

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
**From YouthWorker Journal and YouthWorker.com**

**Sleep and School**

Are you staying up too late studying?

By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

With summer almost gone, most youth are back in school by now. However, when classes start ramping up and homework starts piling on, many teens feel forced to study late into the night, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning.

Lots of teens say they have to stay up late to study; their busy schedules don't allow for an alternative. Parents, teachers, guidance counselors and their own desire to do well in school compels many to work long and hard on their studying and homework. Research suggests that punting sleep in favor of study can backfire.

According to a new study in *Child Development*, teens who stay up late studying often get worse grades than those who sleep well. Cramming for a test the next day is counterproductive if you're groggy or falling asleep during that test.

"Lots of things happen during sleep," Helene Emsellem, director for The Center for Sleep and Wake Disorders, told National Public Radio. "We don't just physically restore ourselves... We take information and organize it and make all the connections." In other words, that eight or nine hours of downtime gives the brain a chance to process what it needs to process.

Students who know they need their sleep to perform well use different strategies to fit in their study time. Some schedule schoolwork at regular intervals during the day, pacing themselves so they don't burn out. Others go to sleep at a reasonable hour, but set their alarm a bit earlier and study then.

**Talk About It:**

Have you ever stayed up late to study? Stayed up all night? How were you doing the next morning?

Most students typically would rather go to bed later and wake up later, but schools never have gotten the memo. Are you a morning person? If you could set your own schedule, when would you go to bed? When would you wake up?

Doctors say that most middle and high schoolers need anywhere from eight to 10 hours of sleep. How much sleep do you typically get? Do you think it's enough? How do you act when you're tired? Do you get cranky? Forgetful? What sometimes prevents you

from getting the sleep you need? Do you sometimes worry too much to sleep? Think too much?

It's not just sleep = we often neglect. Lots of us eat more fast food than we should, don't exercise as we want to and sometimes spend too much time in front of the television or computer. If you could, are there things you'd like to change in your daily routine? Would you like to exercise more? Spend less time vegging? What's stopping you?

**What the Bible Says:**

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety” (Ps. 4:8).

“I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side” (Ps. 3:5-6).

“My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight...Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet” (Prov. 3:21, 23-24).