

March, 2018

Dear Youth Leaders:

We have been most pleased to have the opportunity to be a part of the One Encounter Youth Rally! We thank you for your support and participation! To see our community and our youth come together in worship and for the cause of saving this generation from the perils of substance abuse is very rewarding.

We know events such as this generate many positives, but research indicates that a single, one-time, stand-alone event is not adequately effective by itself in actually preventing future substance use and abuse among participants. To be successful in changing a mindset or a culture requires follow-up, repeated messaging, accountability, and support.

For this reason we are providing materials for three follow-up youth meetings that will keep the conversation going and generate discussion -- and hopefully action and accountability -- among your kids. There is a reason that the Drug Free Communities grant actually requires a partnership with the local faith-based community and that most every recovery / treatment program has a faith component; faith and prevention/recovery are very tightly connected!

The three lessons will be:

Week 1: Your obligation to yourself.

Week 2: Your obligation to others.

Week 3: Your obligation to God.

Please note: The lessons provided here focus primarily on alcohol. There are 3 reasons for this.

- 1) The substance about which most Biblical teachings, warnings, and examples come is alcohol.
- 2) The substance our kids will most likely first come in contact with is alcohol, and the substance most used by our kids is alcohol.
- 3) With Grant County recently going wet, and alcohol being regularly seen in places it was not previously available, one of the natural progressions of thought is that since it is legal it must not be that harmful. A decreased perception of harm will ALWAYS lead to an increase in use. It is important that youth (and parents) understand its harmful impact particularly on developing youths.

Despite the primary focus on alcohol, leaders are encouraged to introduce and entertain discussion on other substances as well, including tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs.

Lesson 1: YOUR OBLIGATION TO YOURSELF

LEARNING TARGET:

Psalms 139:14 (NIV). I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Ask students their interpretation of this verse.

Consider this notation taken from Clarke's Commentary on the Bible on Psalms 139:14. It defines "fearfully" and "wonderfully" made, making a perfect message for youth. Every child in the room is beautifully, wonderfully made! There is value in them because God made them "wonderfully". This is an important message to youth struggling to find their way. If they leave this meeting with nothing else, make sure they know and understand God has made them wonderfully perfect. Of equal importance, look at how Clarke's defines "fearfully". This is particularly poignant in relation to how we treat our bodies and the realities of addiction...

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made - The texture of the human body is the most complicated and curious that can be conceived. It is, indeed, wonderfully made; and it is withal so exquisitely nice and delicate, that the slightest accident may impair or destroy in a moment some of those parts essentially necessary to the continuance of life; therefore, we are fearfully made. And God has done so to show us our frailty, that we should walk with death, keeping life in view; and feel the necessity of depending on the all-wise and continual superintending care and providence of God."

Ask: Do you know what the legal drinking age is in Kentucky? 16, 18, or 21?

The legal drinking age in each of the 50 United States is **21**. This came to pass following Federal legislation, signed into law by Ronald Reagan in 1984, that penalized states that did not raise the minimum drinking age to 21 by having 10% of their Federal highway funds withheld. While states determine their own drinking age, this pressure on the states by the Federal government was motivated primarily by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) who was working to curtail the excessive number of alcohol-related deaths which was occurring among 19 and 20 years olds. While there may be other factors that also have played a part, the number of drunk-driving deaths has definitely dropped dramatically since this legislation was enacted.

Ask: What are local attitudes toward drinking among teens?

Unfortunately, despite the law, many teens and even parents seem to consider underage drinking ok, or normal. Some almost espouse the notion that if done at home, or if they are not

driving, it is safe, normal, or to be expected. Teens report that alcohol is easy to obtain – many saying they get it from their parents or a friend's home.

But besides the important fact that “it's against the law”, there are other reasons, as well, that teen and underage drinking is unwise. **Students owe it to themselves to discover some facts relative to alcohol and the human body before just going along with the crowd.**

Ask: What does the Bible say?

