

## Help kids take a stand against alcohol and drugs



With prom and graduation seasons here, teenagers may face more opportunities than usual to experiment with drinking and drug use. Kids turn to these substances not only to look cool and fit in with the crowd but also because they may help them feel good, ease their nerves, and make socializing easier.

Alcohol and drugs are addictive and harmful, as well as illegal. Using and abusing them can lead to everything from bad decisions to death. But there's much more for Christian teenagers to consider when they're faced with temptations of drugs and alcohol than just being "safe."

In the Bible, Jesus instructs his followers to stay awake and alert in our everyday lives. He said Satan is stalking us like a "roaring lion" (see 1 Peter 5:8), and he wasn't kidding. God instructs us to take up his armor (see Ephesians 6:13-17) so we can stand firm and resist temptation. He also tells us to walk in the light (see 1 John 1:7). Nothing neutralizes our impact for God's kingdom faster, broader, and deeper than shadow living. Whatever we do, we should train kids to live their lives in the light—away from the shadows that give Satan, God's enemy, room to operate and leverage to sideline us.

So when you talk to your teenagers about the physical and legal reasons to steer clear of drugs and alcohol, remember to mention the spiritual reasons as well. Then stop talking and set an example by how you live. God knows about all the temptations we face and wants to be the first place we turn during difficulties.

### The United Methodist Perspective

During worship, Marnie, a woman in her 60s, talked about the impact of being a pen pal and visitor in our church's prison ministry. Then her pen pal, Chris, newly released from prison, came to the podium. He was nervous and read carefully from a note card. Chris said he'd allowed alcohol and drugs to control his life, eventually landing him in prison. He shared how Marnie's love and concern had given him the hope and courage to survive prison and undergo treatment. Marnie had saved his life, he said, not only by helping him through incarceration and addiction but by allowing him to experience Christ's love through her love for him.

Everyone was moved to tears. We saw what it means to be Christ's church. We all saw ourselves in Chris and longed to be faithful like Marnie.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state: "We commit ourselves to assisting those who suffer from abuse or dependence, and their families." I'd read that statement many times but had never seen it lived out before my eyes until then. Through Marnie's servant heart and commitment, Chris has found hope and new life. Now that's a church I want to be part of!

—Hank Hilliard, Young People's Ministries, [hhilliard@GBOD.org](mailto:hhilliard@GBOD.org)



**Contrary to media reports and popular opinion, not all teenagers are into drugs and alcohol. Check out a few of the latest findings:**

- By the time they're seniors in high school, 36% of all teenagers have experimented with illegal drugs. (Office of National Drug Control Policy)
- Every day, 2,500 teenagers use a prescription drug to get high for the first time. (drugfree.org)
- When American young people were asked what makes them happy, only 8% said drinking makes them "very happy." And 55% said the question doesn't apply. (MTV/AP)
- Alcohol use continues to decline among 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, as does use of cigarettes and meth. Meanwhile, marijuana use is on the rise. (Office of National Drug Control Policy)



## Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

**Start conversations with your teenagers about drinking and drugs by using these discussion starters:**

1. What motivates people to drink or do drugs? What's so appealing about getting drunk or high?
2. Why do people believe drunkenness or drug use can fill their emptiness? Can you be both drunk (or on drugs) and filled with God's Spirit? Why or why not?
3. Why should Christians avoid drugs and alcohol? Is it merely because they're illegal or bad for you? Explain.
4. When everyone else seems to be drinking or using, how can you be clean and sober?



## Focus on Prayer

### PRAY THAT:

1. God will help your teenagers resist the temptations of alcohol and drugs, finding fulfillment from positive sources instead.
2. Your teenagers will be able to recognize the false promises of happiness and "coolness" offered by alcohol and drugs.
3. Among friends, your teenagers can take a strong stand against mind-altering substances.
4. God will bless your teenagers for pursuing a relationship with him rather than chasing after the "high" from drugs and alcohol.

