

WEEK 1: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

Leader Guide

Pray to open your group session.

Introduction: What is a Quiet Time?

Before everyone opens their books, here are some questions to begin your discussion:

Questions to discuss...

What is a “Quiet Time”?

What do you call your time with God?

Do you think there is a right/wrong way to have a quiet time with God?

At Beach Retreat it’s called “Silent Sounds,” your friend may call it their “time alone with God,” this booklet calls it a “Quiet Time,” your parents may call it “Devotion Time” – but whatever you call it...it’s a period of time you consistently set aside to be alone with God. It is a time to talk to Him and to listen to Him as you prepare to be used by Him that day.

Question to discuss...

What are some things that you can do in your quiet time?

Read the Bible, pray, meditate on God, sing, dance, listen to worship music, etc.

There are many things to do in your quiet time with God. One of the key elements to time with God is reading the Bible – His love letter to us. The Bible is the standard we are to live our lives by. It is the ultimate way to get to know God – His character, His love, His truth. Below is an outline to help you as you spend time with God.

Get a G.R.I.P.

- **G – GO SOLO** – Get in a place by yourself and away from distractions.
 - Ask your students about their study habits.
 - Do they like to study with a lot going on, or do they do better when they are away from everything.
 - Most will probably agree that they focus better when they are away from distractions.

Have a student read this verse:

Luke 5:16 – “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

Questions to discuss...

What are some other benefits of getting completely alone with God?

(You can pray aloud, show emotion, an intimate setting is created between just you and God, etc.)

Where is a place where you can get alone with God?

How can you help yourself to not get distracted?

- **R – READ** – Read a verse or passage of Scripture.

Have a student read this verse:

2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth.”

- Here are some plans of how to read Scripture: *(discuss)*
 - Pick a book of the Bible. Read a chapter or portion of a chapter daily.
 - Proverbs – It has 31 chapters. Read the chapter that corresponds with the date of the month. *(Proverbs 8 for the 8th day of the month.)*
 - Read the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John). Begin to go through and read a chapter/section each day. This is a good way to learn more about Jesus and His life here on earth.
 - You can find many different reading plans *(to help you read through the entire Bible)* online or often in your own Bible. Check out www.bibleplan.org for different plans on reading through the Bible.

- **I – INVESTIGATE** – What does the writer say, and what does it mean to me?
 - A lot of times in the beginning of the book that you are reading, it will have a **commentary** *(explanation)* of the time it was written, who wrote it, who it was written to, etc. These are all key elements in helping you to really understand what the passage is saying.
 - As you read, **write down a couple key verses** that speak to you.

- **Keep a JOURNAL** – As you write down key verses, write a few sentences to note what these verses are saying to you at that point in your life. This is a really awesome thing to do and to look back on to see what God has done in your life.
 - If there are verses that you aren't sure what they mean, **dig a little deeper**. Read the verses or chapters surrounding it. Go look in a commentary to see what other scholars are saying about these verses. www.crosswalk.com or www.bible.com are great sites that you can look up multiple commentaries to help you better understand Scripture.
- **P – PRAY** – Spend time talking to God and listening for Him to speak to your heart.
 - A relationship with God is not one-sided. A lot of times, we view prayer as us talking to God, telling Him our needs and wants, and praying for Him to do certain things.
 - **REMEMBER: A relationship with God is TWO-SIDED.**
 - Take time to quiet yourself to **listen to God**. You probably won't hear an audible voice of God, but you can hear Him through the Bible, through trusted friends and adults, through the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart, and through circumstances in your life.
 - As you listen to God, remember that nothing He will ever tell you will EVER be contradictory to what Scripture says.
 - During prayer, praise Him for who He is. Thank Him for what He has done and is doing in your life and in the world. Confess your sins. Pray for your needs and for those of others. Commit to living His way – the fullest life there is!

Questions to discuss...

Do you have to spend time with God every day? (*Matthew 6:11 – “Give us today, our daily bread.” This means that we are to be filled with God daily. He is to be our sustenance every single day. Therefore, spending time with Him results in this truly happening.*)

What are the benefits to spending time with God daily?

What if you don't feel like waking up early to spend time with Him?

We are called to OBEDIENCE and LOVE.

- Sometimes you just don't feel like waking up early to have a quiet time, but you do it because you want to be obedient to God, and you know it's the best thing for your relationship with Him.
- *Talk about how spending time with God helps you to develop your love relationship with Him.*
 - We meet with God out of obedience but also because we love Him and want to spend time with Him.

“I do not rise early each morning to feed a habit or to go through a routine that makes me feel virtuous. I rise to spend time in the presence of the living Lord who loves me and whom I love with all my being!”
- Denny Holzbauer

Don't GIVE UP. If you miss a day, start back up THE NEXT DAY.

- It's easy to feel guilt when you miss a day or two.
- Be realistic that there will be those days.
- We don't spend time with God to check off a list of tasks. When we miss a day we'll probably notice a difference ourselves, but there's no reason to get bogged down in guilt over this.
- Pick it up the next day, and start fresh!

Remind students that their relationship with God is their responsibility. While their parents might have always taken them to church or helped them get a ride to church, maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is something that they have to do for themselves.

REMEMBER: God pursues us...we must RESPOND.

ILLUSTRATION: Read the following excerpt from Max Lucado's book "When God Whispers Your Name."

"Each Day I Choose" - by Max Lucado

It's quiet. It's early. My coffee is hot. The sky is still black. The world is still asleep. The day is coming.

In a few moments, the day will arrive. It will roar down the track with the rising of the sun. The stillness of the dawn will be exchanged for the noise of the day. The calm of solitude will be replaced by the pounding of the human race. The refuge of the early morning will be invaded by decisions to be made and deadlines to be met.

For the next twelve hours I will be exposed to the day's demands. It is now I must make a choice. Because of Calvary, I'm free to choose. And so I choose.

I CHOOSE LOVE...No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves.

I CHOOSE JOY...I will invite my God to be the God of circumstance. I will refuse the temptation to be cynical...the tool of the lazy thinker. I will refuse to see people as anything less than human beings, created by God. I will refuse to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to see God.

I CHOOSE PEACE...I will live forgiven. I will forgive so that I may live.

I CHOOSE PATIENCE...I will overlook the inconveniences of the world. Instead of cursing the one who takes my place, I'll invite him to do so. Rather than complain that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray. Instead of clenching my fist at new assignments, I will face them with joy and courage.

I CHOOSE KINDNESS...I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone. I will be kind to the rich, for they are afraid. And kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.

I CHOOSE GOODNESS...I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. I choose goodness.

I CHOOSE FAITHFULNESS...Today I will keep my promises. My debtors will not regret their trust. My associates will not question my word. My wife will not question my love. And my children will never fear that their father will not come home.

I CHOOSE GENTLENESS...Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice, may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it only be in prayer. If I make a demand, may it only be of myself.

I AM A SPIRITUAL BEING...After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let what will rot rule the eternal. I choose self-control. I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. I choose self-control. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek His grace. And then, when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest.

Closing:

Challenge your students to start using their devotional book – “Deep End” – on a daily basis this week. Pray with them as they begin this 6-week journey with God.

Close your time in prayer.

WEEK 1: DAY 1: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

What is a “QUIET TIME”?

At Beach Retreat it's called “Silent Sounds,” your friend may call it their “time alone with God,” this booklet calls it a “Quiet Time,” your parents may call it “Devotion Time” – but whatever you call it...it's a period of time you consistently set aside to be alone with God. It is a time to talk to Him and to listen to Him as you prepare to be used by Him that day.

To get started, let's **PREPARE**.

(Each day of “Deep End” will start with a time for you to prepare yourself to meet with God.)

Take a moment and ask God to prepare your heart this week to learn how and why you should to get to know Him on a more intimate level.

Read Psalm 46:10.

What does this verse mean to you?

There is a saying that says, “If you're too busy for time for God, you're too busy.” Do you think that this is true? Why or why not?

Spending time with God not only helps us get to know Him more, but it also helps us to become more like Christ in the way we act and think.

Think of one of your closest friends. How do you get to know that person better? It's through spending time with them that you get to know them more. You might even have a friend that you can finish their sentences, and sometimes you know what each other are thinking without even saying it. It's the same way with God! As you get to know Him more, you will begin to think like Him, talk like Him, and act like Him. This is the journey of being shaped into Christ's image. It is a lifelong journey, but it is an exciting one!

Take a few minutes to read these verses and answer the following questions:

Psalm 51:10

John 14:26

Psalm 119:105

Matthew 11:28

When I spend time with God...

- **HE CHANGES MY HEART –**
According to Psalm 51:10, He changes my heart by...

- **HE GIVES ME DIRECTION FOR LIVING –**
According to John 14:26, He gives me direction by...

According to Psalm 119:105, He gives me direction by...

- **HE HELPS ME WITH MY BURDEN –**
According to Matthew 11:28, He helps me with my burden by...

Close out your time by praying. Commit your day to God, and ask Him to help you live for Him today. Let God know how you want to grow in your relationship with Him. Thank Him for giving you the chance to know Him more today.

WEEK 1: DAY 2: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

If you've never spent time alone with God, it can be really hard to know where to begin. We'd like to give you a few pointers on how to get started. During this first week, you will learn the importance of why you should be spending time with God and the basic elements that should be a part of your quiet time.

First, understand why it is important to spend time with God. When you woke up this morning, you did a few things to prepare for the day. You probably showered; you got dressed, brushed your hair and teeth, ate some breakfast, and packed your bag for the day. A quiet time should be a part of our daily preparation as well. It's kind of like getting "spiritually dressed" for the day. The Bible talks about putting on the armor of God to prepare for the daily battle.

Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

What do these verses say that our struggle and battle is actually against?

How is the Christian life sometimes like a battle?

Have you found this to be true in your own life? Write about a time when you experienced a spiritual battle:

Read Ephesians 6:14-18.

God's Word gives a very specific picture of what it is like to arm yourself each day for battle. Each piece of armor represents something that we need to "put on" for the spiritual battle we face every day. Write here what each piece of armor represents:

1. Belt: _____
2. Breastplate: _____
3. Shoes: _____

- 4. Shield: _____
- 5. Helmet: _____
- 6. Sword: _____

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

What do these verses tell you about the importance of getting “spiritually dressed” for the day?

Take a few moments to put on your spiritual armor. Once you are finished, put a note on your mirror or set a reminder on your phone to help you remember to put on your armor on a daily basis.

WEEK 1: DAY 3: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

It has been said, “You become like the people you spend time with.” Becoming more like Jesus should be a number one priority for a Christian. In order to become more like Jesus, we need to learn more about Him, read about Him, and simply spend time with Him on a consistent basis.

If you haven’t already done so, choose a time during your day and make an appointment with God. Choose the same time every day if possible. This will help to keep you disciplined.

Read Mark 1:35.

Write out the verse below:

Jesus chose to pray early in the morning. We can learn from His example by beginning each day with God. You might want to start your day with prayer before you get out of bed each morning, or you could also get into the habit of reading your Bible while you’re eating your breakfast. However you choose to do it, you should start your day with God.

Why is it always best to give God the first part of your day?

Depending on your schedule, you may need to wake up a little earlier than usual in order to spend time with God in the morning. Go ahead and decide now when you will start your day with God.

Make an appointment with Him. Write the time here _____ : _____

Try your best to meet with God at the same time daily. Your time with God is the most important time of your day. You have an appointment with the Creator of the universe! You don’t want to miss out on that!

Read Isaiah 50:4.

This Scripture reminds us that God wants to meet with us “morning by morning” – daily!

Why is it important to meet with God on a daily basis?

Read Psalm 143:8.

Your relationship with God is like any other relationship: two sided. Your quiet time with God allows you to not only talk to Him but also listen to Him. He speaks to your heart through prayer and Scripture reading. Take a moment to listen to God today.

What is He telling you today?

WEEK 1: DAY 4: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

Now that you've committed to spend time with God on a daily basis, we can talk about some specific details of your time with Him.

To help prepare yourself, choose a place. The place should be quiet, with few distractions. Choose a favorite spot outside if the weather permits, or you could choose a quiet place in your room or other place in your house.

Yesterday, you read a verse about the time that Jesus spent in prayer with God. Let's read it again to see if there's something new to learn from it.

Read Mark 1:35.

Jesus chose to get away to spend time with God. He went away from others and found a place alone. We can learn from His example by choosing a special place where we can get away as well. Maybe you have a special chair in your room or a spot in your yard that would allow you to focus on your time with God.

Why is it important to find a place where you can be alone with God?

You probably won't be able to leave your house early in the morning, but you can still find a place to be alone with God. Keep reading; maybe you'll get an idea about a good place.

Read Matthew 6:5-8.

This Scripture talks about going into a closet to pray. That may sound funny to you, but this verse reminds us of the importance of finding a place where we can be completely alone with God. A closet isn't the only place where we can get alone with God, but it can be a great place to find some peace and quiet.

Think about a place in your house where you can be alone.

Write that place here: _____

Now you can stock that place with all the things you will need in order to spend time with God. You might want to set up a basket or box with the following items:

1. **Bible** – Be sure to choose a translation that is easy for you to understand. (*New International Version is a great one for students.*)
2. **Devotional Guide or another specific plan for reading through the Bible** – This one is a great start for you. Later, you may want to purchase something from our church bookstore or local Christian bookstore to guide you in reading through the Bible.
3. **Journal and pen** – Some people find it helpful to write out their prayer requests, verses from the Bible, prayers, or thoughts on Scripture.
4. **Note cards** – You can use these to write down Scriptures that stand out to you that you would like to memorize. You can carry the cards around with you during the day or put them in places that you will see them regularly. This is an awesome way to begin to truly know God's Word.

WEEK 1: DAY 5: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

You now have a time and place for your quiet time with God. Now you may be wondering, where do I start? Let's start with prayer.

Each day begin your time with God in prayer. Ask God to speak to you and help you understand what you read. Prayer is simply talking to God and listening to Him. Take a few moments to begin your time talking with God right now.

There is no specific way that you have to pray, but there are some specific types of prayer that are important. Here are a couple of examples of different models you can follow.

CONFESSION, PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, PETITION, INTERCESSION

- **CONFESSION** - Better communication will result when the lines of communication are clear. Sin clogs the lines of communication between you and God. Start out by confessing the things that you have done wrong.
- **PRAISE** – This is the expression of your love and adoration for who God is. Tell God why you love Him!
- **THANKSGIVING** – This is a time to be grateful to God for all He does for you. Thank Him for all the blessings in your life.
- **PETITION** – Take your personal needs to God. Pray for God's will for your own life.
- **INTERCESSION** – This is an honor you have of standing in the gap between God and the person that you are praying for. Pray for the needs of others. Pray for your Christian friends, and pray for your other friends who do not know Christ yet.

Read 1 John 1:9.

Why is it important to include confession in our prayers every day?

Here is another model of prayer that you could follow: *(Remember, you don't have to follow a model. These are just easy-to-remember ways to help guide you as you pray.)*

PRAY: PRAISE, REPENT, ASK, YIELD

- **PRAISE** – Thank God for what He has done for you.
- **REPENT** - Confess your sin to God and claim your forgiveness in Christ. Then choose to turn away from your sin.
- **ASK** – Ask God for the things that are on your heart.
- **YIELD** – Give God total control of your life today, and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Read Matthew 6:9-13.

Which of the elements above (*in either model*) do you see in the Lord's prayer?

End your time today with a prayer. Write that prayer here:

WEEK 1: DAY 6: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

Start your time with God by praying. Get your heart right before God, and ask Him to speak to you during this time.

Like we said in Day 3, if it is true that “you become like the people you spend time with,” then in order to become more like Jesus, we need to learn about Him and read about Him. When you open your Bible to read, it helps to follow a plan.

When you are done with “Deep End,” pick up a teen devotional book at the church bookstore (*or local Christian bookstore*). Another option is to follow a reading plan of the Bible. You can find these plans online or often in your Bible.

Have a devotional book or Bible reading plan ready. Be sure to pick an understandable translation (*Try the NIV or NASB*). Don’t just open your Bible up to a random passage and start reading. It helps to have a plan.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

According to these verses, what are some of the purposes of Scripture?

How are we to read Scripture?

- Read a key verse from your Quiet Time several times that day.
- Read the verse(s) before and after it.
- As you read the verse(s), ask yourself the following questions:

Is there an:

1. Example for me to follow?
2. New thought about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
3. Sin for me to confess?
4. Promise for me to claim?
5. Error for me to avoid?
6. Command for me to obey?

Read Colossians 2:2-4.

Now it's time to ask yourself these questions after reading Colossians 2:2-4. Write your answers below.

Is there an:

- 1. Example for me to follow?**

- 2. New thought about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?**

- 3. Sin for me to confess?**

- 4. Promise for me to claim?**

- 5. Error for me to avoid?**

- 6. Command for me to obey?**

Think of a short phrase or word that summarizes what you have learned, write it on a note card, and meditate on it throughout the day.

WEEK 1: DAY 7: HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

If you were to break your quiet time down into the most important parts, there would be three different parts:

1. Talking to God
2. Listening to God
3. Preparing to be used by God

It wouldn't make any sense to spend time in God's Word, spend time listening to Him, and spend time talking to Him in the morning if He wasn't going to be a part of the rest of your day? Don't walk away from a quiet time with God and forget about Him until the next morning. Prepare to be USED by God during the day and EXPECT Him to use you.

Begin this time by asking God to prepare you today to be used by Him.

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

How would someone know to ask you about the "hope that you have"?

Do others who know you see a difference in you? Why or why not?

Read 2 Timothy 4:2-5.

According to these verses what should we prepared to do?

According to these verses, why should we prepare?

Close your time by telling God what is on your heart. Ask Him to help you spend time with Him on a consistent basis, and commit to taking the steps necessary to prepare yourself to share Him with others.

WEEK 2: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

Leader Guide

Pray to open your group session.

This week we are going to be learning the basics of Christian doctrine.

Question to discuss with students... (Give a few minutes for discussion.)

What does the word DOCTRINE mean?

DOCTRINE IS:

A belief or teaching regarding the study of God, His nature, and His words

- The Greek word for "doctrine" is **DIDASKALIA** which means: instruction, learning, or teaching.

This week, we are going to be learning about some of the basics of our Christian faith.

If you're a new Christian, you may be wondering if you know everything you need to know about being a Christian. If you've grown up in a Christian family, you may assume that you know everything you already need to know. Either way, as you live your teenage years, you are at a time in your life when you need to know what you believe and why you believe it.

It has been said, **"If you don't know why you believe what you believe, you really don't know what you believe."**

Discuss this quote.

Do the students agree or disagree with this statement?

Read the following story:

Rachel Abernethy is an 18-year-old girl who knows what she believes. She wrote the following summary about her beliefs.

"I believe in the Trinity, that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are one. I believe God cares what you call Him, at least to an extent. I don't think He cares if you call Him God, Father, Jesus, Friend or even Daddy...but *would* care if you called Him Buddha, Zeus or Allah because those gods represent religions.

