

# DRINK, DRANK, DRUNK [ a l c o h o l ]

## THIS WEEK

The influence of alcohol is everywhere. Teenagers see it used, talked about, and glamorized on TV, on the radio, and on the Internet. Kids of all ages are consuming alcohol of all kinds, from wine coolers to hard liquor. This TalkSheet gives you a forum to discuss drinking and what a Christian young person should do about alcohol.

## OPEN

Start by asking the group to think of all the beer and liquor slogans that they can remember from TV, the radio, movies, the Internet or wherever. You may want to videotape some of these commercials and play them for the group. Discuss whether or not they pay attention to the commercials and how these commercials portray alcohol. How is it selling the liquor? Are these commercials good, bad, truthful, and so on? You will be amazed at the number of alcoholic beverage commercials that your kids will know. Keep a list on newsprint or whiteboard to refer to later on.

During this discussion, be sure to set the tone for the discussion by listening carefully to the opinions of each of the group members. Although you'll be tempted to state your opinions, wait until later—they'll be more likely listen to you later and respect your thoughts. And remember to encourage them to respect each other's thoughts. This can be a touchy subject, depending on your group, so try extra hard to keep the discussion moving in a positive, yet challenging direction.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Draw the scale shown and record the kids' answers. You will hear several opinions. Allow them to debate the issues.
2. Ask for a show of hands as the group votes on when they think it's permissible to drink alcohol. Allow them time to defend their opinions, then when most people their age drink alcohol. Read the list again and note their answers.
3. You may want to separate the kids into groups based on their answers to the questions and then let them debate the statements. This is a good opportunity for you to listen effectively and find out what your kids believe. Focus attention on the consequences of drinking—what it does to families, friends, parents and individuals both physically and emotionally. You may want to use examples of people you know (without identifying names) and ask the group for anonymous examples, too.

4. This tension-getter explores some of the reasons people drink, such as escapism and stress relief. Can your kids relate to this situation? Why or why not?
5. After sharing these passages, share what the Bible has to say about drinking alcohol. In all probability, your group may wonder if Christ drank wine, why he turned water into wine, and if the verses apply to alcohol.

## THE CLOSE

Young people today associate fun with drinking or doing drugs. Partying, among most teenagers, is synonymous with getting wasted. It's important to communicate to your group the dangers of drinking—not just the moral implications. Drinking ruins lives, destroys families, and causes thousands of deaths each year. High school kids are especially vulnerable to the addiction of alcohol and drugs. Some experts say it takes an adult six months to become addicted, but it takes a teenager only six days. And, drinking is extremely dangerous during these growing years. Alcohol can affect brain growth and may cause permanent brain damage.

Saying no to drinking—and any peer pressure—requires self-control. It takes a strong person to stand up for their bodies and minds. Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—your kids aren't standing alone. Encourage them to ask God for strength and wisdom to say no. Nothing is too hard for God to help them with.

## MORE

- Ask your kids bring in examples of how media portrays drinking. Have them bring in clips of TV shows, advertisements, media clips, songs or other examples of how drinking is shown. Discuss with them how they are being bombarded with pressures to drink and the idea that drinking is okay. How does the media portray drinking? Does it ever deal with the consequences or dangers of it?
- You may want to take some time to talk about alcoholism. This is a commonly occurring disease among families—even Christian families—today. Talk about the dangers of alcoholism and how one can tell if someone is an alcoholic. Point out that someone who is drunk has no right to hit or abuse anyone of any age. If any of your kids are facing abusive situations, encourage them to talk with a trusted adult. For more information on alcoholism and other links, visit NIAAA ([www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)).