### Verse of the Month

**"Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Ephesians 5:17-18)**

Many lives have been ruined—and even destroyed—by alcohol and illegal substances. They seem to offer people of all ages quick solutions to common life experiences of pain and loneliness. But only God's presence can truly fill our deepest longings. God wants his children to make wise decisions that honor him, and he promises to renew our weak spirits with his all-powerful Holy Spirit.

## Going Deeper

**At [SimplyYouthMinistry.com](http://SimplyYouthMinistry.com), youth-culture expert Walt Mueller offers these tips for teaching your teenagers about alcohol.**

Most teenagers are left to get their information about alcohol from unreliable sources. Some learn from their friends. Others learn from the media. Only about one in three middle school and high school students say their parents talk to them "often" or "a lot" about tobacco, drugs, and alcohol. Alcohol education should start when we tell our preschoolers not to accept candy, gifts, pills, or rides from strangers. As they grow older, educate kids on the different types of alcohol they'll encounter and the dangers and effects of each. Don't overstate the danger by saying that everyone who drinks beer will die. Rather, tell kids about the potential short- and long-term harmful effects of alcohol abuse in a truthful, realistic manner. Don't assume that because teenagers are likely to experiment it's best to give them both the alcohol and a place to drink "safely."

Seize teachable moments as kids encounter alcohol use and abuse in the media. Teach them to discern the false messages. Help them pick apart the ridiculous promises and nature of alcohol ads. Teach them that it's against the law for minors to buy or drink alcohol. Teach kids that God has given them the responsibility to obey laws. Read and study Romans 13:1-3, 6-7 with your kids. And if they get caught, be sure they're given the wonderful opportunity to learn by suffering the legal consequences of their actions. Don't work to "fix" any of the legal ramifications. Read together what Scripture says about drunkenness in passages such as Proverbs 23:20-21; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:19-21; and 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8. Finally, walk your talk. A code of biblical moral conduct lived out in the house is the most powerful shaper of your child's own spiritual values and behaviors.



# MUSICSPOTLIGHT



## Mainstream Artist

**Background:** Canadian R&B singer Justin Bieber, 16, was discovered on YouTube. His boyish good looks and songs about teenage love make girls swoon. Bieber's new album debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard charts. He's already sung for the president, presented at the Grammys, and scored the opening line in the "We Are the World" benefit remake.

**Albums:** *My World 2.0* (2010), *My World* (2009)

**What Parents Should Know:** Bieber's lyrics are clean, and other than a duet with the often-crude Ludacris, Bieber seems to be making good choices. He wants to follow the career trajectory of Usher and Justin Timberlake, but time will tell if he steers clear of their penchant for sex-soaked lyrics.

**What Bieber Says:** "There's a lot of stuff [on the album] that's not just about love. .... Real life isn't perfect, so my album kind of portrays that. You just have to make the best of what you have."

**Discussion Questions:** Have you known someone whose life seemed perfect? How can appearances be deceiving? What pressure, if any, do you feel to be perfect? Read aloud Matthew 23:25-28. Why was Jesus so harsh to people who pretended they were perfect? Does this mean we shouldn't strive for godly behavior? Why or why not?

## Christian Artist

**Background:** MercyMe has been a staple of contemporary Christian music since forming in 1994. Their crossover hit "I Can Only Imagine" helped their debut album, *Almost There*, go double-platinum. MercyMe, which has been nominated for numerous Dove and Grammy awards, was recently named Billboard's Christian Artist of the Decade.

**Albums:** *The Generous Mr. Lovewell* (2010), *Coming Up to Breathe* (2006), *Undone* (2004)

**What Parents Should Know:** MercyMe holds a unique position in contemporary Christian music, appealing to adults as well as teenagers. They've helped with charity events, including raising money for kids with diabetes.

**What MercyMe Says:** Lead singer Bart Millard says the band hopes the new album creates "a movement of encouraging people to make a difference in the world, whether it's helping your neighbor or just loving each other."