I believe in the basic teachings of the Bible with nothing added and nothing taken away. And I believe in the Bible's literal truth. I believe that people who are saved go to heaven and people who are not saved go to hell.

I think it's common sense that if you sincerely believe the Jesus story and love God, then you should try your hardest to live as Jesus would. I don't believe going to church saves you, but I do believe it is something God wants Christians to do. And because God wants us to be involved in a church, I believe that's a good enough reason to go. But there are other reasons, too. I think that's a huge part of growing as a Christian.”

Think about this statement that this teenager made. Would you be able to write something similar? Would you be able to share what you believe with someone who has questions. As we study these basic doctrines of Christianity, I hope that it will help you be able to articulate and know what you believe and why.

Test of Basic Christian Doctrine

On the next page of their student guide, everyone will find a test of basic Christian doctrine. Have students work on this *on their own*. They should be able to answer these questions by themselves.

When they have finished, go over the answers one-by-one (*Answer Key is on the pages following the test*) and have them read from their Bibles the Scriptures associated with the answers to the questions.

This test is to help you and your students understand where they are in their understanding of what it means to be a Christian and the doctrines that Christians believe.

TALK BACK

After students have taken the Test of Basic Christian Doctrines and you have had time to discuss the questions and topics, have some time for “talk back.”

Introduce the following topics one at a time and ask one or two volunteers to share what they believe about each topic:

The Trinity: God as Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit

The Bible

Human Beings

Salvation

The Church

Close your time together in prayer.

A TEST OF BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Do you know your doctrine? Take this little theological test. Following are 20 basic Christian doctrine questions. Of course, there are a lot more questions that could be asked, but these will serve as a sample. Also, some of the questions deal with essential doctrines. In other words, they are critical to believe if you are a Christian.

As you take the test, try to also figure out which beliefs are essential doctrines. Okay, let's begin... (Circle your answers.)

1. How many Gods are there in the universe?

- A. One B. Two C. Three D. Many

2. The Trinity is...

- A. Three separate Gods C. One God in three persons
B. One God who took D. A completely false doctrine
three consecutive forms

3. Jesus is...

- A. God in flesh C. A good man
B. An angel who became a man D. A great prophet

4. How many natures does Jesus have?

- A. One B. Two C. Three D. More

5. The Holy Spirit is...

- A. An invisible force like radar C. The third person in the Trinity
B. A divine spark in all of us D. A god

6. Sin is...

- A. There is no sin C. A state of mind
B. A misinterpretation of reality D. Breaking God's law

7. Human nature is basically...

- A. Good B. Sinful C. Neutral D. Divine

8. In what manner did Jesus rise from the dead?

- A. As a spirit C. He did not rise from the dead
B. In the same body He died in D. The disciples made up the
resurrection story

9. Hell is...

- A. Right here on earth
- B. A state of mind
- C. A place of eternal fire and torment
- D. There is no hell

10. Heaven is...

- A. Right here on earth
- B. A state of mind
- C. A place of eternal joy and peace with God
- D. There is no heaven

11. Salvation is...

- A. A condition of mental awareness
- B. Within our own essence
- C. Universal resurrection
- D. Deliverance from the eternal consequence of sin: damnation

12. Salvation is attained by...

- A. Grace through faith after all you can do
- B. Grace through faith
- C. A state of your mind
- D. Obeying all of God's laws

13. The devil is...

- A. An equal and opposing force to God
- B. Not real
- C. A figment of people's minds
- D. An angel who rebelled against God

14. The Bible is...

- A. The inspired Word of God
- B. A nice history book
- C. Full of contradictions and errors
- D. A story book of metaphors

15. The Rapture is...

- A. A serious head rush
- B. A New Age meditation philosophy
- C. An Old Testament Jewish feast
- D. The catching up of God's people into the sky at Jesus' return

16. Adam and Eve...

- A. Were the first man and woman created by God
- B. Were evolutionary representatives of homosapiens
- C. Are mythological figures
- D. Never existed

17. How many ways are there to God?

- A. Just one – through Jesus
- B. Many ways
- C. As many ways as there are people
- D. It depends on the religion

18. When you die...

- A. You go to purgatory
- B. You go to heaven or hell
- C. You don't exist anymore
- D. You are reincarnated

19. Evolution...

- A. Is how we got here
- B. Is not a viable option for Christians
- C. God used evolution to bring man into existence
- D. Proves there is no God

20. Why did God create us?

- A. As an experiment
- B. He was bored
- C. To save us, love us, and have us love Him
- D. For pawns in His cosmic game

ANSWERS TO TEST OF BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

1. How many gods are there in the universe? A. One

The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God in existence – anywhere, any time, any place.

- Isaiah 44:6, 8, “This is what the Lord says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God... ⁸Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”
 - See also: Isaiah 45:6, 14, 18, 21, 22
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2. The Trinity is... C. One God in three persons

God is a trinity. God is three simultaneous persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Though there is no single verse that establishes the Trinity, it is derived from many throughout Scripture.

- There is only one God. The Father is called God (Philippians 1:2); Jesus is called God (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 1:8); and the Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4).
-

3. Jesus is... A. God in flesh

Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. He became a man in order to die on the cross.

- Colossians 2:9, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."
 - John 1:1, 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us..."
 - See also: Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:5-8; John 8:58; Exodus 3:14; Zechariah 12:10
-

4. How many natures does Jesus have? B. Two

Jesus has two natures. He is both God and man.

- Colossians 2:9, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."
 - See also: Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:5-8; John 8:58; Exodus 3:14
-

5. The Holy Spirit is... C. The third person in the Trinity

The Holy Spirit is a person like the Father and the Son. He is not a force like radar. He is not merely an energy presence. He is – like the Father and the Son – God.

- Acts 5:3-4, "Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.' "
-

6. Sin is... D. Breaking God's law

God has revealed His character and will in the law. To sin is to offend God; it is to break His law.

- 1 John 3:4, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness."
 - See also: Romans 3:20; 4:15; 7:7-13; James 2:9; 1 John 5:17
-

7. Human nature is basically... B. Sinful

The Bible reveals that we are all sinners. Because Adam fell, we fell with him. We inherited his sinful nature. All of what we are – body, soul, spirit, mind, emotions, etc. – is touched by sin.

- According to God's Word, the sinner (the unsaved person), cannot understand spiritual things (1 Corinthians 2:14); is full of evil (Mark 7:21-23); does not seek God (Romans 3:11); is lawless, rebellious, unholy, and profane (1 Timothy 1:9).
-

8. In what manner did Jesus rise from the dead?

B. In the same body He died in

Jesus rose from the dead in the same body that He died in. It even retained His scars. Though His body was resurrected and glorified, it was still the same body.

- John 2:19-21, "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' ²⁰The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and You are going to raise it in three days?' ²¹But the temple He had spoken of was His body."
 - Luke 24:39, "Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."
-

9. Hell is...

C. A place of eternal fire and torment

Many think hell is a state of mind – right here on earth – or that it simply doesn't exist. It does exist. The Bible tells us about hell as being a very real place.

- Mark 9:43, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out."
 - Revelation 14:11, "And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."
 - See also: Luke 16:19-31; 2 Peter 2:4; Matthew 22:13; Jude 6, 23; Revelation 21:8
-

10. Heaven is...

C. A place of eternal joy and peace with God

Heaven is the dwelling place of God and of those who are saved through Jesus.

- Psalm 20:6, "Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He answers him from His holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand."
 - John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."
 - See also: Psalm 102:19; 123:1; Matthew 5:34; 2 Corinthians 12:3-4
-

11. Salvation is...

D. Deliverance from the eternal consequence of sin: damnation

Salvation is the act where God, through the atonement of Jesus, forgives a person of his or her sins. That person is then justified before God and saved from damnation.

- Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
 - See also: Matthew 1:21; John 3:17; Romans 5:9; Hebrews 2:14-15
-

12. Salvation is attained by...

B. Grace through faith

Forgiveness of sins is not conditioned by anything that we do, but it is all a gift of God's grace through faith.

- Ephesians 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."
 - Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - See also: John 3:14-18
-

13. The devil is...

D. An angel who rebelled against God

The devil, also called Satan, was an angel who lifted himself in pride and rebelled against God. He is a deceiver, evil, wicked, and powerful.

- 2 Corinthians 11:14, "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."
 - John 8:44, "...He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
 - See also: Isaiah 14:12-20; Ezekiel 28:14-19
-

14. The Bible is...

A. The inspired Word of God

The Bible was authored by God, through men. God inspired the words that they wrote. The original documents were without error or contradiction.

- 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."
 - See also: Revelation 22:19; Acts 17:11
-

15. The Rapture is...

D. The catching up of God's people into the sky at Jesus' return

The Rapture is when Jesus returns to gather His people. Those who are alive when this happens will not see death, but they will be changed.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."
 - See also: 1 Corinthians 15:51-53
-

16. Adam and Eve...

A. Were the first man and woman created by God

Adam & Eve were created by God, lived in the Garden of Eden, are our ancient parents.

- Genesis 2:21-22, "So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man."
 - See also: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Romans 5:12-14
-

17. How many ways are there to God?

A. Just one – through Jesus

Unlike other men who have existed, Jesus was God in flesh. He said He was the only way to God. There are no other ways other than Jesus.

- John 14:6, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' "
 - John 10:1, " 'I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.' "
 - See also: Acts 4:12; Titus 3:5
-

18. When you die... B. You go to heaven or hell

Death brings us face to face with eternity. For those in Christ, heaven is their destiny. For those who reject Him, eternal damnation is the result.