Have the teens look up and read the following scriptures:

Proverbs 23:29-35 – Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. “They hit me,” you will say, “but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?” (NIV)

Proverbs 20:1 – Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (NIV)

Proverbs 21:17 – He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich. (NIV)

Proverbs 23:21 – For drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags. (NIV)

Ask: Is this just archaic thinking? Old language and stuffy rules?

Randomly distribute the following articles and fact sheets to the youth present – so each has one (or two may share and work together). Have students do a quick review and highlight tidbits that would be good to know before blindly engaging in underage drinking (or perhaps even “of age” drinking). (Hard copies have been attached for the first 3 sites provided below)

Fact Sheet relative to teen alcohol use:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/school/teachers/health/factsheet12011.pdf>

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/alcohol-can-rewire-teenage-brain>

<https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/preventing-drug-abuse-excessive-alcohol-use.html>

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This is too much to print, but if technology permits allow students to take a look at this website:
https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH_ARDI/default/default.aspx

To introduce the final lesson component, have a student read:

I Kings 16:8-10 (Elah, king of Israel, is killed after getting drunk....)

Ask students: What happened in these verses? What factors were in play that may have hastened his death?

Genesis 19:30-38 (This passage about Lot and his daughters may be a little edgier, so proceed only as appropriate for your students.) Apparently the daughters were sober, and still thought this was a good idea, (and there will always be people with bad ideas and poor judgement), but would Lot have done this if he had been sober? Who were the Moabites / Ammonites? How do they play out in future relations with the children of Israel?

End session with illustrations taken from current events relative to times things didn't end well for a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Contrast this with Jeff Colon's testimony and the difference "One (true) Encounter" with Christ made in his life. Encourage others to share how a relationship with Christ helps them in their walk.

Pray that our youth understand that they are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Lesson 2: YOUR OBLIGATION TO OTHERS

LEARNING TARGET:

Ephesians: 5:17-20 - "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Substance use, abuse, and addiction rarely happens in a silo. On one end, in almost every instance of initial use, the substance has been introduced to one person by another ... even in instances of prescription drug abuse where the "introducer" is a physician. On the other end of use, abuse, and addiction is the impact it has on family members and loved ones, the community, and now, even our nation at large.

Ask: Has the Bible provided us any examples relating to the impact substance use has on others -- beyond the user?

Have a student read Genesis 9:18-27 aloud. Was Noah's curse justified? Granted Ham, perhaps, could have handled the situation better, but was Noah's anger and wrath really the result of his own guilt and embarrassment?

Do we find in today's society instances of child abuse and neglect – a curse, per se -- related to a parent's dependence upon a drug or alcohol? What is going on emotionally and physically that brings forth such anger, chaos, misaligned priorities, and disfunction?

Have a student read Esther 1:5-22 regarding Queen Vashti. What behavior(s) did King Xerxes' drunkenness encourage? Today, do we still see lewdness, abuse, sexual assault, and promiscuity associated with alcohol use and abuse?

Is alcohol really worth degrading oneself in this way?

Ask: What are other examples of the impact of drugs and alcohol in families, communities, and our nation?

Use one or more of the following resources to introduce discussion relative to the impact substance use and abuse has on others. In all of these resources, there is much evidence of both the impact on innocent bystanders and the impact on the user. Consider dividing your group in half, having half make notes documenting the harm they see the user has done to his/herself (reinforcing lesson # 1) and the remaining half to make notes documenting harm done to others.

