



Worksheet

[Is also downloadable as a PDF](#). Please note that this 2 page A4 size Adobe PDF does not contain everything included below, but essentials.

NOTE

This contains a massive amount of material, pick and choose what you need. We first look at alcohol and then have a quick look at drugs. The [excluded section](#) has additional material on these topics.

OUTLINE

Session to take a look at alcohol, drugs and what the Bible has to say as many young people will have drunk alcohol, got drunk, taken drugs or have been tempted to do so. This focuses very much on alcohol but the principles are the same for drugs.

INTRO

Ask people what they think about alcohol and getting drunk. Then ask about drugs. What do their parents, guardians or other adults believe? Do they know the recommended weekly limit for drinking alcohol? Do they know what this means in practice?

FACTS

For facts on alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, [click here](#) (updated Oct 2017)

There is also a drug and alcohol quiz, [click here](#) (updated Oct 2017)

Government figures (2014-2015) show that alcohol misuse costs the NHS a massive £3.5 billion a year. The cost of crime related to alcohol is estimated to be £8 billion to £13 billion annually. Binge drinking is still an issue in society although the number of people drinking is going down - especially among young people.

In 2016, new research was published from Public Health England, showing that alcohol abuse costs the UK economy up to £52 billion every year. A London-based charity working with homeless people stated that, "Among the homeless people we work with, our figures indicate that super-strength beers and ciders at 7.5% to 9% alcohol by volume are doing more damage than both heroin and crack cocaine."

OUR CHURCHES

Why is it that pubs are more popular than churches and for many people, they are the centre of their life or the local community? In some places, old churches have become pubs or even housing. There's probably a few reasons!

1. They are more exciting and more fun - or they are seen to be more fun.
2. People believe that there are 'real' people there, not always pretending to be 'religious'.
3. People feel alienated by churches despite the great truth about Jesus.
4. Our churches are not welcoming and accepting as they should be.
5. We may be doing church wrong, outside-in rather than inside-out.
6. Church buildings and services are often un-inspiring, irrelevant, distant, too religious, too dull!
7. Churches aren't part of the community but merely located in a community.
8. There is also evil spiritual opposition in society to church. The spirit of antichrist is very active.

What can we do to make churches the centre of the community, based around Jesus - and not pubs as the centre, based around alcohol? Is there anything else we can do to make our churches welcoming?

In my city, the local Street Pastors have a base in a church where people can come and chat, be helped, have a coffee, sober up a bit.

ANY STORIES OF ALCOHOL - Personal & true stories you may have..

My dad was told clearly by God to stop drinking when he became a Christian. He was actually blocked getting into a pub by a force he didn't initially understand but now knows was the Holy Spirit.

For myself, I went out drinking a lot, got involved with football hooligans and got into a fair bit of trouble. The only way God brought me out (though I didn't realise it was God at the time) was by me being attacked in a club and then by a gang. After I was attacked in a club, 2 older football hooligans I knew went back and did some very serious damage. I decided things had to change.

Another time I went to a mate's wedding in Canada. As part of the fun and games my mate had a stag night. I determined with God's help I wouldn't drink loads but make a stand as a Christian. When mocked by a local who was wasted I told him to get lost politely and refused the offer of another pint! I was with another Christian who was drinking heavily. He was accused of hypocrisy by other lads who pointed to me and said 'At least Steve does what he believes.' Standing out for God makes you a target but it does impact people

BIBLE STORIES - Do people know of any? Here's two..

1. Genesis 9.20-25. Noah became a farmer, planted a vineyard and got drunk ending up naked on his bed. Ham, the youngest son discovered him naked and told his brothers Shem and Japheth who got a blanket, walked backwards into Noah's tent and put the blanket over him. Noah woke up, presumably hungover and cursed Ham and blessed Shem and Japheth (Abraham is in the lineage from Shem, see Genesis 11.26)

2. John 2.1-11, the Wedding at Cana where Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus was obedient to his mother, her faith in him was demonstrated and as verse 11 says, 'There he showed his glory and his followers believed in him.' (Youth Bible)

Question: What can we learn from these stories?

PROVERBS - On alcohol:

Proverbs 20.1, 'Wine is a mocker and beer is a brawler..'

Proverbs 23.20-21, 'Don't drink too much wine or eat too much food. Those who drink and eat too much become poor.'

BIBLE TEACHING

The Bible doesn't say completely cut out alcohol, though many people feel that is the Godly thing to do. We will see that there are also higher standards for leaders. The Bible offers alternatives. It shows the negative impact alcohol can have and encourages us into a new way.. let's dive deep into the Word..

Ephesians 5.18 - Do not get drunk on too much wine which will ruin you - but instead be filled with the Holy Spirit (in context of living in the light of Christ).

Point - Too much wine messes you up so steer clear and be filled with another kind of Spirit!! Being drunk suggests that you are not and cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit. Alcoholism can be a curse. There may be times that being regularly drunk suggests something negatively spiritual as the equivalent is being filled with the Spirit.

Romans 13.13-14 - Live in a right way, like people who belong to the day.. don't have wild parties or get drunk.. but clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and forget about satisfying the sinful self

Galatians 5.19, 21 - The wrong things from the sinful self include.. being drunk, having wild and wasteful parties..

