



Mighty Media

GOALS

Youth will learn critical thinking skills and determine whether media images conflict with their values and religious teachings about drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

FOCUS

What are your favorites?

- ✓ Go around the room and ask each student to name his or her favorite television show(s) and movie(s).

A more active method of getting the same information is to ask the youth to act out or play charades so that the rest of the group has to guess their favorite show or film.

- ✓ Make a list on a flip chart or chalkboard.

CONNECT TO THE CONTENT

Pop culture review and critique

- A. You can either play preselected TV shows, commercials or movie segments to the class or ask youth to (prior to the session) watch a favorite TV show, video or movie at home.

While watching, they should note every reference to drug, alcohol or tobacco use and what's going on in conjunction with the use of the substance.

(Examples: Smoking because the person is stressed out, having a beer after coming home from work, attending a party where socializing means drinking and/or drugs.)

If watching television, ask students to also make note of the ads—what is being sold and how? Also, make note of how persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are depicted, how males and females are portrayed, how sexuality issues are presented and whether all ages are represented.

Option: Make copies of the questions you are going to discuss and hand them out to the youth to review as they watch the show or movie.

Let's talk about it

- B. Discuss what you have watched using the “Critical Thinking Questions” handout to guide the discussion.

MATERIALS

- ▶ Flip chart or chalkboard
- ▶ Paper and pencils
- ▶ For CONNECT TO THE CONTENT: Tape a TV show, commercials and/or segments of movies that illustrate the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Arrange to have a TV and a VCR in the room when you do this activity.

PREPARATION

- ▶ Contact peer leaders before you plan to have this session. Review the content, explaining that you would like them to lead it. Decide who will help with which parts of the session. Ask them to help contact youth or choose the TV shows, commercials or movie segments. (See CONNECT TO THE CONTENT.)
- ▶ Learn about media literacy online at www.medialit.org.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

Fun Ice-breakers for Youth Ages 14 to 18

Pity me

Youth should be seated in a circle. Give each participant five tokens such as marbles or pennies. The point of the game is to collect tokens from others by telling everyone something that they've never done, but that others in the group may have experienced, such as riding in a roller coaster, flying, etc. The group members who have done that must give a token to the one who hasn't. Begin with one person and go around the circle. Rules to mention are that they must tell the truth and that what they relate should be in "good taste." The person who has "missed the most" in life will gather the most tokens.

TAKE-AWAY

Compare and contrast

- A.** Distribute paper and pencils and ask students to draw a line down the center of a page.
- B.** On the left side, have them summarize the media discussion from CONNECT TO THE CONTENT.
What do they remember? What did they learn?
- C.** On the right side, they should write what they believe their faith or religious tradition teaches about the use of substances, male and female roles, sexuality, violence and how to relate to persons of different cultures and racial backgrounds.
- D.** Discuss each list and have youth share what they've noted on their lists.
Are there any aspects that fall into both categories? Does their faith or religious tradition ever overlap with what the media portray?

- E.** Comment on anything you feel is missing, especially in the religious area.

Ranking

- F.** Look at the lists made in the FOCUS section of favorite shows and movies.
- G.** Ask the youth to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least realistic and 5 being the most realistic) in terms of the show's realistic portrayal of the following:
 - Illicit drug use
 - Alcohol use
 - Tobacco use
 - Sex
 - Violence
 - The roles of men and women
 - What makes us truly happy

WRAP UP

Ask each student to make one statement about what they learned and to complete their statement with the words: "And that's the truth."



Critical Thinking Questions

1. What **choices** were the people making about the use of substances? About their sexual activity? About their relationships? About engaging in violent behavior?
2. Did the characters **talk** about their choices? If so, what did they say? If not, why not?
3. Were there **good or bad consequences** to their choices? What were they?
4. Was there a **difference** in how **males and females** were portrayed? How about persons of different **ethnic and racial groups**? What about people of different ages? Give examples.
5. How did the show, ad or movie relate to **your values**?
6. Did **male and female** characters make different choices as far as their **use of substances** or their **sexual activity**? How about **adults versus teens**?
7. What was the role of **violence** in the show or movie?
8. In what ways did the show, ad or movie portray the **risks of using substances** or engaging in violent behavior?
9. **Who was the intended audience** for this show, ad or movie? **How did it "hook"** (get the interest of) the audience?
10. In what ways did the show, ad or movie present a **realistic picture** of life? In what ways was it **unrealistic**? Is it OK to be unreal? Why or why not?
11. Why did you **like** or dislike this show or movie?
12. What did this show or movie say about the things in life that make us **happy, joyful and satisfied**?
13. How did this show, ad or movie compare with **what you learn in your congregation about life**? Similar? Compatible? Very different? How do **you feel** about that?