- This video on the heroin epidemic was produced by the FBI and is almost 60 minutes long. It is VERY impactful, but intense -- and includes images of addicts actually shooting heroin (not considered by the prevention community to be a “best practice”). It includes a warning for graphic images (left in the video) and language (which you can tell had been there, but has been cut out). It is rich, however, with very real examples of the insanity of those in the grips of heroin/opioids. Use your own discretion, or perhaps even seek parental permission.
<https://www.fbi.gov/video-repository/newss-chasing-the-dragon-the-life-of-an-opiate-addict/view>
- Marin Riggs video: This video is only about 6 minutes. Told by parents of Marin Riggs. Her story will be impactful to our local youth because like them, she did not look like the typical “addict”. Yet she was.
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=marin+riggs+video&view=detail&mid=0C714ED3E4AAE3314F6E0C714ED3E4AAE3314F6E&FORM=VIRE>
- Have a student Google “Larry Mahoney” to discover the sad story attached to his name. relevant to the Carrollton Bus Crash include:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CLDGXknjLo>
 (There is a whole host of related videos on YouTube.)
Consider/discuss the impact on the victims, survivors, families, and, yes, even on Larry Mahoney. Some insight into Mahoney’s life before and after may be found in this Enquirer story: http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2003/05/14/loc_mahoney.html

Ask: What obligation do we have to ourselves? to our loved ones? to complete strangers?

Have students look up and read the following passages:

Ephesians 5: 15 – 20: “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Another aspect of our obligation to others is found in this verse:

Romans 14:21 – “It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”

Ask: Do we acknowledge / understand that for some people one sip, one-time use is the start of a chain reaction that alters a life forever? If you are fortunate enough to be able to “handle

alcohol”, etc., what about your brother, your drinking buddy. What responsibility do you have to them?

Help your students identify reasons youth turn to drugs and alcohol. You will have youth in your group who are at risk as well as youth who are in a position to make a difference in the lives of their counterparts. Develop a plan of action that allows students to be the hands and feet of Christ, that supports and holds each other accountable, and provides a safe place to share and seek assistance as needed.

Pray that our students grow in truth and knowledge, and that they understand that loving someone else means they keep themselves holy and acceptable unto God.

Lesson 3: YOUR OBLIGATION TO CHRIST

Introductory Activity: Line 3 students in a row. Have the students on the left and right read two different, but exciting accounts from the news at the same time (perhaps one a sports story, another something historically fascinating). Direct the student in the middle to listen to both and when they are finished recount both stories back to the group. He/she will obviously be unable to tell complete details from both.

Ask: Can an individual dabble in two worlds?

According to Matthew – words spoken by Jesus during his Sermon on the Mount -- no.

Have a student read Matthew 6:24 (KJV 2000): “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Lead in discussion: Use of many substances -- tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, heroin – is started with the participant thinking he/she can dabble in both worlds. In fact, part of the perceived attraction is that the substance is going to *improve your present world*, your present reality, in some way – ie: remove your physical or emotional pain, enhance your performance, help you think, help you relax, help you fit in, help you have fun – but that is not the nature of this beast. This beast is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Think of it as the devil described in I Peter 5:8

Have a student read I Peter 5:8 (KJV): “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Testimony after testimony, obituary after obituary describe this capacity to devour....

Ultimately, it devours you -- your morals, principles, loves. It strips you of your dignity, your integrity, your money, your family, your children. ***It devours you.***

Share “Dear Heroin” letters attached. Ask students to identify examples of complete slavery to addition.

And don’t be fooled by the person peddling this to you. **It (or an equally gripping sin of greed and power) has already devoured the person “befriending” you.** They are either so debased that they are selfishly bringing you down to their present state to make themselves feel better, or they are so greedy that they are knowingly making you and your family their victim for their financial gain. RUN! RUN NOW! RUN FAST!

Ephesians 5:6-20: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Discuss: Let's be honest. Someone is making this stuff. They know what they are doing; they know the substances they are putting in it will devour you, make you their slave. Actually, from a business point of view, addiction is their business plan. Be smarter.

Ad-dic'tion: the compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (such as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal; broadly: persistent compulsive use of a substance known by the user to be harmful. (MerriaBm-webster.com)

Ad-dict'ed: **Given up or over to** a practice (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

But, let's go back to where we started....

