

# HOOKED ON DRUGS [substance abuse]

## THIS WEEK

Alcohol and other drug use is an issue that remains problematic in society. Make no mistake, alcohol is a drug. This isn't to suggest that adults shouldn't drink in moderation. But those adults, as well as young people, need to understand that when they drink they are consuming a legal drug. Take the opportunity to talk with your young people about drugs and how they can avoid them.

Be sensitive to those in your group who may have been using drugs already. According to statistics, there most likely are a few in your group who have experimented. Be careful not to come off sounding judgmental—keep an open mind during the discussion.

## OPENER

Ask the students to name all the celebrities they know of (athletes, actors, musicians, politicians, and so on) who have had problems with alcohol or drugs. You will be able to create a long list of names. Ask the group if they know why any of these supposedly successful individuals became involved in substance abuse. Then discuss the consequences of that involvement. Did it affect their careers? Who went to jail? Who divorced or lost their children as a result of their dependency? Who lost their lives? Finally, ask the students if these individuals make substance abuse glamorous to teens. This will lead directly into your first TalkSheet question.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Generally speaking, the three most frequently used drugs are caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol. Point out that these three are addictive drugs even though they are legal.
2. Create a master list of reasons why these drugs are used by teenagers. What makes them want to use? What are the rewards of doing drugs? How do they initially get hooked?
3. Here the group can focus on good reasons to avoid use. Reach a group consensus on the best reasons to avoid use. What makes it hard to resist using drugs in today's society?
4. Has it gotten easier for your kids to resist drugs and alcohol? Most likely not. Spend some time talking about peers and media influences. Why is it harder to resist than before? What can your kids do to stay clean, despite the pressures?
5. Let students share their various perspectives on the passages. Focus on one or two passages of interest to the group.

## THE CLOSE

The temptations to use drugs are everywhere. As you close, don't lecture your kids—affirm them. It takes will power and determination to stay clean. Encourage them to find others to support them—to keep them accountable for saying no. And point out that God gives power to those who ask for help in resisting temptation—check out 1 Corinthians 10:13 or James 1:12-15. Challenge your kids to make a commitment to stay clean and to find someone who can encourage them.

## MORE

- How can your kids deal with addiction? What if they have a friend who is hooked? What can they do to help themselves and others? You may want to talk more about how to handle drug abuse and the importance of breaking the addiction. For information and discussion ideas, check out the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (<http://ncadd.org>) or the Addiction Research Foundation ([www.arf.org/isd/info.html](http://www.arf.org/isd/info.html)). You may want to talk about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse on families—some of your kids may face abusive homes or alcoholic family members. These are real issues that need attention. What are the signs of an addicted parent or sibling? Where can your kids go to find help and encouragement?
- Or you may want to ask someone to talk about drug addiction—possibly someone who works with users, treats those who are addicted, or has recovered from drug abuse. Some of your kids may have stories of people that they know who have been hooked. Take some time to talk about these stories and what happened—but be sure to mediate the conversation. What did your kids learn from these stories? How real are the dangers of drugs and alcohol?