- Philippians 1:21-23, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far."
 - 2 Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."
 - See also: Isaiah 59:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Genesis 3:19
-

19. Evolution... B. Is not a viable option for Christians

Evolution is not the fact that it is told to be. It is not consistent with the Bible. God created man; man did not evolve.

- Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' "
 - Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."
 - See also: Colossians 1:16-17; Psalm 104:30; Genesis 1-2
-

20. Why did God create us? C. To save us, love us, and have us love Him

God's creation and our salvation were not just so we could live with Him in heaven. God desires fellowship and intimacy in a loving relationship with His people.

- 1 John 1:3, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."
 - Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.'"
 - See also: John 3:16; John 10:27-28; Philippians 2:1-2
-

How did you do? Do you need to study more? Maybe you learned something here, or maybe you have some more questions. Read the Scriptures about each of the doctrines and search out what the Bible has to say. If you still have questions, make sure to ask your youth pastor, parent, or trusted adult leader. They can help you understand what Scripture says about these important doctrines.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this test, there are some essential doctrines that are critical to believe if you are a Christian. It is one thing simply to not understand Scripture, learn what is right, and accept the Truth. It is another thing to refuse to believe what the Bible says.

So, what are the essentials? The Bible tells us what they are. They are test questions number 3, 8, and 12.

#3 - Jesus is God in flesh.

#8 - Jesus rose from the dead in the same body He died in.

#12 - Salvation, or the forgiveness of sins, is by grace through faith. You cannot add anything to Jesus' finished work.

There are many extremely important doctrines in the Bible: the Trinity, resurrection, forgiveness, the virgin birth, etc., but the Bible itself declares that these three are essential. If you refuse to believe any of these, then according to the Bible, you are not truly a Christian.

Wherever you are at in your faith, continue to study all of the doctrines of Christianity. Be a student of God's Word. Seek to know more and understand what you believe. This is key to truly living the life God desires for you as well as being a contagious Christian to others around you.

Remember the words of Paul to Timothy: *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

WEEK 2: DAY 1: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

Read John 4:39-42.

How did the people in the town come to believe that Jesus was the Savior of the world?

In your life, how have you “heard for yourself” that Jesus is the Savior of the world?

Even though you may have a relationship with Christ, do you think that there is more that you have to learn about Him? Why or why not?

What else do you want to know about God and Christianity?

This week we will be learning more about some of the basic beliefs and doctrines of Christianity. Doctrine is a word used to describe a belief or teaching regarding the study of God, His nature, and His words.

No matter where you are at in your walk with God, it is important to know what you believe and why you believe it.

Do you know what you believe? Why or why not?

If so, do you know WHY you believe what you believe? Explain.

Before we start studying about Christian beliefs, take a few minutes to write out your own personal beliefs about the following topics:

The Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit:

The Bible:

Mankind:

Salvation:

The Church:

Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

How can you become a person who “correctly handles the word of truth”?

Close your time in prayer, asking God to reveal Himself to you today. Ask Him to make clear what His Word says about what you are to believe as a Christian.

WEEK 2: DAY 2: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF GOD

One of the most important beliefs as a Christian is our “Doctrine of God.”

Here are a few basic Christian beliefs about God.

- There is only one true God.
- He is the living Creator and Ruler of the Universe.
- The Bible explains God’s existence as the Trinity: God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Read 1 Corinthians 8:6.

What does this verse say about God?

When you think about God as a “Father,” what comes to your mind?

Think about your relationship with your earthly father. Whether it is good, bad, or non-existent, you can probably imagine what the best qualities of a father should be.

What are a couple of the best qualities that a father should have?

Depending on your relationship with your earthly father, you may have a hard time understanding the concept of God as Father. Maybe you have had a hard time trusting your father, or others of you may have never known your father because he was absent from your life. Still, others of you have great relationships with your fathers. No matter what your situation is, we know that earthly fathers are all human, and they all make mistakes. Unlike our earthly fathers, our heavenly Father is perfect. We can always depend on God as a Father. He is consistent, completely loving, and all-powerful.

No matter what your situation is, you can have confidence that you have a Heavenly Father who is everything a father should be. He loves you and wants nothing but the best for you, His creation.

There are a couple of different ways that God displays Himself as Father. He is our Father as our Creator but also in a more personal sense.

Read Ephesians 3:14-15. What does this verse mean?

God as Father (Creator): In one sense, God is a Father to *all* of creation since *all* people come from Him as the Creator.

What is something that you have seen in the past week that would remind you that God must be our Creator?

Read Galatians 4:6.

God as Father (Abba): In another sense, God is Father to only those who become His children through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible uses the word *Abba* to describe God to His children. The word *Abba* means *Daddy*.

Explain the difference between God as Father (Creator) and God as Father (Abba - "Daddy")?

What does it mean to you that God wants you to call Him *Abba*?

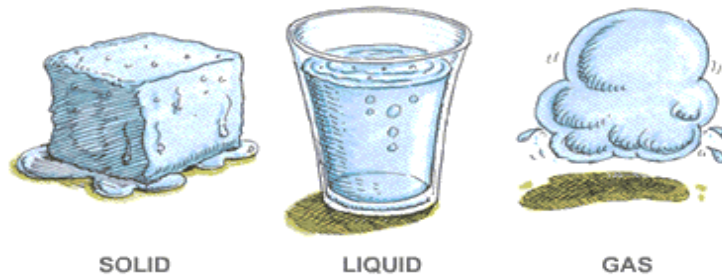
Spend a few moments thanking God for being your Father – both your Creator and your Abba – Daddy.

WEEK 2: DAY 3: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF GOD

It seems like the easiest, most common way for us to view God is in a fatherly sense. But the Bible explains God's existence in three ways through the Trinity. The Trinity is God as Father and also the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is one God, but God exists as three persons. Each one is truly God. If that sounds confusing...let's think about it in another way.

Think back to elementary school. Do you remember learning about the three forms of water? All three are water...but water exists in three different forms. The same is true of God. He is one God, but He exists in three forms: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



GOD THE SON: JESUS

Jesus has two natures in one person. He was not half God and half man. He was completely God and completely man. You may be saying, "How can that be possible?" Read the Scripture below and think about it.

Read Philippians 2:5-8.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!"

What does it mean to you that Jesus who was totally sinless would humble Himself to become a man and experience a painful death on the cross for you?

While sin separates us from God, Jesus serves as our “bridge” to God because He made right that which was wrong between God and us.

Wanna go deeper?

Check out these Scriptures that describe the nature of Jesus.

1 Peter 2:22

Colossians 2:9

1 Timothy 2:5-6

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God and lives within every Christian from the moment that he or she makes the decision to follow Christ. **If you are a Christian, God lives in you!** The Holy Spirit’s role in us is to convict us of sin and push us toward righteousness. He loves, teaches, and guides us. As a believer, you have a responsibility to not ignore the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 8:11.

What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you?

If you were constantly aware that you had the God of the universe with you, would that change some of your decisions? How?

How will you stay mindful that God is a part of your everyday life in the form of the Holy Spirit?

Spend a couple minutes asking God to help you remember that He is with you all the time. Commit to letting Him guide you in every way.

WEEK 2: DAY 4: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

Did you know...

- The Bible is the best selling book of all time.
- Approximately 93% of Americans own a Bible.
- Approximately 27% of Americans own 4 or more Bibles.
- In the 1980's, 73% of Americans said that they read the Bible at least "on occasion."
- In the year 2000, only 59% of Americans said that they read the Bible at least "on occasion."
- 16% of Americans say that they read the Bible every day.
- 21% say they read the Bible weekly.
- 12% say they read the Bible monthly.
- 10% say they read the Bible less than monthly.
- 41% say that they rarely or never read the Bible.

* Information from "Six in Ten Americans Read Bible at Least Occasionally," Gallup News Service, October 20, 2000.

How important is your Bible to you?

The Bible is essential to the Christian faith. The Bible is the ultimate source of truth for all Christians. It clearly defines Christian beliefs and gives instruction for Christian living. The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is inspired by God, and it is the absolute truth. It is the sole authority for life.

Read Acts 17:11.

How does this verse show that the Bible was the "ultimate source of truth" for these early Christians?

Here are some additional things that Christians believe about the Bible:

- The Bible contains sixty-six books contained in 2 testaments (Old and New Testaments).
- The Bible is the written revelation of God Himself to man.
- It was penned by men but divinely inspired in each part and as a whole.
- Nothing should be added to or taken away from the contents of the Bible.

- Scripture serves as the standard by which all believers should conduct their actions and test their religious beliefs.
- The Bible gives testimony to Jesus Christ.
- The purpose of Scripture is to bring salvation to those who read it.
- It is important that those who have received salvation devote themselves to the study of God's Word and obedience to its truth.

Read 2 Peter 1:16-21.

How do these verses show that the Bible is truly the Word of God and not simply the work of man?

Does this give you confidence in believing that the Bible is truly God's Word?

If so, what does that mean for your life and how you live it?

Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement:

"Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them."

In our world today, many people will say that the Bible is not completely authoritative or absolutely true. As a Christian, it is so important to believe that the Bible is the Word of God and true in every sense. Ask God to help you believe this with all of your heart and stand on this truth no matter what the world may say.

WEEK 2: DAY 5: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF MANKIND

Have you ever thought about the reason why God would choose to create us? God's creation and our salvation were not just so that we could live forever with Him in heaven. God created us because He desires fellowship and intimacy in a loving relationship with us.