Romans 13.13-14 - Live in a right way, like people who belong to the day.. don't have wild parties or get drunk.. but clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and forget about satisfying the sinful self

Point - Getting drunk is in a list of sins. Getting drunk is about satisfying the sinful self. Don't do it. The alternative is living right, in the light, being clothed with Jesus

1 Peter 4.2-3 - Change your lives. Do what God wants. In the past you did the evil things non-believers want. You were guilty of sexual sins, evil desires, getting drunk, wild and drunken parties and hateful idol worship

Point - Getting drunk is in the same list as worshiping an idol. Is getting drunk simply the worship of alcohol? getting drunk is associated with a need to change. Being drunk is described as being something evil

Luke 21.34 - Be careful not to spend your time feasting, drinking or worrying about worldly things.. but be living ready for Jesus

Point - Drinking is seen as an unspiritual act. This passage from Jesus and others notes that being truly spiritual for God involves different behaviour.

LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 3.3 and Titus 1.7. In these passages we see the standards required of elders, spiritual leaders of churches. Do not drink too much wine is the advice. Above all, they are the church leaders and must be respected. There must be a higher standard of right living and an integrity above question. Interestingly in Titus, the verses before saying don't drink too much talk about an elder not getting into fights or getting angry - 2 effects that alcohol can have.

WARNINGS

These come from Paul. In 1 Corinthians 5.1, Paul warns the believers not to eat with those who claim to be believers but who sin by '.. being greedy.. getting drunk.. cheating people.' In 1 Corinthians 6.10 Paul warns that people who do wrong won't inherit God's Kingdom - these people include those who are greedy or get drunk..

BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

As suggested in Ephesians 5.18 being drunk can produce a similar effect to the Holy Spirit. Be careful before you dismiss out of hand some of the more unusual moves of the Spirit of God. In Acts 2.15 after the apostles had been filled with the Spirit they were obviously acting in a kind of mad way as people thought they were drunk! Peter had to reassure the onlookers with a bit of humour - they're not drunk, it's only 9am!

THE POSITIVE SIDE

There can be a positive side to having a drink. Jesus seems to have enjoyed going to social events and enjoying himself. Wine often played a major part at these events. In Matthew 11.19, there was criticism of Jesus - '..look at him, he drinks too much wine and is a friend of tax collectors and sinners..' Was the wine non-alcoholic? I don't know! Remember also that Jesus was often accused of doing things he didn't do

In 1 Timothy 5.33, Paul suggests to Timothy that he drinks a little wine for the stomach. Today I guess we'd take Rennie's or something! This does suggest, however, that Timothy did not normally drink at all!!

ANOTHER PERSONAL TOUCH

One of the things that bound me with my buddies from Canada was sitting on my mate's decking before the wedding at night, chilling with a bottle of beer. Obviously I could've sat there with a coffee but the point was that I was joining them on their territory and entering into it some way - as I do when I meet non-Christian mates at the pub. The thing is God's made me strong enough to say 1 pint or bottle (if that) and that's enough. We must be careful if we're not strong here.

GOD'S LOVE

Song of Songs/Solomon is obviously a story of two lovers and also a reflection of Jesus' love for his church. In 1.2, we read that 'Your love is better than wine.' And surely this sums it all up. God's love is better than alcohol and drugs. Ephesians 5.18 encourages us to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, which is eternal rather than the next party, which is temporary! Does being drunk tally with the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5.22-23?! Remember, you don't want to do anything which makes you less fired up for God!!

STEPS TO HEALING AND WHOLENESS

As with other issues, there is a real need for some people to make significant changes in their lives away from abuse of, or addiction to, alcohol. The power of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, allied with the support of the body of Christ is the place for healing, wholeness, transformation and change.

There are some ways and means to change:

1. Recognising there is a problem. Telling someone and desiring to make a change. Asking Jesus for his help daily.
2. Contacting a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous and becoming accountable to and for others.
3. Finding acceptance in God's love for you, demonstrated within the body of a local church.
4. Recognising and dealing with (maybe with professional help), the issues that cause your problems.
5. Learning that God wants and is able to meet your needs and bring healing to your whole self.

For more support and advice please visit these resources among others:

- [HopeUK](#) - website of Christian organisation dealing with drug and alcohol issues

- Look in the local paper, Citizens Advice Bureau, Yellow Pages for 'alcohol support services' (such as Alcoholics Anonymous). Many areas have resources for young people specifically, as well as for people generally.

WEEDS

Some people say that we can smoke Cannabis because God made all things, plants etc. Yes God did make the world. But let's not forget that there are weeds that have grown up because of our sin.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

I was in the drugs scene when I was a bit younger and God brought me out of that and out the football hooligan scene too. God can bring you out of something negative and turn it for good. Just ask him.

Cannabis is addictive - psychologically. It also causes long-term damage that is only now being recognised by studies. Only a small percentage of young people will go on to use harder drugs from cannabis use. Most realise the immense dangers from cocaine, crack, heroin. Only a few use speed, ecstasy and LSD etc. Many young people will grow out of drug use. Not all, however. Legal highs are now the most dangerous threat because of the fact they contain such random chemicals.

Be aware of the signs of drug use. Young people may be hyper, full of energy, have large pupils, be excessively friendly, excessively spun out, not able to focus effectively and so on. On harder drugs, some may be hostile or agitated. Be aware of the fact that just because they have taken drugs, it's not the end of the world, it's often not as bad as it sounds.

Nevertheless, destructive drugs are not from God! Be aware, balanced and have a strategy. For example, what would you do if you found young people taking cannabis on church property?

Specialist drugs help should be accessed via local drugs project, many cities have youth drugs workers. If not, contact the agency. There are Christians involved in this area - for example, [HOPEUK](#)