

# Just One Drink?

For teens ages 12–14 · about 45–60 minutes · Moral Issues for Teens · built on **Ephesians 5:18** and **Proverbs 23:29–32**

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Your students are growing up in a culture that sells alcohol like it's harmless fun. Ads target them young. Friends will say "just one drink" before they can drive. Even church families sometimes pass around excuses pulled from Scripture out of context. This session isn't a lecture meant to scare them into religion — it's an honest look at what alcohol actually does to a brain, a body, a witness, and a soul, anchored in what the Bible actually teaches.

## **Before you teach anything, pray.**

This guide will help you plan, but it cannot do what only the Holy Spirit can. Some of your students have already been offered a drink; some have parents who drink at every dinner. Ask God for wisdom, compassion, and courage. You are not shaming a room — you are handing them truth they can build a life on.

## **The heart of the lesson**

Alcohol is promoted as the way to relax and have a good time. In reality it is a depressant — it suppresses brain and body functions and puts the mind to sleep in gradual stages. The Bible does not treat drunkenness as a distant problem for "other people." Ephesians 5:18 warns against being drunk with wine; 1 Peter 4:3 condemns drinking parties; Proverbs compares alcohol to a serpent that bites after it charms you.

## *The first drink starts the slide toward drunk.*

Students will hear two classic excuses: "Jesus turned water to wine" and "Paul told Timothy to take a little wine." Those passages must be read in context. Jesus did not produce a drink that causes the damage Scripture condemns elsewhere. Paul's instruction was a small medical measure — not a green light for teen parties. What God calls His people to instead is a living sacrifice, self-control, a body that glorifies Him, and a sober mind awake for the days we live in.

# *Alcohol will destroy you internally, externally, and eternally.*

## **EPHESIANS 5:18**

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but **be filled with the Spirit.**"

## **PROVERBS 23:31-32**

"Do not look at wine when it is red... In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper."

## **How the session flows**

- 1 Name the pressure.** Open with how alcohol is sold to teens. ~8 min
- 2 Teach the facts.** Body, mind, Bible, and the serpent picture. ~12 min
- 3 Play the game.** "Just One Drink?" two-team showdown on screen. ~12-15 min
- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, filled in privately. ~5 min
- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home reinforcement. ~15 min
- 6 Close with courage.** Prayer and a clear invitation to stay sober. ~8 min

You'll want a screen for the game, a printed reference card and pen for each student, and a leader ready to handle sensitive questions without glamorizing alcohol or shaming kids from drinking families.

## Leading it, part by part

### Name the pressure

Start where they live, not where your notes live. Ask: where do you see alcohol pushed at people your age? (Social media, movies, sports ads, "drink responsibly" slogans, friends bragging about parties.) Let them talk briefly. Then land this: the liquor industry is big business, and young people are a target. Nobody in those ads shows the DUI, the vomit, the shame, the family fight, or the morning after. Your job tonight is to get the *whole* picture — natural facts and biblical facts.

### Teach the facts

Walk through four layers without rushing. **Physical:** alcohol harms the body God calls a temple (Romans 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). **Emotional and moral:** Noah, Lot, and the prophets show judgment dulled and sin opened — not just a headache. **Beyond the drinker:** influence, money, family, crime, accidents, fighting, sexual immorality — damage spills outward (Proverbs 20:1; Isaiah 5:11–12). **Spiritual:** drunkenness and drinking parties are condemned; the Christian is called sober and self-controlled (1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:5–6).

When someone raises Jesus at Cana or Timothy's wine, answer calmly and in context — don't dodge it. Those passages are not permission slips for the party culture around your students. Then read Proverbs 23:32 aloud and let the room feel the image: it bites like a serpent. That's not preacher drama; it's accurate. Alcohol works like venom in the body.

### Play the game

Split into two teams and run "Just One Drink?" on the screen. Keep it moving twelve to fifteen minutes. The rules are built in. When it ends, bridge back: every round was asking the same thing — will you believe the excuse or the truth? Winning points is fun; winning a clear conscience before God is the actual goal.

### Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card. Promise plainly that nobody is collecting it. Give them five quiet minutes to circle, check boxes, and write. Some will be deciding ahead of the first real offer. That moment deserves silence.

### Worksheet

Reinforce key verses, T/F on physical and spiritual harm, one scenario response, and one "this week" sobriety action. Good for pairs or take-home.

## Close with courage

Invite students to choose sobriety as an act of worship, not fear. Pray for strength when friends pressure them, for wisdom with family conversations, and for any student already tangled in drinking to find help and repentance. Offer yourself and other leaders as safe adults afterward. Don't manufacture tears — do make the standard clear: we belong to God, and we stay sober.

## Take it further

Discussion questions for small groups or a follow-up week:

- How does alcohol cause physical harm to the body? (Psalm 107:27; Proverbs 23:20–21, 29–35; Isaiah 19:14; 28:7–8)
- How does alcohol cause emotional and moral harm? (Genesis 9:20–21; 19:32; Proverbs 31:4–7; Isaiah 5:11–12; Habakkuk 2:15)
- Why is alcohol described as a serpent and a viper? (Proverbs 23:32)
- What problems spill beyond the person drinking? (Isaiah 5:11–12; Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3–4)
- What do Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9–10; and Galatians 5:19–21 condemn?
- What do Ephesians 5:18 and 1 Peter 4:3–4 condemn?
- What did Jesus do in John 2:1–11 — and is that justification to drink?
- What did Paul tell Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 — and is that justification to drink?

## A final word

Teach the truth without contempt for people who struggle and without softening what God said. Your teens will face this decision in a specific moment — at a party, in a car, at a cookout, on a trip. Give them Scripture, give them the game, give them the card, and trust the Spirit to make "just one drink?" sound as dangerous as it actually is.