

OPENING

Distribute copies of the Anonymous Quiz to the members of the group.

Anonymous Quiz

Directions: Place a check by each of the following items that apply to you. Do not sign your name.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I have never tasted an alcoholic drink. <input type="checkbox"/> I have never been drunk. <input type="checkbox"/> I have had a drink in the past two weeks. <input type="checkbox"/> I easily could get marijuana. <input type="checkbox"/> I have tried hallucinogens. <input type="checkbox"/> Some of my closest friends have tried hallucinogens. <input type="checkbox"/> I have spiked my dog's water dish. <input type="checkbox"/> I have persuaded someone else to drink alcohol. <input type="checkbox"/> I have successfully discouraged someone else from drinking or taking drugs. <input type="checkbox"/> I think marijuana should be legalized. <input type="checkbox"/> My parents drink quite often. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The decision to use or abuse drugs or alcohol is up to the individual. What may be right for some may not be right for others. <input type="checkbox"/> Christians should not hang around substance abusers. <input type="checkbox"/> I think members of our youth group have a problem with drinking. <input type="checkbox"/> People in our youth group abuse drugs. <input type="checkbox"/> I once vowed never to drink, but have since broken that promise. <input type="checkbox"/> The legal age for drinking should be lowered. <input type="checkbox"/> Penalties for drunken driving should be stricter. <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol should be banned in our community. <input type="checkbox"/> Substance use is okay as long as it is done in moderation. |
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Have them write yes or no by each item, indicating their opinions. Explain that they are not to sign their names, although you will study the findings together as a group. After everyone has finished the quiz, collect and redistribute the questionnaire to the group. Discuss each statement, asking the students to raise their hands if the sheet they are holding has a check by that item.

After a few of the statements, you can ask for volunteers to share responses to the quiz. Is the vote accurate? Do they agree?

Explain in your own words that

this session will deal with the issue of substance abuse. Some people interpret this to mean illegal drug abuse, but most include alcohol abuse in their interpretation. Some people also include caffeine and chocolate. For the purpose of this session, we will include any substance that can be taken internally which will alter a person's physical or emotional state. This program will present them with the option of making their own decisions regarding substance abuse, and will give them a chance to take a stand on their decision.

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Take a few minutes to talk and list as many substances as the young people can which can be abused. List these substances on the blackboard or newsprint. Answers can include: marijuana, alcohol, tranquilizers, coffee, soft drinks, sleeping pills, cigarettes, aspirin, cocaine and chocolate.

Study the list and work as a group to identify those items which are discouraged or condemned by our society. Ask for volunteers to suggest reasons some are allowed and others are discouraged. Is this a double standard and if so, should it be challenged?

On another piece of newsprint or section of the blackboard, list reasons people abuse these substances. Reasons your group might suggest are: to feel better or happy, be accepted, escape from pain, satisfy one's curiosity, escape from stress, help "forget" and to control feelings and behaviors.

Examine each reason and take a group vote. Have the youth give a "thumbs-up" sign if they consider that reason is all right, and a "thumbs-down" sign if they disapprove of that reason. Don't dwell on the reasons, but do give individuals an opportunity to express reasons the item is acceptable or unacceptable.

Divide into two groups. (If you have more than 25 in attendance, you can divide into more groups.) Give each group one of the following tasks:

Group 1 should read the following verses and then prepare arguments for abstaining from substance abuse: Proverbs 20:1; Luke 21:34-35; Romans 13:11-14; 14:13-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Gala-

tians 5:19-21.

Group 2 should take the following verses and work to find reasons that indicate some substance use is all right: Genesis 1:28-31; Matthew 11:16-19; John 2:1-11; Romans 14:14 and 1 Timothy 5:23.

After each group has compiled its arguments, re-form one large group. Place six chairs in the center of the room and ask each group to send three representatives to sit in their group's chairs and debate for their group's view. People can only talk if sitting in one of the chairs. If someone wants to talk, he or she may take the place of a debater, "tag-team style."

After the debate, discuss what transpired using the following questions:

- Do you think it is possible to prove through the use of biblical texts that using alcohol or drugs is right or wrong for Christians?

- Based on what you have studied, what guidelines would you recommend for Christians regarding alcohol and drug use?

- How difficult is it to change another's opinion regarding substance abuse? What seems to be the most convincing arguments?

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Divide into small groups of six or eight and give each group a set of 3 x 5 cards on which you have written the following behaviors. Assign the task of placing the behaviors in order of most to least desirable.

You stayed home by yourself one night and got drunk.

You went out with non-Christian friends and got drunk.

Your nervous aunt abuses a prescription drug.