

Don't Start

For teens ages **12–14** · about **45–60 minutes** · *Moral Issues for Teens · Personal Integrity & Character · game **Who's Master?** · built on **1 Corinthians 6:12, Romans 6:16, and 1 Corinthians 6:19***

Your students live in a world where vaping looks harmless, marijuana gets called "medicine," pills get shared in group chats, and "just try it once" sounds like the smallest possible risk. Many of them have already been offered something — at a party, in a bathroom, on a bus, or through a friend who swears it's no big deal. This session isn't a scare tactic or a lecture from another century. It's a clear look at what drugs actually do to a brain, a body, a conscience, and a future — and at the deeper question underneath every offer: *who is your master?*

Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students are already experimenting; some have family members tangled in addiction; some think "drugs" means only hard street stuff and don't count their vape. Ask the Spirit for wisdom and compassion. You are handing them a freedom framework — not performing a D.A.R.E. rerun.

The heart of the lesson

Drug abuse is not mainly a "bad kid" problem. It's a **mastery** problem. Paul says, "I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Peter warns that a person becomes "a slave to whatever has mastered him" (2 Peter 2:19). Romans 6:16 puts it plainly: you become a slave to the one you obey — whether sin or God. Drugs promise freedom — a buzz, an escape, a shortcut past pain — but the spiral runs the other direction: tolerance, craving, secrecy, broken relationships, and a body that pays the price.

Don't even start — the slide is faster than you think.

Your body is not your own experiment. It is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). What you put into it matters spiritually, not just medically. Christians also honor governing authorities God has placed over us (Romans 13:1–2) — which means illegal use isn't "just personal choice"; it's disobedience that trains the heart to shrug at God's order. The root issue underneath drug use is often escape: from boredom, stress, shame, or pressure. God's way out is not another

substance — it's the Spirit, Scripture, honest community, and the courage to say no before the first hit.

You were bought with a price — don't hand the keys to a chemical.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but **I will not be mastered by anything.**"

ROMANS 6:16

"Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...?"

How the session flows

- 1 Master or free?** Hook with who controls your choices. ~7 min
- 2 Teach the truth.** Body, law, spiral, and the "don't start" line. ~12 min
- 3 Play the game.** "Who's Master?" two-team showdown. ~12–15 min
- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, private reflection. ~5 min
- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home reinforcement. ~15 min
- 6 Close with hope.** Prayer and a clear invitation to stay free. ~8 min

You'll want a screen for the game, printed reference cards and worksheets, pens, and a leader ready to connect students with help if they're already in too deep — without shaming the room or glamorizing use.

Leading it, part by part

Master or free?

Ask: what do people your age use to "check out" — vape, weed, pills, something else? Let them name it without debating every label yet. Then read 1 Corinthians 6:12 aloud. Land the question: who is mastering you — God, the crowd, a chemical, or your mood? Read Romans 6:16. Every "yes" trains obedience somewhere. Even "I'll just try it once" is already picking a master.

Teach the truth

Walk through four layers. **Body:** drugs harm the temple — depressants slow the nervous system, stimulants hype then crash, hallucinogens distort reality, narcotics dull pain and judgment (Proverbs 14:12 — a path can seem right and end in death). **Law:** Christians honor authority; illegal use trains a habit of "my rules" over God's (Romans 13:1–2). **Spiral:** intoxication, abuse, addiction — tolerance, craving, withdrawal. Most people who insist they're "fine" discover they're not when they try to stop. **Don't start:** the only sure way to avoid the ditch is to never step in. Peer pressure, secrecy, and "everybody vapes" are the same old crowd logic (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Hold up hope: Christ frees slaves (Romans 6:17–18). If a student has already started, repentance and help are the road home (1 John 1:9) — but tonight's standard for the room is clear: *don't start*.

Play the game

Run "Who's Master?" on screen — twelve to fifteen minutes. Rounds sort free vs. enslaved choices, name Scripture on mastery and the body, and work real pressure moments (party offers, vape culture, pill sharing). Bridge afterward: every card asked the same thing — will you let a substance master you, or will you belong to God?

Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card. Promise plainly that nobody is collecting it. Five minutes. Students circle where they are — not tempted, pressured, or already experimenting. Protect the silence. Make leaders available afterward for anyone who needs to talk.

Worksheet

Structured reinforcement — verse fill-in, T/F, lookup, match free vs. enslaved, one real scenario, one "this week" action. Good for pairs or homework. The reference card addressed the heart; the worksheet reinforces Scripture.

Close with hope

Pray for students facing offers this week. Invite them to memorize 1 Corinthians 6:12 as a pre-decision line: *I will not be mastered by anything*. Offer leaders for follow-up. Don't pressure public confession, but do make freedom, repentance, and wise counsel feel safe. End with the truth that freedom and new obedience are still possible in Christ for students who repent and get help (Romans 6:17–18; 1 John 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Take it further

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

- What does Paul mean by "I will not be mastered by anything"? (1 Corinthians 6:12)
- How does Romans 6:16 connect obedience to slavery — sin or God?
- Why does God call your body a temple? What are you not allowed to do with it? (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)
- How do Christians relate to governing authorities and the law? (Romans 13:1–2)
- Why is "just once" or "just a vape" a dangerous starting point? (Proverbs 14:12; 2 Peter 2:19)
- What symptoms show someone is sliding toward dependency? (secrecy, tolerance, craving, broken relationships)
- What is the root issue underneath drug use for many teens? (escape, peer pressure, boredom, shame)
- What must someone do if they've already started? (repentance, confession, help — 1 John 1:9; James 5:16)

A final word

Drug abuse destroys more than a weekend. It masters the mind, damages the body, dulls the conscience, and steals a witness. Your students will face a specific offer soon — a locker, a car, a group chat, a "it's just CBD." Give them Scripture, give them the game, give them the card, and trust the Spirit to make "don't start" sound like the road that actually keeps them free.