- Human beings are made in the spiritual image of God. We are made to be like Him in character.
- He created humans as male and female; gender is part of the goodness of God's creation.
- In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was given the freedom of choice by his Creator.
- By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race.
- After sin entered into the world, the original innocence of man declined, and the environment inclined toward sin.
- It is only by the grace of God that man can enter into God's fellowship.
- However, Adam's sin catapulted the creation into a fallen state, and plunged all his descendants into depravity. As a result, all of us are marred by rebellion and disobedience toward God. This is called "sin."
- Sin separates people from God and causes many problems in life.
- Each person has sinned, either by rebelling against God or by ignoring His will. No matter what our background or how hard we try to live good and moral lives, we cannot earn salvation or remove our sin. Only Christ can save us.

Read Psalm 8:3-6.

Meditate on these verses. If possible, take some time to sit outside in the midst of God's creation. Think about the world and everything in it. God created that world and made it good.

Who is God to you?

Who are you to Him?

Read Matthew 10:29-31.

What does it mean that “you are worth more than many sparrows”?

God knows every little detail of your life...down to the number of hairs on your head. God loves you, and He created you because He wanted a relationship with you. He knew that you would mess up, but He still created you and loves you.

Do you see yourself as God sees you?

If not, what needs to change about the way you see yourself?

There's a song by Kendall Payne called “Lines.” Read the lines in this song, and think about how God made you and what that means for your relationship with Him.

*I don't think He's threatened when we ask questions,
When we have doubts and disbelief,
I don't think He's angry when we are human,
That's what He made us to be.*

What do these lyrics mean to you in your life?

Take comfort in knowing that God created you, has a purpose for you, and loves you for who you are. Write out a prayer to God telling Him what is on your heart right now.

WEEK 2: DAY 6: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Salvation is easy to understand, but at the same time it's hard for a lot of people to accept because it goes against much of what we think is true in our society. In the world we live in, we think that you should "get what you pay for and pay for what you do." Well, God doesn't always work this way. Here's an example:

God gives us what we don't deserve: GRACE
God doesn't give us what we do deserve: MERCY

Read Isaiah 55:8-9.

In what ways can you see that God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours?

Read the following lyrics that describe God's surprising nature:

*He won't say the words you wish that He would
Oh, He don't do the deeds you know that He could
He won't think the thoughts you think He should
But He is good, He is good
I know you're thirsty, the water is free
But I should warn you, it costs everything
Well, He's not fair, no He's not fair
When He fixes what's beyond repair
And graces everyone that don't deserve*

"Aslan" by Kendall Payne, CD: Grown.

Read the lyrics closely. Do these words make sense to you?

Explain:

Salvation is God's FREE gift to us. You've probably received a lot of gifts in your life for birthdays and other holidays. Some of those gifts were more memorable and special to you because they were personally and specifically made for you.

What is the nicest gift that you've ever received?

Now, imagine that you tried to pay for that gift. Because the gift was made specifically for you there is no way you could offer anything back that would earn that gift for you.

That's what salvation is: **a free gift from God**. You can never earn it by being good enough or doing enough for God. It is something He offers to you...you only have to **accept the gift**.

Once you have accepted the gift, God does desire that we live a life of obedience and following Him. Salvation is something that is offered to all. God desires that all men come to Him. Here are some specific Christian beliefs about salvation:

- We receive the gift of salvation through repentance of our sins and faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- Repentance means turning away from our sin and turning towards Christ.
- Faith means trusting in Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins.
- When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, His perfect obedience is credited to us so that God sees us as righteous ("right before God").
- Every person who truly is saved is eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in heaven, while those who die in their sins will spend eternity in hell.
- God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- If you have made a genuine commitment of faith in Jesus, you cannot lose your salvation.
- Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. You cannot "lose" your salvation.
- God's grace and power enable us to persevere in faith until the end.

Read Romans 6:23. What does this verse mean?

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Look back at what "grace" means. What does it mean that you are saved by grace through faith?

Write out a prayer, thanking God for His free gift of eternal life. Tell Him what it means to you that your sins are forgiven and that you can have a personal relationship with Him.

WEEK 2: DAY 7: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

You've probably read your Bible in church, but have you ever read about the church in the Bible? It's in there! The Bible has a lot to say about what the church is and what the church should be.

If someone asked you to describe what the church is, what would you say?

Here's a definition of the church that you might not have read before:

The Church is to be the body of Christ here on earth. The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by building itself up in faith, observing the ordinances, and furthering the gospel.

Let's break that down a little bit:

- **“The body of Christ here on earth”**
 - The Church doesn't just mean the building that you go to on Sundays and Wednesdays.
 - The Church CAN be a building, but the Church can also refer to the “Body of Christ” which simply means all believers in the entire world.

- **“The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by building itself up in faith.”**
 - The Church is a group of Christian believers who get together to worship God, learn about Him, and study His Word together.

Read Acts 2:42-47.

How do these verses describe what the Church should be?

- **“Observing the ordinances”**
 - There are a lot of different types of churches that believe a lot of different things. Here at Second Baptist Church, we believe that the Bible describes two “ordinances” that we are to do to obey, honor, and remember Jesus Christ.
 - The two ordinances are **Baptism** and the **Lord’s Supper**.
 - **Baptism** is a symbolic act that represents our salvation. It is not necessary for salvation, but is strongly associated with salvation as it best illustrates our new identity with Jesus Christ. It is the first step of obedience that the Bible describes a Christian should take following salvation. Dr. Young likes to describe baptism as a way to “raise your flag for Jesus” to show the world the decision that you have made in your heart.
 - **Read Romans 6:1-4.**
 - After you accepted Christ, were you baptized? If you haven’t taken this step of obedience, talk to your youth pastor this week about being baptized.
 - **The Lord’s Supper** is a practice that our church observes on a regular basis to remember what Jesus did for us. Bread and grape juice are offered to those who have made a decision to follow Jesus Christ. We eat and drink these things as a representation of Jesus Christ’s body and blood being sacrificed for us. Like baptism, it is a symbolic practice.
 - **Read 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.**
 - Next time you have the opportunity to take part in the Lord’s Supper, really think about what it means.

Close out this time in prayer, thanking God for the Church – not only for the building – but also for the people who make up the Church: the body of Christ.

WEEK 3: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Leader Guide

Pray to open your group session.

This week we will be talking about SPIRITUAL GIFTS and how to use our gifts for God's kingdom. God has given all of His children at least one spiritual gift. So, if you are a Christian, whether you know it or not, God has blessed you with a spiritual gift. Throughout this week, we are going to learn about the different gifts and how to use them in the body of Christ and in serving others.

Have a student read these verses:

1 Peter 4:10-11 – “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

According to these passages – Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and Ephesians 4:11-12 – here is a list of spiritual gifts that God equips us with:

- 1. Prophecy**
- 2. Service**
- 3. Teaching**
- 4. Exhortation / Encouragement**
- 5. Giving**
- 6. Leadership**
- 7. Mercy**
- 8. Wisdom**
- 9. Knowledge**
- 10. Faith**
- 11. Healing**
- 12. Miracles**
- 13. Discerning of Spirits**
- 14. Tongues**
- 15. Interpretation of Tongues**
- 16. Apostle**
- 17. Helping**
- 18. Administration**
- 19. Evangelism**
- 20. Pastor-Teacher**

Talk through some of these gifts with the students and allow them to ask questions on some of them specifically.

If you are asking yourself, “How do I find out my spiritual gifts?” Here is the answer...

1. Through PRAYER
2. By studying the BIBLE
3. By WATCHING how God is already using you
4. DISCERNMENT and CONFIRMATION from others
5. Through a SPIRITUAL GIFT TEST

We are all going to take a “Spiritual Gift Test.” This is a survey that will ask you questions about your tendencies and natural reactions in situations. Please answer honestly about each of these. This should help you discover what may be your spiritual giftings. There are 14 possible gifts surveyed in this test. This is not a comprehensive list, but it is one that is based on practical and functional use. Have fun taking this and discovering how God has gifted you.

SPIRITUAL GIFT TEST

Instructions: Ask yourself how you feel about each one of the following statements. How true is each statement about you? Simply respond with the numerical rating as follows:

- 5 – Almost always true**
- 4 – Often true**
- 3 – Sometimes true**
- 2 – Seldom true**
- 1 – Almost never true**

Avoid, as much as possible, a **3** (Sometimes true) choice. Don't hesitate choosing **5** (Almost always) or **1** (Almost never). Your desire to be humble or not exaggerate may cause you to choose more moderate responses. This may affect your results. Try to be as honest as possible, and go with your first instinct.

1. ____ Classmates tell me that I have really encouraged them.
2. ____ I love to have people over to my house.
3. ____ My friends think I am sensitive.
4. ____ I tend to motivate others to get involved
5. ____ I am willing to let others take charge, and show my support by helping in the background.
6. ____ I can tell when people are insincere.
7. ____ God has given me unusual assurances of His control.
8. ____ It irritates me when my teacher is unprepared.
9. ____ Others appoint me as the leader when one is needed.
10. ____ I am heavily burdened for my unchurched classmates.
11. ____ I believe having great knowledge is very important.
12. ____ When my friends are in a pinch I gladly help them with money.
13. ____ I am willing to confront my friends when they sin.
14. ____ I tend to make wise decisions and choices.
15. ____ Other friends come to me when they need to be cheered up.
16. ____ I tend to make total strangers feel at home.
17. ____ I am saddened when someone at school is being picked on or mistreated.
18. ____ I can do a lot of things at once.
19. ____ I am happiest when meeting needs through service.
20. ____ I can tell when others teach or share inaccurate info.
21. ____ I always believe and see how God works in our lives.
22. ____ I like it best when my Bible study teacher shares facts and details about a lesson.
23. ____ I prefer working with people rather than trying to complete a task alone.
24. ____ I feel comfortable sharing Christ with friends my age.
25. ____ I have an ability to acquire Bible facts and principles.
26. ____ I give gifts to show my friends that I appreciate them.
27. ____ I am irritated when I see people sin.
28. ____ I seem to be able to help others make right decisions.
29. ____ I want to know how my pastor's message will apply to my life.
30. ____ I like to invite friends in need to stay in my home.