Matthew 6:24 (KJV 2000): “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

We can choose only one master. Choose the “One Encounter” that is truly the gift of life. Keep your bodies holy and pleasing to God.

A Living Sacrifice Romans 12:1 (NIV) “**1**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Follow-up: Consider giving the students the opportunity to minister to those who may not have had the benefit of hearing/heeding the words of warning they have now received, and have fallen victim. Various organizations work to meet needs of those impacted by addictions. Camille Croweak, Project Coordinator for the Champions for a Drug-Free Community DFC grant, would be pleased to coordinate any efforts to minister to those being served by the following organizations:

NECCO – Florence, KY (859)594-4510 - Serves children of addicts

Needs the following items:

Underwear (all sizes, both male and female)

Pajamas (all sizes, both male and female)
Socks (all sizes, both male and female)
Travel size toiletries – deodorant, tooth brush & tooth paste, shampoo, Head & Shoulders shampoo
Stuffed animals and blankets (new only)
Duffel bags

Transition's Healthy Newborns – Covington, KY (859)491-4435 - Serves children of addicts

http://transitionsky.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Healthy-Newborns-Donations-Sheet_11-1-14.pdf

Kenton County Detention Center - Serves addicts/offenders

Toiletries
Nonperishable food items
Underwear (adult sizes, both male and female)
T-shirts
Emergency blankets
Feminine hygiene items
Small satchel or backpack to put items in

Pray that our youth will be able to withstand the wiles of the devil, and with grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

DEAR HEROIN LETTERS FOR LESSON 3

Dear heroin,

Well hello again. It's me, Steph - you know the one who you took from, broke and tried to kill. Let me tell you a little something. You had me in your grips at an early age. I didn't know that when I took that first drink, had that first drink or took that first hit, that I would become your slave.

It's funny to look back now and see how you tried to sneak in, especially in the last few years.



Despite all the bad things - you were good for one thing and one thing only - to escape from my pain of this [messed] up world. But this, my friend, is two-sided. See, where you took my pain away, you also brought more on. Starting a vicious cycle. You made me lie, steal, cheat, manipulate, justify, rationalize, do my 'nevers,' sell my body, lose self-respect, don't forget about all the \$ and material things. Do you feel good when you strip someone of everything? I began to question life and

often thought suicide was the answer. Time and time again God protected me. But you were always there waiting for the right time to attack. You stole years of my life and many memories that I can't get back. I think I hate you the most for that. Bet you hate to hear that from my mouth when I'm sober!

I would always declare my love for you but I was completely wrong! I regret every time I showed you love and answered to your every call. We're done! It's OVER! This is your past due eviction notice.

You no longer will take space up in my head or waste my time. I'm putting on all my armor against you because I know you won't leave without a fight. You'll always be ready to attack no matter what. So I need to always be prepared.

Stephanie Evanko.

Stephanie Evanko battled addiction for 17 years. She died at aged 32 of an blood infection caused by using dirty needles. Pictured above is her mother and daughter, Savannah.

http://lancasteronline.com/features/dear-heroin-i-regret-every-time-i-showed-you-love/article_2cf01b80-a20c-11e7-b18a-d76d79a1bc1c.html

Stephanie Evanko's poem, written April 29, 2013

To My family and Friends:

I'm sorry that I'm such a Mess, I deserve all the evil words spoken to me, and all the time I've been disappointed.

I don't know what to even say. I hope that I'll change and once again be okay.

I do all the things I say I won't do, my dreams & goals (YEAH). I threw them away too.

I always claim that I'm a Mother, when in reality I act like a child, and constantly chase "ONE MORE" another.

Every time I look into Savannah's eyes, my heart breaks more because of all the lies, I hate the person that I have become, running from life and wanting to be numb.

I ask myself over and over what will it take, I can't keep living this way, not only for me but for my daughter's sake.

"Mommy was a drug addict and that why she is Dead" my daughter will say, along with broken memories of me in her head.

She'll go & visit my grave and constantly question just why I couldn't behave.

