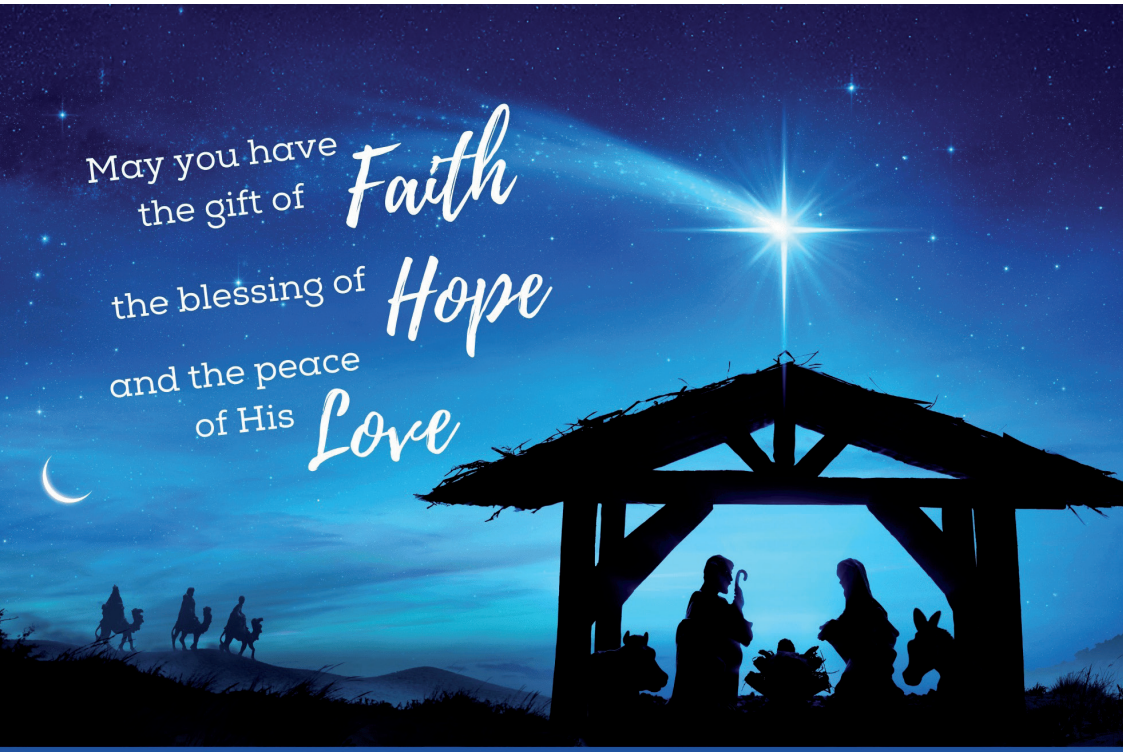
White Ribbon Bulletin

World Woman's Christian Temperance Union

Volume 121 • Number 4 October - November - December – 2026

We Care





Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a bright and happy New Year.

Editor's greeting!



Margaret Østenstad

Dear all ❤️🎄
The Advent/Christmas digital edition of the White Ribbon Bulletin has come to you. I hope you share it with your friends and contacts. 🔔💝

It is easy to let the rushing, shopping, and noise of the holiday season drown out the quiet wonder of Christmas. Bright lights and endless to-do lists can distract us from the miraculous gift in the manger.

