

Where's Your Line? - Alcohol, drugs, party pills, smoking

Activity 1: Continuums

- 1) You're 15 years old and a friend offers you a beer while hanging out in the park. Do you think that
 - a. To drink the beer would be illegal and against Christian values
 - b. To drink the beer would be illegal but doesn't conflict with Christian values
 - c. To drink the beer would not be illegal but would be against Christian values
 - d. To drink the beer would be neither illegal nor against Christian values and would be ok
- 2) You're under 18 but your parents don't mind if you drink or buy alcohol. Your friends (also under 18) want to share a bottle of wine to celebrate the end of the exams before you go your separate ways. Do you think that
 - a. It would be ok to buy the wine and have a quiet drink with your friends
 - b. It would be ok to have a quiet drink but you would ask your parents to buy the wine for you
 - c. It would be against your Christian values and so you wouldn't buy nor drink the alcohol though the letter of the law didn't really worry you as your parents didn't mind.
 - d. It would be against the law and so you wouldn't buy nor drink the alcohol
- 3) Do you believe that it is:
 - a. (far end) Never ok to drink any alcohol as a Christian
 - b. (middle) Ok to drink small amounts of alcohol in some circumstances as a Christian
 - c. (opposite end) Doesn't matter at all if you drink alcohol as a Christian
- 4) Do you believe that it is:
 - a. (far end) 100% wrong to ever get drunk regardless of the situation
 - b. (middle) Ok to get drunk in some circumstances
 - c. (opposite end) Not against any laws nor your values to get drunk

Small group discussions:

1) Take a few moments in your group and brainstorm reasons for a Christian teenager drinking alcohol. *(list below to help if you get stuck.)*

- *It's not against the law*
- *Health benefits (Good for your heart)*
- *It's fun*
- *Start young and set good habits early on. Learning to drink responsibly.*
- *To fit in with others everybody is doing it.*
- *To set a good example to others how to use alcohol wisely.*
- *They drank wine in the bible.*
- *Parents say it's ok.*

2) Now take some more time in your group to brainstorm reason for not drinking alcohol as a Christian teenager. *(list below to help if you get stuck.)*

- *Not a good Christian witness.*
- *Negative health effects.*
- *Loss of control – Drunkenness.*
- *Impaired judgement at any level of consumption.*
- *Adolescents aren't able to make a fully informed decision.*
- *Responsibility not to model drinking for weaker Christians.*
- *You either drink or you don't – often no opportunity to clarify how much, or how often.*
- *Often leads to other issues.*
- *Leading cause of problems amongst teenagers in New Zealand.*
- *Often causes conflict – struggle to act with honesty & integrity in all spheres of life.*
- *Parents often don't approve.*

3) How are we supposed to make a decision which argument is right or wrong? How are you supposed to decide on what your response, your line or boundary should be? Can you think of any things that Jesus said or did which might be applicable to this issue?

- **Honouring your mother and father**, something Jesus affirmed on several instances during his ministry. A principle originally from the Ten Commandments.
 - Look up the following references. (*Matthew 19:19, Exodus 20:12, Matthew 15:4.*)
 - What does it mean to honor your parents?
 - What would it mean to honor your parents with this issue?

- **Loving your neighbour**, also something which Jesus taught, in fact it was a key component of his teaching. Jesus placed a great deal of importance on this command.
 - Look up the following references. (*Matthew 22:37-40, Luke 10:25-37, Rom 13:8-9, Gal 5:13-14.*)
 - So what does it mean to love your neighbor?
 - How can you effectively love your neighbor with this issue?

- **Being a good Christian witness, especially to weaker Christians**, this is something the apostle Paul teaches on in the following passages.
 - Take a moment and look up the following references. (*1 Corinthians 10:23,31-32, Romans 14:15.*)
 - What does it mean to be a good Christian witness?
 - How can you be a good Christian witness with this issue?

- What about considering consequences on our bodies and minds and on others
 - Alcohol is classified as a drug, technically a depressant. Initially it depresses inhibitions (*One of the factors which make it so popular*). It allows people to be more confident, say things they wouldn't normally say, or do things they wouldn't normally do. People, who might normally be quiet and unobtrusive, can become the life of the party. They can also make unwise decisions or become violent and abusive. The more alcohol consumed the more it acts as a depressant, this can cause young people to be depressed and in extreme circumstances consider taking their own life.
 - Monetary cost to us, our families and others that could have been helped with that money
 - Research says that many teenagers drink alcohol frequently and in high quantities with nearly 25% of current drinkers drinking alcohol at least once a week and over half of the current drinkers have had an episode of binge drinking (more than five drinks in one session) in the past month
 - Studies into brain development in adolescents have discovered a huge amount of development takes place during teenage years. Teen brains can be easily damaged or permanently impaired by drug use including alcohol. Recent studies are also suggesting the parts of your brain which allow you to perceive and analyse risks effectively don't develop until the end of adolescence. Meaning teenagers aren't able to effectively assess risks; this is exaggerated when alcohol is included in the mix.