31. I feel that life is about meeting the needs of those less fortunate.
32. I do my best work under pressure.
33. It is difficult for me to say no when I am asked to help.
34. I am able to differentiate between true and false needs.
35. Trusting God for the impossible comes easy for me.
36. When in class, I am thinking about how I can teach others the information I just learned.
37. I make decisions based upon how they will affect my long-term goals.
38. I am most excited about student events that are designed to help me bring unchurched classmates to Christ.
39. I learn and remember biblical truth easily.
40. I enjoy Bible studies and sermons about giving.
41. I am willing to speak boldly to groups concerning sin and evil.
42. I easily see the difference between truth and error.
43. I encourage others by sharing about how I overcame problems similar to theirs.
44. I believe hospitality is one of the most important things.
45. When I hear about someone going through difficulties I hurt with them.
46. I tend to take charge when no one else does.
47. I prefer doing the "behind the scenes" tasks.
48. I am able to read between the lines of what others say.
49. I'm comfortable around people who like to pray a lot.
50. I like sharing my thoughts in front of groups in hopes that they may help someone learn.
51. I enjoy motivating and inspiring others for a common purpose.
52. I seek to be around non-Christians in hopes to win them to Christ.
53. I study the Bible to gain more knowledge about things.
54. I am willing to do without something in order to help meet the needs of others.
55. My friends become aggravated when I share biblical truths concerning their actions.
56. People often seek me out for wise advice.
57. I can easily tell when someone is troubled or hurting.
58. My home is always open to anyone or for any group.
59. I am controlled by my emotions.
60. I like impossible challenges.
61. I can do things better myself, instead of trying to get others involved.
62. I am able to easily detect unspiritual things.
63. I want people to pray more and increase their faith.
64. I enjoy research.
65. When working with a group I feel compelled to lead.
66. I enjoy thinking of creative methods to witness.
67. I take serious the command to "increase in knowledge."
68. I love to give cheerfully.
69. I recognize evil easily.
70. I like to solve problems through the wisdom of the Word.
71. I often feel inspired to find ways to encourage others.
72. I feel church members need to be more hospitable.
73. I feel a lot of compassion for those who are suffering physically.
74. I like to organize people to accomplish great tasks.
75. I don't mind doing jobs that make others look good.
76. I seem to have a unique discernment in many areas.
77. I have strong assurances that God answers prayer.
78. Knowing the answers is not always enough; I must find out "why" it's the right answer.
79. When with a group, I can persuade them to do what I want them to do.
80. I share my faith regularly.
81. I often feel compelled to study and learn biblical truth.
82. I like to give anonymously.

83. _____ I enjoy helping others see the truth.
 84. _____ I believe wisdom is more important than faith or knowledge.
 85. _____ I enjoy helping people feel good about themselves.
 86. _____ A neat home is not as important as its availability.
 87. _____ I am easily moved to tears.
 88. _____ I delegate responsibilities to accomplish tasks.
 89. _____ I enjoy helping with projects around the house.
 90. _____ People say that I often have just the right advice.
 91. _____ People say I have a tremendous amount of faith.
 92. _____ I see myself someday sharing my ideas with others.
 93. _____ I can put the needs of the group before my own.
 94. _____ I pray for the salvation of my classmates.
 95. _____ I like to learn things most people don't know.
 96. _____ I feel the best way to encourage someone is to give them something.
 97. _____ I see things as black or white, right or wrong.
 98. _____ People often say I demonstrate lots of unusual wisdom.

Scoring Instructions: Record your choice (5, 4, 3, 2, or 1) in the appropriate numbered question box. Total each column.

NUMERICAL RATINGS CHART

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N

Plotting Instructions:

To plot your Spiritual Gifts Graph, use the totals from your Numerical Ratings Chart to plot your graph below. Find the appropriate letter **A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, or N** in the Spiritual Gifts Graph below and circle the number of the total under each letter.

YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS GRAPH

Encouragemen	Hospitality	Mercy	Administratio	Servant	Discernment	Faith	Teacher	Leader/Shepherd	Evangelism	Knowledge	Giving	Prophecy	Wisdom
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7

Reading Your Graph: To determine which gifts are most like you, connect the circles. Notice which gifts are most intense. The higher on the profile, the more intensely that gift describes you. Also notice your next highest and lowest plotting points to learn more about your overall gift tendencies.

What are your THREE HIGHEST gifts?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SPIRITUAL GIFT DESCRIPTIONS

Spiritual gifts are given to every believer. Everyone doesn't receive the same gift. Just as many parts of the human body work together as one, so spiritual gifts are given to the Body of Christ to serve as one.

Their purpose is to encourage and mature Christians for more effective ministry. This profile focuses on fourteen spiritual gifts. These fourteen gifts are featured based upon their functional and practical use.

Encouragement/Exhortation

Definition: The special ability to come to the aid of those in need of encouragement, a challenge, or earnest advice.

Biblical Example: Barnabas (Acts 4:36, 9:26-27)

Characteristics:

- Sees problems in a person's life as a tool for growth
- Is a comforter and aims to cheer
- Offers strengthening presence and encourages others
- Comes across as a friend, even when the words are firm
- Can tell you the truth about yourself with an arm around you
- Always has a word from the Bible to encourage

Misuses:

- Can appear insensitive when he/she is trying to get a point across
- May be too quick to talk
- May end up treating friends as projects rather than persons
- May get too caught up in the process

Hospitality

Definition: The special ability to welcome individual or groups into one's home in order to share fellowship, food, or lodging.

Biblical Example: 1 Peter 4:9-10; Acts 16:13-15

Characteristics:

- Opens home to provide a place to stay for someone in need
- Ready and willing to invite guests into home to meet for any occasion
- Loves to provide refreshments or prepare meals for individuals or groups
- Seldom shows irritation over last minute requests to host someone
- Tirelessly serve to make people comfortable and encouraged

Misuses:

- Can take on too much
- Gets worn out because of all that they do
- Could sacrifice family time for hosting others in home

Mercy

Definition: A special ability to have compassion for and to give aid to those who are hurting.

Biblical Example: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30b-37)

Characteristics:

- Is motivated to help others remove problems or pain
- Focuses more on the person's pain than the person's spiritual growth
- Has a marked ability to identify with what others are feeling
- Is able to empathize with the needs, pains, and sorrows of others
- Is an agent of healing and restoration
- Is burdened to comfort

Misuses:

- Can be taken advantage of by everyone who needs them
- Tries to make life too easy for some
- May fail to be firm
- Taking on others' problems can lead to emotional overload on yourself

Administration

Definition: A special ability to plan and coordinate the gifts and talents of a group of Christians to reach certain objectives.

Biblical Example: 1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:8

Characteristics:

- Organizes persons and resources to meet specific goals
- Likes to find things for people to do – delegates well
- Focuses on team participation
- Sees the big picture and wants to keep everyone on track
- Evaluates what needs to be done, and then does whatever necessary to accomplish the task

Misuses:

- Expects too much of people
- Not always organized personally
- High goals sometimes are not realistic

Servant

Definition: A special ability to give assistance in a way that relieves other Christian workers.

Biblical Example: Rebekah (Genesis 24:15-20)

Characteristics:

- Always chooses “doing” as his/her means of help
- Prefers behind-the-scenes jobs, especially when this frees others up
- Takes action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help
- Is oriented more to practical needs than to emotional needs
- Enjoys helping someone without being asked
- Doesn't care if other people get the credit owed to them

Misuses:

- May become weary in well-doing
- May become frustrated and stressed-out
- Tends to take on all the work – not delegating the responsibilities
- May keep others from reaching their full potential by refusing to let them help

Discernment

Definition: The special ability to determine whether certain teachings or actions are truth or error.

Biblical Example: 1 Corinthians 2:14; 12:10

Characteristics:

- Has an unusual ability to see through a lot of confusion and pin point problems or solutions
- Are concerned about right and wrong
- Tend to listen well and hear the little and seemingly insignificant things that shed light on a specific need
- Distinguishes between good and evil, truth and error
- Likes to ask questions and then give advice
- Feels strongly about obeying truth and living by the Word of God

Misuses:

- Can be too critical
- Sometimes they are too quick to share
- Needs to listen to people before responding

Faith

Definition: A special ability to see God's purpose in a situation and to trust His wisdom and power to accomplish that purpose.

Biblical Example: Matthew 8:5-16; Hebrew 11:1

Characteristics:

- Believes God for what seems impossible
- Deeply depends upon God and His Word
- Tends to stretch the faith and commitment of others
- Encourages others to act on their faith and challenges everyone to increase their faith
- Optimistic because of their trust in God

Misuses:

- Overly trusting of others
- Often proud of their faith to a point of being prideful
- Needs to follow through on their faith with their works

Teacher

Definition: A special ability to provide a detailed understanding of biblical truths.

Biblical Example: Saul/Paul (Acts 9:22)

Characteristics:

- Has a desire to communicate God's truth in order to strengthen the body
- Is strongly interested in research and study that will illustrate the truth
- Displays a profound depth of biblical wisdom and knowledge
- Is able to study God's Word and communicate the spiritual truths in such a way that they are relevant to the health and ministry of the church
- Has a real love for the Word of God
- Is willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching

Misuses:

- May become puffed up about his/her knowledge
- May criticize others in their field
- Depends on human logic rather than the Holy Spirit's teaching

Leader/Shepherd

Definition: A special ability to set goals for the good of the group and to work towards that goal in a timely manner.