More than two thousand years ago, God stepped into our darkness. He did not send a temporary earthly ruler, but Immanuel—God with us. Jesus came as a humble baby in a stable to bring peace that surpasses understanding, forgiveness for our sins, and the promise of eternal life. When we pause to remember His sacrifice and presence, our celebrations are filled with true joy.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus. Help us to look past the stress and distractions of this world and fix our hearts on the real miracle of Bethlehem. Fill our homes with Your peace and your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Blessings, love and prayers,
Margaret





"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

WWCTU President's Christmas Greetings 2026



President
Dr. Sheela Lall

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world tocondemn the World, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

We are approaching the festive season of thanksgiving and Christmas. Our hearts are filled with gratitude and praise! Numerous times during this season we have heard Sermons based on John 3:16 but the following verse 17 is also equally important and very powerful illustration of God's bigger picture to save and transform the world. One thing is clear for sure He loves the "World" in older WCTU terms "Every land" wecan very well say the whole Human race." Second assurance from this beautiful passage is that He doesn't condemn anyone and doesn't want them to perish such extreme love that God allowed his own one and only Son to live a poorest man's life in this world and sacrificed himself on the cross just because He wanted to pave a way for our eternal life in heaven.

This is the greatest example and drawing force for all Christian work in the world! We as WCTU workers are no exception. We need to remind ourselves that WCTU loves "**everybody**" - we want to save lives from total destruction, eternal death and condemnation. We are diligently, consistently and intentionally trying to make a difference in this world through prayer, education, compassion thus serving – "**God, Home and every land.**"

Winter times and these festive times bring greater challenges for us but do not loose heart because our Lord God is greater than all the problems of this world. He created us in his own image and he has chosen us for His purpose so rejoice because the Bible answers us in Philippians 4:13 through Paul who reminds us – "**I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.**" Yes, you can do it. We can do it. Together with determination we will make the difference.

You have a reason to be happy as you are not listening to the world's calling and paying attention to its allurements. This is a season to celebrate God's love and gracious blessing because you are His channel of blessing for others. Your good deeds show His shikainna (heavenly) glory to this dark world. One person, one home at a time will surely make a difference and give God a reason to rejoice that His one and only Son, Jesus' sacrifice for this world is not in vain. Let's spread true Joy, Peace and Love amongst all in this chaotic and confused world. Make sure this Christmas becomes your greater opportunity to transform the world. Each life is important and each little task is important when done for the Lord.

Have a wonderful Christ-centered Christmas with family and friends and a blessed New Year.



Luke 15:11-32
Rembrandt's final painting is tied to "The Return of the Prodigal Son". It is perhaps also one of his most famous works. The central figures in the painting are the younger brother—who has squandered everything—returning home; his resentful older brother; and the father, who embraces the prodigal son.



Jesus taught the people using parables and examples drawn from their everyday lives. In Jesus's time, it was common practice to divide an inheritance while the father was still alive. Therefore, it is not at all unusual for the younger son in the story to ask for his share of the inheritance. Once he received his share, he could no longer expect a portion of his father's estate; he had to make his way in the world using the inheritance he had been given. However, the son fails in his endeavors; he lives extravagantly and hits rock bottom. It is then that he realizes the desperate situation into which he has plunged himself. He longs for home—to return to his own people. At the same time, he recognizes that he has done wrong and needs forgiveness. He resolves to ask if he might be taken on as a hired hand in his father's household. Yet, he is in for a surprise. To the father, he remains his son, and he is welcomed back with joy.

Through this parable, Jesus demonstrates just how loving God is. God joyfully welcomes all those who were thought to be lost. Through this parable, Jesus teaches us many things. One lesson is that God is the friend of sinners and those who have failed. He lovingly welcomes the repentant and the weak without imposing conditions.

Jesus taught this in many ways, often using parables. He first drew people into fellowship with Him without demands, and once they trusted Him, He taught them and led them to the living waters.



Pastor Irja Eskelinen
Department Director
Christan Outreach.
3. Vice President

Jesus faced criticism for His actions. In Luke's account, the older brother can be seen as representing these critics. Angrily, the older brother asked why no one had ever thrown a party for him. The father then reminded him: "Everything I have is yours." The brother possessed everything available in the father's house. He had served dutifully —doing what was right—yet had failed to appreciate the possibilities around him. Luke does not say whether the older brother joined the celebration of his brother's return. We might reflect on how we ourselves would act in such situation!



