of God in Christ.

### Discussion topics:

*What does truthfulness have to do with:*

- using or not using drugs;*
- recovering from drug dependence and addiction;*
- living with loved ones who are drug abusers or addicts.*

**Suggestion:** The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (and Alanon, etc.) have played and continue to play a pivotal role in recovery. Thinking through the “truth requirements” of the Twelve Steps is one way to develop this discussion.

## Learning Activity #9 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### The Bible and the Twelve Steps

**STEP 1: We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.**

*Proverbs 23: 29-35*

*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Those who tarry long over wine, at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder... "They stuck me," you will say "but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink."*

*Romans 7:15-24*

*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

**STEP 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

*II Corinthians 12:9*

*I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me, but He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

*Mark 10:51-52*

*Jesus said unto him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."*

*Ephesians 3:20*

*May you be filled with all the fullness of God... who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.*

*Isaiah 12:2*

*Surely, it is God who saves me, I will trust in Him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense and he will be my Savior.*



## Learning Activity #9 for Parents and Youth Leaders

### **STEP 3: Made a Decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood Him.**

*Romans 12:1*

*I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.*

*Isaiah 30:15*

*In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength... the Lord waits to be gracious to you.*

*Isaiah 55:6*

*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon Him while he is near, let him return to the Lord, that He may have mercy.*

### **STEP 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

*Isaiah 53:6*

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.*

*Lamentations 3:40-41*

*Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven.*

*Psalms 139:1-2*

*O Lord, thou hast searched me out and known me! Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar.*

### **STEP 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

*1 John 1:8*

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*James 5:16*

*Therefore confess our sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

## The Bible and the Twelve Steps cont.

### **STEP 6: We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

*Isaiah 1:18-19*

*Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

*Hebrews 4:16*

*Let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

### **STEP 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**

*Psalms 103:2-3*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity and heals all your diseases and redeems your life.*

*Psalms 51:1-3*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

*1 John 1:9*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

### **STEP 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

*Psalms 19:12-13*

*Who can tell how often he offends? Cleanse me from my secret faults. Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins, let them not get dominion over me.*

*Matthew 7:12*

*Whatsoever you wish that men should do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*

*II Corinthians 5:18-19*

*Christ reconciled us to himself and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation... entrusting to use the message of reconciliation.*

## The Bible and the Twelve Steps cont.

**STEP 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

*Matthew 5:23-24*

*If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go first be reconciled to your brother, and come and offer your gift.*

*Numbers 5:6-7*

*When a man or a woman commits any of the sins that men commit... he shall confess his sin and he shall make full restitution for his wrong.*

*Ephesians 4:31-32*

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

**STEP 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

*Psalms 139:23-24*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me.*

*Romans 12:3*

*I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to his own measure of faith.*

*1 Corinthians 10:12-13*

*Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape.*

## The Bible and the Twelve Steps cont.

**STEP 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

*Psalm 25:1-5*

*To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you... Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. In you have I trusted all the day long.*

*Psalm 63:1-7*

*O God, you are my God; eagerly will I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a barren and dry land... When I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches, you have been my helper.*

*Psalm 19:14*

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God.*

**STEP 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the results of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

*Isaiah 61:1*

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up all the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those who are bound.*

*Galatians 6:1-2*

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too become tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

*Galatians 6:9-10*

*Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

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## RESOURCE LIST

**The National Institute on Drug Abuse**

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

**Center on Addiction**

[www.centeronaddiction.org](http://www.centeronaddiction.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/alcoholportal](http://www.cdc.gov/alcoholportal)

**Alcoholics Anonymous**

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous**

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

**Celebrate Recovery**

[www.celebraterecovery.com](http://www.celebraterecovery.com)

**Mothers Against Drunk Driving**

[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence**

[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

**Partnership for Drug Free Kids**

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

**Street Drugs**

[www.streetdrugs.org](http://www.streetdrugs.org)

**Office of National Drug Control Policy**

[www.whitehousedrugpolicy.org](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.org)

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