Didn't I love her, wasn't that enough making her feelings and trying to be tough.

The holiday will come year after year & pass after I die, all because I was selfish & wanted to get high.

My parents will raise her and try to do it right, they'll try their hardest & put up a good fight.

All sorts of emotions my mother will feel, and at time ask herself can this be real?

Everyday she'll feel anger and sorrow, trying to reassure my daughter there's always tomorrow.

My father would probably be filled with regret, and do things with Savannah he didn't do with me, until all his goals are met.

My sister would be disappointed & cry, she'd pray to God for the answers to Why?

My brother-in-law would be the backbone, and hold his family when they sob & they moan.

I'm so ashamed to even claim I'm a Mother, all I'm really worried about is can I get "ANOTHER".

http://lancasteronline.com/features/dear-heroin-i-regret-every-time-i-showed-you-love/article_2cf01b80-a20c-11e7-b18a-d76d79a1bc1c.html

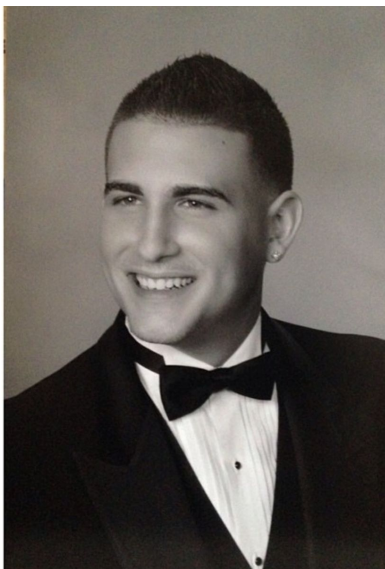
<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/an-open-letter-to-heroin>

Dear Heroin,

I wasn't sure where to begin at first, but I've always been a brutally honest person, and I make no exception for you. You are the worst possible thing to walk into someone's life. You don't care about the people you hurt or how you can end someone's life within a matter of time. I didn't realize how powerful you were. I didn't understand why people were so addicted to something as terrible as you. I hate that you have so much control. I hate that even though people know how dangerous you are they still want you. I hate that you stole the life of the person I loved.

You take some of the most amazing people we have. You take the ambitious ones who want the most out of life. You take the ones who have so much love to offer. You also take advantage of the weak ones, the ones who have struggled enough throughout their life and are just trying to rebuild themselves. You make yourself an option to them and you slowly drag them down even more. I never believed you would walk into the life of someone I loved. You seemed like a faraway threat, something so unreal to me. But I was wrong. You became something for them to depend on and you became the most important thing in their life. Nothing or nobody else mattered. Not even me.

There is nothing appealing about you and it breaks my heart to know that there are people who give into you. But what some people don't understand is the addiction that comes along with you. You take over every part of a person's life to the point where they aren't themselves anymore. It's an illness that consumes every little piece of the ones who have fallen victim to you. And I would never blame them for this. I blame you. I hate that you continue to exist as the person I love no longer does. While you get to roam freely infecting more people around you I no longer get to hug the person I love. I don't get to laugh with them anymore and I don't get to tell them how my day was. I don't get that last chance to tell them how much they meant to me.



My hate for you grew even more after I watched the person I loved be lowered into the ground. Because of you I would never see his bright smile again. It was at this point that I had thought you won. You took one of the greatest things in my life away from me forever. But I've healed and so have the people around me that have also lost their loved ones because of you. We stand together and we won't stop fighting against you. You may continue to exist but you haven't won, heroin, and I promise you never will.

RIP Michael Moss.

Other scripture passages of interest:

Isaiah 5:11 – Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have not regard for the deeds of the Lord.

Isaiah 5:22 – Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.

Romans 13:13 – Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

I Corinthians 5:11 – But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, and drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

Other websites of interest:

<http://www.legacy.com/news/culture-and-trends/article/she-wanted-to-live-when-obituaries-are-honest-about-addiction>