Noontide prayer
Around the world, someone is always praying

Jesus's parable also serves as a picture of a family that falls apart but becomes whole again. God's family—all of us together—is quite a motley crew. We can go our own ways, quarrel, and compete for God's approval. Yet God keeps the gate open for those who return. It is a matter of passing through the gate of forgiveness and grace. God rejoices that His kingdom overcomes the resistance of evil with goodness and makes life whole again.

All of God's children who are already in the Father's home are told: "Everything I have is yours." The treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven are at your disposal; they are not depleted by being shared. Invite friends, guests, and the people you meet to join in as well. With God, there is joy there, one finds goodness and wholeness. None of us has the strength to serve without joy, and service performed without joy does not bear abundant fruit. The words of the Bible in the First Book of Samuel remind us: **"Thus far the Lord has helped us"** (1 Samuel 7:12).

Let us pray: My God, when I look at my life, I bow my head, for I often forget to give thanks for the gifts of life and for Your protection. Make me Your grateful child, for whom the gifts of life are truly Your great gift. Increase my faith and tend to my life, that I may grow in faith in my Savior. Amen.

Christmas Greeting for the World WRB



Merry Lee Powell
1. Vice President

As we enter this blessed Christmas season, our hearts turn once again to the Child in the manger—the One who brings hope to weary nations, peace to troubled homes, and light to every corner of the world. For the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Christmas is more than a celebration; it is a reminder of the steadfast love and moral courage that Christ inspires in all who follow Him. His life calls us to compassion, purity, and service, and His example strengthens our resolve to uplift families and communities through temperance and Christ centered living.

This year, we rejoice in the global sisterhood that binds our Union together. From small rural chapters to bustling city unions, from long established branches to newly planted ones, we celebrate each member who carries the banner of "For God and Home and Every Land." Your dedication—whether through education, advocacy, prayer, or quiet acts of kindness—reflects the heart of Christmas: giving of oneself so that others may flourish.

As we gather with loved ones, share meals, exchange gifts, and sing familiar carols, may we also pause to remember those who face hardship, loneliness, or loss. Let us be bearers of Christ's comfort, extending His peace to all we meet. And as the new year approaches, may the light of Bethlehem guide our steps, renew our purpose, and strengthen our commitment to building a healthier, safer, and more hopeful world.

Merry Lee Powell
1st Vice President



Report from Philippines WCTU inc.

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Grace, peace, and joyful greetings from the Philippine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Inc. (PWCTUI)!

With hearts filled with thanksgiving and joy, we are delighted to share with you the successful celebration of the 97th Anniversary of the Philippine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Inc., held on September 19, 2026, at the Heritage Hotel, Manila, Philippines.

This milestone was a beautiful celebration of God's faithfulness, our rich heritage, and the continuing commitment of Christian women to serve God and humanity. As we gathered in fellowship, worship, thanksgiving, and renewed commitment, we were deeply reminded that the work begun generations ago continues to bear fruit through the faithful service of women today.

Our celebration carried the theme:

"Women of Faith: Chosen to Serve for Such a Time as This" — Esther 4:14

The words of Esther 4:14 spoke powerfully to us. They reminded us that God places His people in particular places and seasons for a divine purpose. As PWCTUI enters another year of ministry, we prayerfully embrace our calling to stand for Christian values, strengthen families, serve communities, and advocate for lives transformed by faith and temperance.

We give thanks to God for the women who have gone before us and faithfully carried the banner of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in the Philippines. Ninety-seven years is not simply a measure of time—it is a testimony of perseverance, sacrifice, prayer, service, and God's sustaining grace.

We are equally grateful for the continuing bond of sisterhood that connects PWCTUI with the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Though separated by geography and diverse in our cultures and circumstances, we remain united by one Lord, one faith, and one calling to advance His work.

