

# IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE-SUBSTANCE ABUSE!

## TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

(Please copy and give to teachers before assembly)

DEATHS IN THE UNITED STATES EACH YEAR CAUSED BY:

### ANIMALS

BATS..... LESS THAN ONE  
SHARKS.....2  
SNAKES.....10  
WASPS & BEES.....40

### PLANTS

ASPIRIN.....250  
ILLEGAL DRUGS..... 10,000  
ALCOHOL..... 125,000  
TOBACCO..... 400,000

1. What do you think is more dangerous ... plants or animals? Why?
2. What happens to the spider's web if it is given different drugs to eat?  
[THE SPIDER CHANGES THE WAY IT MAKES THE WEB]
3. What happens to people if they use drugs?  
[IT CHANGES THE WAY PEOPLE ACT, FEEL AND THINK]
4. What are some good drugs people use? Why?
5. What are some bad drugs people use? Why?
6. What are the three choices when it comes to people using alcohol in their lives?  
[NO USE, PROPER USE, MISUSE] Discuss those choices.  
How could alcohol hurt you and your family?
7. Each day in the United States more than 1,000 people die from using the plant tobacco. How do people use it?  
[SMOKE IT AS CIGARETTES OR CIGARS, IN PIPES ... OR CHEW IT]  
Why do people use tobacco? How do people get started using it?  
What would you do if a friend offered you a cigarette?  
Is it easy to say "no" to your friends? [ROLEPLAY SITUATIONS]
8. Think of the story with the poison snake and the boy ...what did the snake mean when it said "*You knew what I was when you picked me up!*"  
What would you have done differently than the boy?  
Who is the snake when it comes to drugs?  
How does this story help us learn about the dangers of drugs?

### CHICAGO REGION INTERPRETERS

Assembly programs featuring live animals, storytelling, and audience participation.  
Teach the Mind, Touch the Heart, It's a Jungle Out There-Animals Only,  
Earth Day Every Day, Earthkeepers-Native American Legends,  
Animal Inventors, It's Going to Sting Me, Down on the Farm, Dinosaur Discoveries,  
Christine Buik (630) 968-3209 Jim Walser

## IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE - SUBSTANCE ABUSE!

### SYNOPSIS

This unique presentation thoughtfully combines issues of health and nature with an entertaining and meaningful message. Animals (including some alive) are used to compare the dangers around us.

Dressed in safari gear, the speaker is introduced to the group holding an iguana lizard. The speaker asks the group what would be more deadly and dangerous to people on a safari hunt... the animals or the plants?

Using a participatory method for younger students (usually through grade 5) the speaker takes the group on an imaginary safari hunt. Clapping hands and repeating phrases after the speaker (let's go... let's go, down the trail... down the trail, up the trail... up the trail, up and down... up and down, all around.. all around, what's that?... what's that?, etc.) the first stop is to Central America and spiders.

A tarantula is brought out to the group and they learn about tarantulas and about spiders in general, finding out that spiders are important to have around (mostly eating up insects)... let them live to do their job. But, spiders have also been in research experiments and have been made to eat other things...  
**DRUGS.**

The drug portion of the program involves good drugs (ie. medicines), drugs found in foods and drinks (ie. caffeine found in chocolate, cola, coffee, tea), prescription drugs and illegal drugs. Using chocolate and cola, participants learn that drugs come mostly from plants. Terms such as caffeine dependency, drug dependency, withdrawal symptoms, pep drugs, downers and depressants, and the "candy man" are used. Drugs can change the way the spider acts in making its web... drugs can change the way people feel, act, or think!

Continuing on their journey, the group uses participation to move along the trail back to Illinois where wasps are introduced using a hornet's nest. Students learn that baby wasps are important to have around, eating billions and trillions of insects... let them live to do their job. Students laugh when the presenter describes how sometimes wasps can get "drunk" in an apple orchard after drinking the juice of a fermented apple! Children are amazed to learn that sometimes apples, after falling off the trees can have their juice actually change into alcohol.

Plants make alcohol. Alcohol has a drug in it that slows our systems down... it changes the way we feel and can change the way we think. Alcohol, esp. beer, wine and wine coolers, and choices concerning the use of alcohol are presented. Students learn that the poisonous sting of bees and wasps (killing about 40 people each year) is not nearly as deadly as the sting of alcohol (killing almost 400 people each day)!

Continuing on their journey, the group again uses participation to head to the oceans around the world where sharks can be found. Participants volunteer to hold up a 20 foot black plastic great white shark. After learning a few facts about sharks, the presenter holds up a foot long plant leaf to the group and asks, "Which is more deadly and dangerous to people... this leaf or real sharks in the oceans today?"

The plant leaf, of course! But, what is it?? Some children guess marijuana, coca, or even poison ivy! Tobacco is the correct answer. And, tobacco can kill... over 1,000 people every day just in the U.S. Sharks kill 2 people every year in the U.S. This segment touches upon cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, nicotine, tar, Joe Camel, the Marlboro Man, and the Virginia Slims chicks. Not only puffing, but also huffing on chemical sprays is discussed.

The end of our journey takes us to the magical, mysterious country of India... land of snake charmers and poison cobra snakes. A small basket is brought out to the group and a volunteer teacher comes up to hold the basket as a snake charming routine is performed. A snake does appear from the basket, but not a poison snake. Students learn about the corn snake... a non-poisonous snake that roams the corn fields of Illinois. The corn snake and all snakes help us out by eating mice and other small animals.

The journey concludes with a story about a boy and a rattlesnake. The snake asks for the boy's help... but, the boy knowing that the snake has a poison bite refuses to help the snake. The snake asks the boy again for his help and promises the boy that he will not bite with his poison bite. So the boy, convinced by the snake's promise, picks up the snake and takes him down the mountain. Nothing happens to the boy. He puts the snake down where it can live and thrive, is ready to return to his village when the snake bites the boy in the leg... the boy falls back in pain, knowing he will never return to his village. "Why did you do that to me?", said the boy, "you promised you wouldn't bite me with your deadly bite! Why, why did you do that to me?" The snake just slithered away, saying, "You knew what I was when you picked me up! You knew what I was when you picked me up!"

The presenter, while still holding the corn snake, continues the story by saying, "Boys and girls, you know there are dangers in the world that you shouldn't pick up... don't pick up cigarettes and tobacco, don't pick up alcohol, don't pick up illegal drugs... and, don't believe in false promises people may tell you about these things...they can only hurt you or even kill ."

The end of the journey comes to the question that the participants first started with, "What is more deadly and dangerous to people... animals or plants?" Two "death" signs are presented. One shows deaths from animals, the other deaths from plants. The numbers are staggering and gasps sometimes are heard from the participants when the plant sign is revealed.

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