

Lesson 18

The Best Me Is Drug Free

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

Drugs can change how a person feels and acts.

Drugs can impact brain development and brain activity thus limiting the ability to make good decisions.

Making a wise decision about using drugs is the responsibility of each individual person.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. realize the effect using drugs can have on their body.
2. understand they are in charge of making choices about drugs.

KEY TERMS

Simulation: the act or process of pretending.

Slogan: a distinctive phrase or motto of a group.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Drug abuse among children has been studied intently over the past few decades trying to determine how it starts and how it progresses. Some studies have focused on the risk factors for children which might open the door for drug use. For example, children may come from an unstable home or have a chaotic home environment. They may not have nurturing parents or transitions within their home or place where they live may be constantly changing. Some of your students may have parents who abuse substances. Parents are extremely important in providing stability, love, nurturing and supervision. Knowing someone cares helps children learn to make wiser choices.

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As teachers, we can sometimes see warning signs in our students. It may be inappropriate classroom behavior, poor social skills, poor choices in friends, academic struggles – all of these could be signs of potential drug use. If we can provide stability in our classrooms and help our children feel loved and secure, we will be helping to provide exactly what some of these children need. Sometimes directing them into an activity will enhance their stability. Work toward giving those students extra attention and some steadiness in their lives. Reinforcing wise choices and resisting peer pressure, as we have discussed in this curriculum, will also help your students.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION

1. For **Exploring the Lesson**, you will need to either use the board and chalk or large paper and marker.
2. Three days prior to teaching the **Applying the Lesson** section, put an egg in a clear glass and cover it with vinegar. Tell your students this will be a part of an experiment you will share with them in three days. Let them make observations as they see bubbles forming on the egg during these three days.
3. In **Discovering the Lesson** for **younger elementary students**, you will need to provide white paper, pencils and scissors.
4. In **Discovering the Lesson** for **older elementary students** in **Activity 1**, you will need 10 slips of paper to simulate money for each student; for **Activity 2**, you will need to provide wrapped chewy candy and two pairs of gloves or two small towels.
5. For **Sharing the Lesson**, you have the option of providing large paper and markers for slogans and paper and pencils.
6. For **Going Deeper**, you will need some seeds, a few grains of gravel, a plant and, if available, a compass.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON

[Say to the students:] **In the last lesson, we talked about addictions. We can become addicted to some things that are harmful to our bodies and minds. When we left Trish, Hector, Dugan and Edgar they were in a boat heading into stormy weather! What is going to happen to them?**

READINESS (5 minutes)

[Read to your students:] **Chapter 18 – Drifting into the Dark**

The Librarian’s final words echoed in the minds of the three friends as they quickly lost sight of the land; “You are not being sent out in a storm! You are being sent out in a boat!”

“The storm is getting worse,” observed Hector. “But the Librarian seemed more interested in the boat than the storm. I don’t get it.”

“The storm sure looks a lot bigger than our boat,” offered Trish.

“Well, things could be worse,” said Dugan. “We could be out in the storm without a boat.”

“Great! That makes me feel much better,” yelled Hector as the sounds of the waves began to drown out normal conversation.

“Look over there!” instructed Trish. “See that black mass moving our way? Do you think it is from some of those dark, damaged parts of the map the Librarian pointed out when we first got here?”

“So, now, we’re not only in a storm but drifting into some of the sick, unhealthy, dying parts of the map!” yelled Dugan. “Whose idea was it to get in the boat in the first place?”

Edgar lifted his nose into the wind and howled a mournful note that seemed to be taken up by the winds and wrapped around them as they huddled in the open boat.

“Can you hear voices? I hear voices in the wind!” cried Trish.

“What are they saying?” asked Hector.

“It’s hard to tell,” continued Trish as she tilted her ear toward the wind.

Suddenly, as if a door had been slammed shut, the winds ceased. All was dead calm and the voices were no longer carried on the wind, they were now inside each of the three, hitchhiking on their own private thoughts.

Join us.

You know you want to.

Fighting it only makes it worse.

Why prolong the inevitable?