We rejoice in what God has accomplished among us, and we look forward with hope to what He will yet accomplish through us. May our partnership with the WWCTU continue to grow stronger as together we encourage women, strengthen families, uplift communities, and proclaim the transforming power of Christ.

As Psalm 133:1 reminds us:

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”

On behalf of the officers and members of PWCTUI, I extend our heartfelt gratitude and joyful greetings to our sisters around the world. You were part of our celebration in spirit, prayer, and sisterhood.

May the Lord continue to bless the WWCTU and all its members and ministries. May He give us courage for the work before us, wisdom for the decisions we make, compassion for those we serve, and unwavering faith to remain faithful to our calling.

As we celebrate 97 years, may we continue to say with confidence:

The work continues. The calling remains. The mission goes forward. And God is faithful.

With Christian love, gratitude, and joyful sisterhood,



Dr. Florita V. Miranda

President

Philippine Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Inc. (PWCTUI)

“For such a time as this.” — Esther 4:14
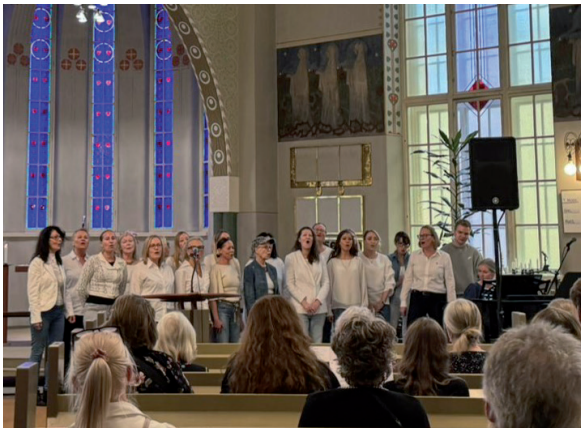


News from around the World



Joy Marie Butler,
World Organization Secretary
pres.wctuaustralia@gmail.com

The year has gone very fast but we can praise God for His mercies and His guidance in our lives and in the life of the World WCTU. We have welcomed new members and supporters in many parts of the world and that is very encouraging. WCTU has existed for nearly 150 years and of that we can be very proud. Let's keep that going and continue to uplift the name of Jesus through all our activities and promotions. Let's keep the temperance movement alive and let's speak up for truth about the SAD (smoking, alcohol, drugs) poisons and show our children and youth that life is better when we live in purity and peace. Christmas is a wonderful opportune time to do this.



News from Finland

During September Irja Eskelinen had the privilege of joining fellow White Ribbon sisters to celebrate the 120th Anniversary of the Kuopio White Ribbon Association in Finland. Irja writes about this "This association is one of the local branches of the Finnish White Ribbon Union with 50 members. Geographically, the association is based near my childhood home, about a five-hour train ride north of Helsinki. Over the summer, I wrote a history of the association's activities. While doing so, I could only marvel at how much we owe to past generations. "On Sunday, September 6, the celebrants gathered at the nearby Alava Church for a service. The theme of the service was Gratitude, and the Gospel reading was taken from the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 1–15. White Ribbon sisters served as scripture readers, and the Finnish White Ribbon Union's General Secretary, Taru Koivisto, played Ave Maria on the flute and provided musical accompaniment for the hymns. We were able to step forward into the new decade and the demands of our daily lives, sustained by God's blessing."



News from Korea

Dr. Jung Joo Kim shares wonderful news from Korea. "On Jeju Island, Pastor Eun Sik Sohn and his wife Minsun Lee started a new KWCTU chapter in May, 2026. They have been well acquainted with the temperance work for the last ten years during their ministry for the homeless in Seoul, Korea, and also in Thailand. They planted a new church in Jeju, naming the church, "Where Are You?" to serve the homeless there. Many church youth groups, who have helped the homeless ministry in Seoul, started to visit their church to help and to learn more of the Biblical understanding of the service for the homeless. On this beautiful island, for the summer retreat,

they received 5 groups from various churches on the mainland in Korea and they included the temperance education as part of the training program. It has been so exciting to hear of the great work happening in this newest chapter of KWCTU which is reaching many young people with the temperance education, sowing seeds and upholding the Biblical standard on how to live free from addiction. The world offers so much addictions, whether it is alcohol, nicotine, drugs, internet games and gambling and often through the internet which is pervasive."