Biblical Example: Nehemiah (Neh. 3:1-32; 4:13-14)

Characteristics:

- Focuses on long-term goals and purposes for the group
- Has an ability to communicate God's vision and motivate others to follow
- Is decisive, goal-oriented, calm, clear-thinking, and practical
- Has a strong desire to disciple others and is willing to commit to long-term development
- Assumes leadership when there is no leader
- Plans ahead and then works on a schedule

Misuses:

- May get discouraged with those who don't follow
- Can become impatient at times
- May develop a self-agenda
- Tends to take all the credit

Evangelism

Definition: A special ability to lead people to a relationship with Christ.

Biblical Example: Philip (Acts 21:8)

Characteristics:

- Is primarily concerned with seeing people won to Christ
- Sees almost any situation as a witnessing opportunity
- Is drawn to events at church pertaining to outreach and winning the lost
- While conversing with others, is primarily trying to evaluate whether or not that person is a Christian
- Has a desire and ability to help others become more effective witnesses
- Is outgoing, bold, and enthusiastic

Misuses:

- Thinks that everyone should be as dedicated to evangelism as they are
- May move too quickly from prospect to prospect
- Tends to force people to make decisions for Christ
- May view other gifts as secondary

Knowledge

Definition: A special ability with the unique capacity to gain deep insight into biblical truth by means of careful research and serious study.

Biblical Example: 1 Corinthians 13:2; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 8:7

Characteristics:

- Has the ability to uncover the great principles of God's Word
- Receives specific truth from the Word of God
- Loves to study and learn more
- God gives them insights into His Word in order to share with others

Misuses:

- Can overwhelm others and bring more attention to their knowledge rather than sharing what God has revealed to them
- Makes others feel inferior or ignorant

Giving

Definition: A special ability to manage money and resources so that much can be invested in the Lord's work.

Biblical Example: Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-8)

Characteristics:

- Is motivated to help others by using their resources
- Believes how one handles resources is a good indication of spiritual maturity level
- Has an interest in others' financial matters and is willing to help where needed
- Is able to be sensitive to and provide for the needs of others with great generosity
- Feels a deep sense of fulfillment in supporting the ministry of others
- Note: This gift is NOT reserved for the wealthy

Misuses:

- May think their giving gives them the right to control how the money is used
- Could neglect to leave the results of their giving up to the Lord
- May give too much, therefore cutting off the resources for their family
- May judge people who misuse their own funds

Prophecy

Definition: A special ability to declare truths from God in an authoritative way.

Biblical Example: Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1-10)

Characteristics:

- Sees things as wrong and right, black and white, no in-betweens
- Is willing to speak up quickly and confront those in the wrong
- Often points out consequences of sin as a motivation in correcting others
- Serves as a messenger for God
- Is opinionated
- Has the capacity to persuasively declare God's will

Misuses:

- Feels the need to correct everyone and everything
- Can be critical of others when they fall
- Tends to cast judgment too quickly
- Becomes consumed with rebuking rather than restoring

Wisdom

Definition: The special ability to understand how to apply biblical truths to problems or opportunities which face a group of believers.

Biblical Example: Solomon, James 3:13-18

Characteristics:

- Is able to use knowledge in a practical way
- Combines what they know with a serious reverence of God in order to influence others
- Is a great counselor and gives tremendous advice
- Needs to stay in constant prayer, asking God for wisdom
- Perceptive

Misuses:

- Can sometimes speak down to people
- Pride can sneak in with an attitude of superiority
- Can respond too quickly

WEEK 3: DAY 1: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Begin this time with God by getting in a place where you can focus. Ask God to help you hear from Him over the next few minutes.

Read Romans 12:4-8.

We see in Romans that God has given each of us spiritual gifts. It is important that we utilize our gifts to help further His kingdom. Not only does God give each of us spiritual gifts by which the body of Christ is supported, but He also gives us what is needed to carry out the functions of His Church. God empowers and equips each and every one of us to use our gifts as we form ONE body.

Read verses 6-8 again. Circle the spiritual gifts that you read about in these verses:

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

Have you ever thought about what your spiritual gifts might be? _____

What benefit do you think that a spiritual gift might have on the body of Christ (*Christians*)?

Think about some of the Christians that you know. What are some of the gifts that you can see displayed in their lives?

Why do you think that God gives us DIFFERENT gifts and not all the same?

These verses in Romans list some of the spiritual gifts that God gives. This is not a comprehensive list, but it is one that we will start with. God gives generously to His children. His grace (*undeserved favor*) is given to us free of charge. When He gives us gifts, He desires us to USE those gifts for His glory.

How can you use the gifts that God gives you for Him and not just for yourself?

Spend time in prayer today, asking God to reveal the gifts that He has equipped you with.

WEEK 3: DAY 2: WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Grab your Bible and go somewhere without any distractions. Turn your cell phone off!

If you have accepted Christ into your life, God has given you one or more spiritual gifts. Every Christian receives these to help the body grow and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11.

How does it make you feel that God has given you spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural talents. The Bible teaches that these gifts are given for 3 purposes:

1. Equipping believers to share the good news of Jesus Christ
2. Authenticating the Gospel message (*Gospel means "good news"*)
3. Teaching believers to serve other believers

There are several passages in Scripture that talk about the spiritual gifts that God gives His children. Here are some verses that talk specifically about spiritual gifts:

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Ephesians 4:11-12

Here is a list of spiritual gifts from Scripture that God equips us with:

1. Prophecy
2. Service
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation / Encouragement
5. Giving
6. Leadership
7. Mercy
8. Wisdom
9. Knowledge
10. Faith
11. Healing
12. Miracles
13. Discernment
14. Tongues
15. Interpretation of tongues
16. Apostle
17. Helping
18. Administration
19. Evangelism
20. Pastor-teacher

Whether or not you know what your spiritual gifts are, pick three of the spiritual gifts listed above that seem like they might be ones you possess, and write the gift and a way that the gift could be used:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write out a short prayer telling God how you are committing to live for Him. Tell Him how you want to use the gifts that He has given you to benefit His kingdom.

WEEK 3: DAY 3: MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

It's time to get alone with God! Get excited about this time! It is an amazing thing to have a personal relationship with your Creator – remember not to take it for granted. Use this time to seek God with all of your heart.

Now that we know about the spiritual gifts, how do we use them to serve the church and others around us?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7.

Because we know that the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us when we become a Christian, then based on this verse, we can see that only Christians have spiritual gifts.

This is an amazing thing that God gives to us. He allows us to use our gifts to reach those who don't know Him and spread His name!

There are several ways that you can find out what your spiritual gifts are. There are many "spiritual gift tests" that you can take. These tests will ask you questions that will help reveal your tendencies and giftings. These can be great tools to help you discover what God has blessed you with.

Other ways to find your spiritual gifts are:

1. Through prayer
2. By studying the Bible
3. By watching how God is already using you
4. Discernment and confirmation from others

What has God shown you about your own gifts?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-27.

Have you ever felt insignificant? YES NO

Most of us have felt insignificant at one time or another in our lives. Through these verses in 1 Corinthians 12, we see that God has created us all to love and support each other. As Christians, we need each other. We need to all work together, using our individual giftings to help build each other up. We are all part of the body – no part being more important than the other.

How can you use your gifts to help unify the body of Christ?

Take a few minutes asking God to help reveal your spiritual gifts, so that you can better serve Him and others.

WEEK 3: DAY 4: USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Prepare yourself for this time with God. Make sure you get away from anything that could distract you.

Read Romans 1:11-12.

In these verses, Paul shares that he wants to encourage the Christians he is writing to; he wants to be encouraged by them as well. Our spiritual gifts are to be used to strengthen us as well as others around us. We are given these gifts to share them and help others. When you see someone struggling in their faith, ask yourself how you can use your gifts to encourage and help them.

Who is someone that you could encourage this week?

What will you do to encourage them?

Read Colossians 2:2-3.

List some people that you know right now that do not have a relationship with Christ and pray for them by name right now as well as throughout this coming week.

What can you do to share Jesus with them?

Be challenged to live your life this week in such a way that others will see it and want to know what is different about you. Be passionate about knowing God and making His name known. Wouldn't it be so awesome for those who are around you daily to see Christ in you and want to know Him? Live with your heart undividedly committed to God. This is a life with no regrets. It is the life that God has created you for.

What is God showing you in your own life that you can be doing differently?

Spend a couple minutes reflecting on what you have learned today and committing to live for God passionately and whole-heartedly.

WEEK 3: DAY 5: BE DIFFERENT

Grab your Bible and get in a place where you can listen and talk to God without any distractions.

Read Ephesians 4:21-24.

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, ²²throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy.”

What 3 things do these verses say that we are to do as Christians?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

As a Christian, God has called you to a higher standard. He has called us to throw off our old selfish, sinful nature and the way we used to live. We are to let the Holy Spirit renew the way we think and act, and then we are to put on our new nature – living like God – righteous and holy.

How can you put on your new nature in the way that you live today?

God has equipped us with spiritual gifts. We are to be humble with our gifts and live in such a way that everything is pointed back to Christ.

Flip back a few pages in the Bible and read Galatians 5:22-23. In your Bible, underline the things that the Holy Spirit will produce in our lives.

Write down 2 of the “fruits of the Spirit” listed in Galatians 5:22-23 that you will really work on this week.