If you tell anyone what you hear, they will laugh at you.

You can’t win. Why not accept things as they are?

You don't deserve to be rescued.

You don't matter to anyone.

Give in and get it over with.

Surrender to me and I'll make you feel better.

Drink me, eat me, put me inside and the voices will stop.

The voices burrowed deep into each of the three until it seemed as if nothing else existed in all the world but the voices.

"I think I'm going to be sick!" moaned Dugan as he pulled open the sack lunch the Librarian had given him just before they got in the boat. The initial nausea passed and Dugan looked at the contents of his sack.

"There's no food in my sack!" stated Dugan. "Just this rolled up piece of paper tied with a string."

What does it say?" asked Trish.

Dugan unrolled the paper and read the following –

Not everything you hear is right.

Not everything you think is true.

Not everything you feel is real.

"What does it mean?" asked Hector.

"I think it means the voices we're hearing aren't telling us the truth," said Dugan.

"But where are these voices coming from?" said Trish.

The sound of a big splash stopped the conversation as each turned toward the sound.

"Where's Edgar?" cried Trish.

They looked over the side where Edgar had been. All they saw was the tip of a tail circling around on the surface of the dark waters like the fin of a fish.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Dugan. "We have to save Edgar!"

Just then, Edgar's nose broke the surface of the water and Dugan reached down, grabbed Edgar by his collar and pulled him back into the boat.

"He's got something in his mouth," said Hector.

Edgar dropped an odd looking piece of debris in the bottom of the boat and wiggled his rear end the way dogs do when they are particularly proud of something they have just done.

Dugan picked up the curiously shaped bit of debris, turned it around in his hands and announced, “This thing is covered with the names of drugs and nasty stuff some of the older boys at school have been trying to get us to take!”

“Wow!” said Dugan in an uneasy voice. “Do you think there’s any chance we could still be sucked into the darkness or tricked by the voices?”

“Probably,” said Trish. “But, I think it’s less likely now that we know what the voices are trying to get us to do.”

The children didn’t know it at that moment, but they were drifting on the surface of a diseased part of the map called the “Drugs of Enticement.”

EXPLORE (10 minutes)

[Say to the students:] **Life is a wonderful gift to us. Remember in Lesson 3, we talked about how amazing our bodies are? Our bodies work hard every day to give us a good life and we want to always take good care of them.**

Sometimes, people may try to get you to put something into your body that would harm it. In our story, Dugan said they had been tempted by some of their peers to use drugs. You may have been tempted, too. You need to understand this: You are in charge of you. We make choices every day. A choice is something you decide to do. Making good healthy choices is important for you to learn. For example, you may choose to play ball in a safe place or a dangerous place. You may choose to eat an apple or a bag of chips. These are easy decisions where you can evaluate which would be a better choice for you to make. If we learn to make wise choices with easy decisions, it will help us to be more responsible and make wise choices about harder decisions.

Today, we are going to talk about making wise choices about drugs. Drugs that are prescribed by doctors and used correctly for helping us feel better can be useful. If someone doesn’t use those prescribed drugs correctly, it can make them sicker. There are also illegal drugs people use

to try to make themselves feel better, but they do great damage to their bodies and can cause them to make unwise decisions.

I am going to choose two of you to come to the board. I want you to write your first and last name. Then I want you to turn around fast 10 times and write your name again. *[Repeat this experiment as many times as needed to get the student to the point the handwriting is definitely affected by his or her dizziness. After this activity has been completed, have the class compare the writing. You should see the writing get progressively worse.]*

[Say to the students:] This is just a simulation of what can happen if you put something inside your body that could alter your mind. Sometimes at first, it doesn't seem to make a difference, but the more you allow drugs into your body, the more it affects your ability to do things well.

DISCOVER (30 minutes)

For Younger Elementary Students – Hugs not drugs!