News from Guatemala

Dr. Dora Coloma de Barrientos writes to us from Guatemala "I have been reminded what Christian service is truly about: not only giving advice, but walking alongside people, taking their hand, and helping them find hope. "WCTU does this so well and in the work we do through Fundación Débora in Guatemala. For many years, we have had the privilege of serving women, children, and young people who face difficult circumstances, offering education, practical skills, emotional and spiritual support, health services, and above all, hope and the love of Christ.



Dr. Dora with the children in Fundación Débora in 2015.

"Fundación Débora has recently become part of the National Coordination for the Immediate Search for Missing Women in Guatemala. We see this new opportunity as another way of serving women and families, working together with others to bring hope, support, and protection to those who are going through very difficult circumstances. We pray that God will guide us and give us wisdom as we take on this new responsibility."

News from Australia

Dawn Ginn is a lady on a mission at a Nursing Home for the Elderly at the small town of Cooranbong, Australia. Dawn is an elderly lady well into her 90s but she is enthusiastic about sharing her faith and the literature from Australia WCTU. Every week a nurse takes her to the local shopping centre where she hands out the White Ribbon Signal and Drug Free Kids newsletters. She says they are just so popular and people ask for more. She says the nurses beg for more papers for themselves and their children. Joy Butler keeps her supplied with the papers. Praise God for her commitment and witness.





Young people are particularly vulnerable to harm from alcohol because their brains and bodies are still developing. The brain goes through important changes during puberty, and continues to develop until around age 25, making it more sensitive to damage from alcohol.

Alcohol can harm the developing brain



Alcohol affects a young person's brain differently to the adult brain. Exposure to alcohol while the brain is still developing can lead to long-term emotional problems and difficulty with learning, planning and memory.

This can ultimately limit a young person's ability to reach their full potential, including at school, study, or work. Some areas are particularly sensitive to the effects of alcohol.

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines recommend that children and people under 18 should not drink alcohol to reduce the risk of injury and other harms to health.

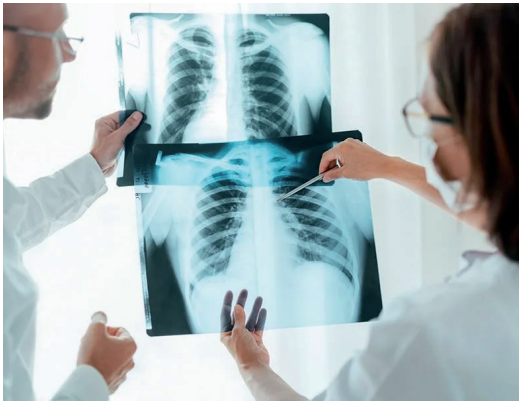
How does alcohol affect the developing brain?

- Decision making, impulse control and personality.
- Alcohol slows down the brain and makes it harder to make good decisions, concentrate, and control impulses.
- Memory, learning, emotional regulation
- Young people are more likely to have memory blackouts, where they can't remember what happened while they were drinking.
- Movement, balance, coordination
- This is why accidents and injury are common when young people drink alcohol.

Mental health harm

Alcohol use, especially at a young age, increases the risk of experiencing mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. For people who experience mental health issues, drinking alcohol can make symptoms worse. Alcohol can also interact with over the counter and prescription medication, including anti-depressants.

Risky drinking and harm in adulthood



Young people who start drinking alcohol at an early age are more likely to have problems with alcohol later in life, such as binge drinking and becoming dependent on alcohol.