**Discussion Questions:** How can acts of kindness change people's lives and surroundings? What are some simple ways you can show kindness to others? Read aloud 1 Thessalonians 5:15. How would daily life be different if everyone followed this advice? Is that a realistic expectation? Why or why not?

# FILMWATCH

**Movie:** *Iron Man 2* (releases May 7)

**Genre:** Action-Adventure

**Rating:** PG-13 (for sequences of intense sci-fi action and violence, and some language)

**Synopsis:** The world now knows that Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) is Iron Man, and with that fame come complications: The U.S. government wants the technology from his suit, a mysterious woman is vying for his attention, and powerful new adversaries are trying to take down the superhero.

**Discussion Questions:** Why do problems sometimes seem overwhelming? How do you cope with pressure? Why do so many problems exist in the world? Why doesn't God just remove our problems? Read aloud Genesis 39. Think of a time you've seen good come from a problem: Was the end result worth the struggle? Explain. Does God always have lessons to teach us through our problems? Why or why not?



# May 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b>
						Deadline for Seniors to have their stuff turned in and RSVP for the lunch
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
6-8:30 pm UMYF mission training. <b>Mandatory</b>			6:30-7:30 Bible Study	Feeding Frenzy-Mexican		
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
6-8:30 pm UMYF Build Day. <b>Happy Mothers Day!</b>		6pm care and concern comm.	6:30-7:30 Bible Study	FF-Breakfast 5:30 missions		
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>AM-Youth Week tickets on sale in atrium!</b> 6-8:30 pm UMYF Build Day.			6:30-7:30 Bible Study  5pm fundraising committee	FF-Hamburgers <b>7-10Seniors invited to the Young Adult Third Thursday Thing!</b>	<b>Coffee, Dessert and all that Jazz!</b> Fundraiser for missions	
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>AM-Youth Week Tickets in FLC!</b> 6-8:30 pm UMYF Build Day. <b>Senior Recognition!</b>			6:30-7:30 Last Bible Study	Last FF-Italian		
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					
<b>AM-Youth Week Tickets in Atrium!</b> 6-8pm UMYF <b>All 6<sup>th</sup> graders join us! Big Celebration!</b>			<b>May 30 during services we will be selling by sealed bid the serving carts that are being built on build days.</b>			

[Fundraiser for mission trips- Coffee, Dessert and all that Jazz](#) Grab a date and join us in the Family Life Center for "Coffee, dessert, and ALL THAT JAZZ" on Friday, May 21st at 7pm for an evening with David Carr Jr., recording artist and popular jazz saxophonist. Tickets are \$10 each and include all refreshments for the evening. Be a part of this Mission Trip fundraiser as we relax, enjoy dessert and coffee, and listen as David makes some amazingly smooth jazz sounds on his sax. For more information, call Michelle (817-483-1667) or Susan Bragg Riddle (817-483-5305). [Invite friends, it's a great way to introduce them to the church!](#)

**Build days are fun for everyone but are required for all mission trip participants for at least two of the three nights!**

Youth week- begins June 4 through June 10. We do a week filled with fun activities and service projects. We hope that this will help our incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders get to know us and it is a great way to kick off the summer together. Please try to make room for your youth to attend as much as possible. If rides are needed during the day, we can see what we can do to hook your youth up with a ride. Brochures will be coming in the mail soon and tickets go on sale in the atrium on May 16. Keep in mind that we need adults to help us travel to these events, sign up to help where you can.

SALT-Servant And Leadership Team is made up of youth from all grade levels (7-12). They meet once a month (usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month) as a large committee as well as each member is required to serve on a sub-committee that meets once a month. They also are responsible for two events that the youth put on each year. In other words they are responsible for many of the activities that the youth ministry do. Each participant will be required to fill out a application and if chosen to be on the SALT committee they must attend the SALT retreat. The retreat will be held on August 20 and 21. There is a small expensive to help cover some of the cost of the retreat and their SALT t-shirt. Be watching for the announcement that applications are ready to be picked up!

Sunday School classes will promote up on Sunday, June 6!