[Say to the students:] What are some healthy choices you make for yourself? *[Write these on the board or paper.]* Why do you think these are healthy choices? *[Give time for discussion.]* How could you help a friend make better choices? *[Lead the discussion toward the idea of encouraging their friends to eat better, to exercise, to choose to not use drugs, alcohol or tobacco.]* Today, we want to encourage someone you have noticed making wise choices in taking care of their bodies. We are going to give someone a “hug” card. Trace your hands on a piece of paper. You should be able to get both hands on one sheet. You will need to help each other. Cut them out and then tape them to the outer edges of another paper – one on each side – so when you look at the card, the hands are coming together in the front of the card like a hug. Write on or under the hands and tell someone you are proud of them because you have seen them making good healthy choices.

For Older Elementary Students

Activity 1: *[Divide your students into two groups. Give them 10 slips of paper and tell them it represents a certain amount of money. Everyone gets the same amount of money.]*

[Say to the students:] **Group 1 is addicted to drugs. Group 2 is not. I want each of you to give me four of your money slips to pay for the cost of living in your house/apartment this month. [Collect the money.] Now, I want each of you to give me two slips of money for food. [Collect the money.] Now, give me one of your money slips for clothes. [Collect the money.] You should each have three pieces of money left. Now, Group 1 has to give me the rest of your money slips because you spent it all on drugs. Group 2 can “go buy” something special.**

What does this lesson teach us? *[This should reinforce the realization that spending money on drugs would also affect them financially.]*

Activity 2: *[Divide your class into two groups. You can either have each person participate in this race or have each group choose one person to represent them. Put pieces of chewy, wrapped candy near a chair for each group at one end of the classroom.]*

[Say to the students:] **When I say ‘go,’ you are to hurry toward the chair, sit down, unwrap one piece of candy, put it in your mouth, chew it completely, then hurry back and tag the next person in line. The person you tag will go and do the same thing. Keep racing until the last person in line has taken his/her turn. “Go!”** *[If you choose to have one person represent each group, modify the directions.]*

[After the race is finished, put more of the same candy near the chairs at the end of the classroom. This time give the students at the front of each line a pair of large, bulky gloves to put on or a towel to hold. Tell them they have to complete the same task of going to sit down in the chair, unwrapping the piece of candy wearing the gloves (or using the towel), chewing it and coming back to tag the next person in line. Each person has to put on the gloves before they are allowed to hurry toward the candy. It is definitely more difficult with gloves (or a towel). If you choose to have one person

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*represent each group, modify the directions. Say to your students:] **What did you learn from this race?** [You should hear the gloves made it much more difficult to complete the task.]*

[Say to your students:] This is exactly what happens when you have drugs in your body. Everything you do will be more difficult because you have lost your ability to think reasonably and perform even simple tasks well.

APPLY (20 minutes)

[Say to the students:] Do you remember three days ago, I put an egg in this glass and covered it with vinegar? Today, we are going to take the egg out and see what has happened to it. [Have the students observe as you gently remove the egg. The outer shell should be almost gone. Wipe the residue off with your fingers.]

[Say to the students:] The egg represents your body. When you immerse yourself in drugs (the vinegar), it will change your body. Look at this egg. The vinegar (drugs) has completely affected the egg (your body). It ruined the shell and now the inside of the egg is like rubber. (It will actually bounce from a short distance.) You cannot eat it anymore. It will not function like an egg. You cannot use it to cook anymore. How is this an example of what happens to our bodies if we use drugs? [Leave time for discussion.]

If you change your body’s abilities by using drugs, you will have a more difficult time playing sports, learning new skills, playing with your friends and finishing puzzles or reading books. Drugs damage your brain, your heart, your lungs and affect your abilities to enjoy life.

Choose to be a “good egg” and not allow something like vinegar (drugs) to affect you!

SHARE (10 minutes)

[There are several slogans you can teach your students to use as they learn more about living drug free. Choose from this list or come up with some of your own. Teaching them slogans helps students have a response when they

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are faced with temptation. Let your students practice saying some of them to each other. They could make posters using their favorite slogan.]

I love me! I am drug free!

Make a difference – live drug free!

Be a drug-free superhero!

Give hugs, not drugs!

I've got too much swag ... using drugs is a drag!