The later teens delay their first alcoholic drink, the less likely they will drink alcohol regularly and the less likely they will experience issues with alcohol as an adult. Even in adulthood, regularly drinking alcohol (even at low levels) causes damage to the body and can lead to serious diseases, including cancer and stroke.

Risk of illness, accident and injury

Young people are still developing skills to make good decisions and their brains do not assess risks in the same way that adult brains do.

Adding alcohol to the mix can further increase behaviours that can end in harm like:

- Vomiting, alcohol poisoning and blackouts.
- Injury, including assaults, falls and road traffic crashes.
- Unwanted or unsafe sex.
- Treating others in a way they normally wouldn't, like arguing or having a fight, and harming important relationships.
- Behaving in a way they otherwise wouldn't, potentially damaging their reputation.

Source: alcoholthinkagain.com.au





Dr. Sarah Soyeon Oh, World Education Officer,



Reclaiming the Joy of Christmas

"Be not drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18)

Christmas joy, handed to a glass

Christmas is the feast of the Incarnation: God came to us as a child, and the angels sang of glory to God and peace on earth (Luke 2:14). Yet in many homes that joy has quietly been handed over to alcohol. The office party, the toast at the family table: each tells our children that celebration and drinking are the same thing. In many countries December is the heaviest-drinking month of the year, and it brings the familiar costs: road deaths, family conflict, relapse for those in recovery, and grief in the homes that should be warmest.

The question for temperance educators is therefore not how to take something away. Last year's World Education Report, *Warning as Love*, argued that warning of alcohol's harms is an act of love. This year I want to add the other half of that love: offering something better. That means returning the joy of Christmas to its true source, Jesus Christ, and to the gifts that surround him: love, light, giving, and one another.

A new turning: the alcohol-free cocktail

Something is changing in the culture of drinking, and our movement should take notice. A senior member of our Korean union returned this month from two weeks in Switzerland and Germany with a striking report: alcohol-free cocktails were being served as a matter of course, from the airline cabin to ordinary neighbourhood restaurants.



The figures confirm what she saw. **According to IWSR, global alcohol volumes fell for a third consecutive year in 2025 (down 2%), while alcohol-free beer and spirit industries grew by 8% and alcohol-free wines by 13%**. At the same time, the World Health Organization has stated plainly that **no level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health.**

A strategy for this Christmas: the four Rs

I propose that every union, national and local, adopt four steps this season. Together they move alcohol from the centre of the celebration to its margins, and put Jesus, and the joy He brings, back in the middle.





Four steps move alcohol to the margins and Christ's joy to the centre



1. **Reframe.** Teach that the joy of Christmas was never in the glass; it is in Jesus. Our message centers around the fact that "the real joy" begins with celebrating Jesus's birth, (Isaiah 9:6) i.e. the light that shines in the darkness (John 1:5) and gives us eternal happiness and love.
2. **Replace.** Put a beautiful alcohol-free drink at the centre of the table, served with the same garnish as any cocktail. Paul reminds us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Every union could choose a signature "alcohol-free" Christmas drink for 2026 and teach members to make it.
3. **Ritualize.** Build new traditions that families and churches repeat each year: a family Christmas worship session, a candlelit bible reading session with the children…A habit repeated at Christmas becomes a custom, and a custom becomes a culture.
4. **Reach.** Carry the message beyond just your family and church community. Norms change when the environment changes, as indoor smoking bans showed, so ask our churches first, and then local restaurants and hotels, to put alcohol-free cocktails on their Christmas menus. Share recipes and photographs through social media! For "*Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*" (Matthew 5:15).