Be a chooser, not a loser! Choose to be drug free!

Just say no to drugs! *[No matter where you live in this wonderful world, we all need to learn to just say “no” to drugs! You could teach your students to say “no” in different languages.]*

[To extend this activity, you could write these words on the board and invite them to copy them on a piece of paper: “Say no to drugs, say yes to _____! I pledge to celebrate my greatness and stay drug free!” They choose the word to fill in the blank.]

ENDING THE LESSON

[Remind your students they have learned about the importance of making wise decisions about anything they put into their bodies. Reinforce the concept drugs WILL negatively affect their bodies and cause them to make poor decisions.]

GOING DEEPER (optional)

[Say to the students:] **We are going to explore how things we cannot see can influence us.**

[You can have this discussion without the use of a compass by having your students recall which direction is north. Show a picture of a compass and

discuss how a compass works. If you have access to a compass, have your students gather around a table and place a compass in the middle of the table. Act surprised it actually works, and say:] **Wow! I see north hasn't moved. It is still in the same place!** *[Then ask the students:]* **What makes it point north? Why does the compass work? It looks like magic!** *[Let one or more students answer. Hopefully, the class will mention there is a magnetic pull from the North Pole causing it to work.]* **There is something invisible at work like the things influencing our three friends in the story. Can you think of other invisible things that might influence us?** *[Possible answers: gravity, a cold virus in the air, waking up with a bad attitude, feeling safe around our families (or not).]* **There are many things we cannot see that can influence us.**

[Say to the students:] **Now, let's look at another kind of invisible force or influence. Show the students the seeds, grains of gravel and the live plant. We all know, if we plant these seeds, water them and give them light, they will grow into plants. But what about these little pieces of rock? Can we plant those and expect them to grow into big rocks? Why not? Why will the seeds grow, but the rocks will not? The seeds have living material in them and the rocks do not. But what is the difference? What makes some things alive and other things non-living? Scientists know a good deal about how living things reproduce (RNA, DNA, etc.). However, what exactly life *is* continues to be a mystery.**

Let's see if the book of Genesis in the Bible gives us any clues to the answer of what makes something alive and able to grow:

"Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground — trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit" (Genesis 2:8-9a, New Living Translation).

What does this verse say about how plants are able to be alive and grow? *[Let one or more students answer. If they have difficulty answering, you could ask:]* **What does it mean when it says "God made all sorts of trees grow up?"**

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The Bible explains the mystery of living things: plants, animals and people. The Bible says God made them alive and makes them grow.

Today, we've talked about things we can't see that still can have a big influence in our world (such as the pull on a compass and God causing plants to live and grow). Those are good and useful things. But we know some things have a bad effect on us (like drugs), even if we can't see their influence in advance. In future lessons, we'll look at more *DreamBreakers* that may not look bad to us at first, but can certainly hurt us.

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

Our topic this week was about the importance of making wise choices about the use of drugs.

Questions you might ask your child:

1. Can you tell me the story your teacher read? Do you remember what was written on Dugan's paper he found in his lunch sack? (Not everything you hear is right. Not everything you think is true. Not everything you feel is real.)
2. What do you think that message was telling the three friends? (It was a message about drugs some of the older boys at school had been trying to get them to try.)
3. What did you learn from the candy race? (The gloves made it much harder to complete the task. This is exactly what happens when someone has drugs in their body. At first, they are affected only until the drug is eliminated. But soon, everything they do will be more difficult because they have lost the ability to think reasonably and perform even simple tasks well.)
4. What have you learned about how drugs can affect your body? (Depending on your child's age, you may hear: Younger children — I can make wise choices and receive hugs, not drugs; Older children — Drugs are bad for me physically, emotionally and financially.)
5. What did the egg experiment teach you? (If I change my body's abilities by using drugs, I will have a harder time playing sports, learning new skills, playing with my friends, finishing puzzles or reading books. Drugs will damage my brain, my heart, my lungs and affect my ability to enjoy life.)

Parents, if you know of someone who has struggled with illicit drugs, share the consequences of what you have noticed.