An invitation to every union

Christmas is the season when our homes are most fully on display. I invite every union to send me their signature alcohol-free Christmas drink, with a photograph and a few lines on how it was created/received, so that we can share them across our world family on our new WWCTU

Celebrating the Gift of Love



Vandna Charan

Be the Best Gift for Jesus this Christmas
As we remember the true spirit of Christmas, may the message of love, compassion, and kindness guide us into the new year.
Celebrating the gift of love means becoming the gift itself. This Christmas, the best gift we can offer to Jesus is a life lived with honesty, safety, and emotional connection.

How can we make this possible?

Focus on honesty, safety, and emotional connection rather than lecturing during the holidays. Keep conversations age-appropriate

and centered on making healthy choices so everyone can enjoy a safe, happy celebration.

To help children understand a drug-free life, don't scare them — empower them. Children listen when we make it simple, practical, and positive.
Here are the best ways that work for schools and parents in India:

1. Talk by Age, Not by Fear
For younger children, don't talk about drugs directly. Talk about "good things for the body vs. bad things for the body." For example, good food, exercise, and sleep give us superpowers. Cigarettes, gutka, alcohol, and unknown pills are poisons that steal those superpowers.
For older children, talk about peer pressure, curiosity, and stress. Use real examples: "If someone says, 'try once, nothing will happen,'
what will you reply?"



2. Teach Them to Say NO
Say NO firmly: "No, I don't want to."
Give a reason and leave: "I have to go for my practice."
Tell a trusted adult.
Practise this as role-play in class. It works.

3. Replace, Don't Just Reject
Children often turn towards harmful habits out of boredom or stress. Give them a better high: High on Sports, High on Music, High on Dance, High on Art. Start a "Drug-Free Club" with weekly 30-minute activities like yoga, painting, gardening, or coding.

4. Use Stories, Not Lectures
Show a 2-minute video of a sportsperson or influencer who chose a healthy life. Ask students to write one line: "My Dream Needs Me Drug-Free Because..." and display it on the board. Invite a doctor or police officer for a 15-minute Q&A, not a long speech.

5. Teach Media Literacy
Explain that movies and reels show smoking and drinking as cool, but they never show the

hospital bills, loss of money, and family pain that follow. Ask them, ”What is hidden?”

6. What Parents Can Do at Home

Be a safe person. If children are punished for asking questions, they will stop asking. Notice early signs: sudden secrecy, a drop in marks, a change in friend circle, or loss of interest. Keep medicines, alcohol, and tobacco out of easy reach.

Tie safety and fun together. Frame the

discussion around keeping everyone safe, happy, and able to enjoy holiday traditions together.

For younger children, keep it simple — explain that alcohol is a grown-up drink that can make people’s bodies and brains work differently, making it harder to stay safe.
Our body is like a super-bike. What makes it fast and what makes its engine dirty? Let’s choose to stay safe, healthy, and joyful this Christmas.

Marry Christmas and happy and healthy drug free New Year
With prayers and blessings Dr Vandna Charan
Director of Children Department WWCTU



«Every child is Precious!» says Emy de Barrientos holding Tammy.

Congratulations!

The Legend of the Four Advent Candles

Four candles burned on the Advent wreath. It was completely quiet—so quiet that one could hear the candles speaking to one another.

The first candle sighed and said, **"My name is Peace. I shine so brightly, but people do not want peace; they do not want me."** The candle grew smaller and smaller... until, finally, it went out completely.

The second candle said, **"My name is Faith. But I have become superfluous. People no longer wish to acknowledge God. There is no point in me burning."** And so, the second candle went out.

Saddened, and in a low voice, the third candle said, **"My name is Love. I no longer possess the strength to burn. People overlook me. They see only themselves, and not those around them—those whom they ought to love."** And so, the third candle also went out.

A child entered the room, looked at the candles, and said, with eyes full of tears, "But you are meant to shine, not to go out!"

Then, suddenly, the voice of the fourth candle was heard: **"Do not be afraid! My name is Hope, and as long as I am burning, we can relight the other candles."**
The child took a match and, drawing light from the flame of Hope, relit all the other candles.