Ask God to help you be different and “set apart.” Commit to spending time with Him and letting Him transform you to become more like Him.

WEEK 3: DAY 6: TRIAL AND ENDURANCE

Prepare yourself to spend time with God. Ask God to help you hear from Him today.

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

How can you use the gifts God has given you to serve others?

What does it mean to you that when you speak, it is like speaking the very words of God?

How can you represent God in a way that would honor Him?

According to 1 Peter, you should use whatever gift God has given you faithfully. This means that you should not allow it to go to waste. God knew what He was doing when He made you. He also knew what spiritual gift(s) He was going to bless you with. It is our job to be obedient and spread His truth to our city and beyond.

Read James 1. *This chapter talks about the trials that we will endure and how to persevere through them.*

According to this chapter, when you face trials and tests, what will it develop in you? (v. 3)

How can perseverance help you as you try to consistently use your spiritual gifts?

Write out a prayer to God, asking Him to help you use the gifts that you've been given no matter what you go through in life.

WEEK 3: DAY 7: GO AFTER JESUS

Head to a place without distractions and spend the next few moments quiet before God. When you've done this, ask God to teach you more about Himself during this time.

Looking back over this week and thinking about what God has shown you about spiritual gifts should be a very exciting thing in your life. You have more Biblical truth to stand on and the principles to go along with it.

Once, you've realized and understood what spiritual gifts God has given you, it will help you serve more efficiently. Now, do not think because something might not be your "spiritual gift," that it means you cannot do it or still serve in that area. God can and will use you in whatever way He chooses. Our job is simply to be available to Him.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

What are 2 or 3 spiritual gifts that are hard for you to live out?

How can Christ's strength help you in your weaknesses in these areas?

Our culture is saturated in "me, me, me." We live in a world that says to please self first and foremost. It is uncommon for people to consistently put others before themselves. Even though this is not the norm, it is what God has called each and every one of us to. We are first called to follow Christ. We must give up our selfish desires, because we believe that God knows what is best for our lives. When we do this, it is then that we truly find life.

Read Luke 9:23-24.

How can you deny yourself this week to follow Christ?

What do you think you will gain by choosing to put God and others before yourself?

Close this time out in prayer, committing to live in the strength of Christ and for the glory of His name.

WEEK 4: FAMILY

Leader Guide

Before you begin...

Remember that the students in your group have all different types of family backgrounds. They come from great families, bad families, broken families, divorced families, sibling conflict, abuse, etc. Do not assume or act as though everyone comes from an ideal family.

Pray to open your group session.

Introduction

Have bite-sized candy and ask a variety of questions to see how well students know the little stuff about their family. Toss a piece of candy to anyone who answers correctly.

Use questions like:

- What is your sister's favorite thing to do?
- Where does your brother like to hang out?
- What is the first thing your mom does at work each day?
- What is your dad's favorite ice cream flavor?
- What is your mom's favorite TV show?

It's easy to complain about parents and siblings – I used to complain about mine too. But what would happen if we put energy into strengthening our relationships with them? It's not as easy as complaining, but it is more effective. Today, we're going to focus on developing a relationship with our family, whether they're our biological, step, or adoptive family. The truth is that you can have a huge impact on the quality of your relationship with your family by following God's plan.

1. Be **HONORABLE** – **HONOR** your parents.

- Sometimes we fool ourselves into thinking we understand the world better than our parents.
- Parents have a major advantage over you – life experience.

Illustration: 7-year-old's Dinner

Imagine you're babysitting a seven-year-old and feeding him dinner. There's a jar of cookies and candy on the kitchen counter next to the veggies and pasta you're supposed to make for him. If you let the kid pick what he wants to eat, he'll most likely go for the all-candy and all-cookie diet. But you – with your massive life experience – know he'll probably puke if he only eats junk. Your life experience gives you a better perspective. *(So you feed him the veggies and keep the candy for yourself!)* Parents have this same life experience advantage over you – not just for dinner plans, but in most areas of life.

Have a student read this verse:

Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

Questions to discuss...

Define what it means to honor your parents.

What are some ways that you can do this?

Illustration: Ice Cream with Lincoln

- Sure, Abraham Lincoln – the U.S. president who ended slavery – is dead. But pretend he isn't. And pretend you're sitting down with him at an ice cream shop. He chose a double scoop of rocky road. Abe, as he tells you to call him, is telling you about how difficult it was to stand his ground when he knew it meant leading the nation into civil war. Do you constantly pipe up and interrupt, telling your own little trivial stories? Of course not – because, after all, he's the President. You want to honor him, show him the respect he deserves, listen to his experience and perspective, and gain everything you can from this moment.
- Your parents might not be Abe Lincolns, but they deserve – according to God – this same honor.
- Sometimes honoring people – our parents included – feels weird because our culture puts such a high value on everyone being equal that we've lost our understanding of how to honor people.

2. Be INSPIRATIONAL – set the EXAMPLE.

There's no question that improving your relationship with your family is tough work. But the reward can be great – you could have a major impact on your whole family!

Have a student read this verse:

1 Timothy 4:12 – “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

It is not easy to be an example, but you can do it!

Question to discuss...

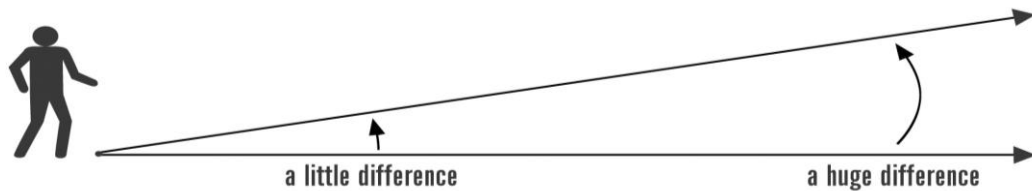
How can you be an example with others?

How can you be an example within your family?

(Students don't have many people who believe in them. Tell them you believe in them, and when they succeed, tell them you are proud of them. Many of them never hear that from adults.)

Illustration: One Degree of Change

Ask students to imagine a line starting from where you stand and extending out for 100 miles. Now have them imagine bumping the line one degree – just a tiny nudge. One foot away from you, the line would hardly be any different. But if you walked out 50 or 75 of those miles, the difference would be huge! This is the effect students can have on their families. By being an example of love and forgiveness – by obeying, honoring, and respecting their parents – the long-term effects can be huge!



Actions: So What Does it Look Like?

Have a couple students role play the parts of parents and siblings and act out what it might look like to honor their parents and set the example in their family.

The responses of parents and siblings will be funny, but make sure they really try to act it out right.

Extra Discussion Questions...

- **On a scale of 1 to 10, how hard is it to believe that God wants what's best for you when He asks you to obey your parents? Explain.**
- **What are some ways to set an example in your home?**
- **How do you respond if your parents aren't willing to share much about their lives? What if they don't seem to want a deep relationship with you or don't seem to have time for you?**
- **What if you don't respect your parents? Is it still possible to honor them? How?**
- **What would you tell a person who has a terrible relationship with their family? Where should they start?**
- **Is it ever okay to disobey your parents? When?**
- **In what area of your family life do you think you could change things a little? What difference could that one change make 1 yr. from now?**

Close your time in prayer.

WEEK 4: DAY 1: FAMILY

Make sure you are in a place where you can spend the next few minutes with God without any distractions.

Read Ephesians 6:1-3.

What does God promise you if you honor your parents?

Imagine a beautiful painting hanging in an art gallery. When you look at the painting, you know one thing is true – the artist knew what he or she was doing. The most incredible artists are the ones who can have a picture in their head and make it look the same on the canvas. They may not all be the exact same, but those are the paintings that seem to really last.

That is exactly what God wants to do with your life! He knows what a perfect painting of your life will look like, and through this Scripture, He tells you one of the best ways to make your life right. He says if you can do this one thing – honor your parents – things will go well in your life and you will last!

What does it mean to obey your parents?

What does it mean to honor your parents?

Did you know it is possible to obey without honoring? Imagine your mom or dad tells you to do the dishes. You can make a sigh of frustration, go into the kitchen, do the dishes, and be upset about it. You are obeying your parents, but are you really honoring them?

What is the area of your life that you have the most difficulty obeying your parents?

What area is most difficult to honor them?

What could happen if the next time they asked you to do something, you not only obeyed, but you honored them IMMEDIATELY. You may not want to do it, but you do it anyway (*and with a good attitude*), because you're commanded by God and because you want to honor God by honoring your parents.

That's picture perfect!

Write out a short prayer, asking God to help you do what you've learned today.

WEEK 4: DAY 2: FAMILY

Before you begin, take about 2 minutes to remove any distractions around you and in your mind. Pray and ask God to speak to you today.

Read Ephesians 6:4.

Have you ever gotten angry because of the way your parents treated you?

Have you ever thought your parents were too strict?

Imagine you were given a beautiful fish from someone very special to you. This fish means so much to you that you do everything you can to make sure that it is taken care of. You would probably try to make sure the water is always clean. You may try to make the bowl or aquarium really nice. You may even try to put in some friends for him to swim around with. Whatever it is that you do, your main goal is to take care of this fish because it is special to you.

List 2 things that you think your parents are too strict about:

What would you do if the fish jumped out onto the floor? Put it back in, right? Why? Obviously you would put it back in because you know that is the safest place for the fish to be. What if your fish could talk and looked at you with his little fish face and said, "I don't like this bowl. I want to be free!" What would you do?

First, you'd pass out because your fish is talking! After you woke up, you would probably say, "I'm sorry, but I want what is best for you, and I know that being outside the water is not the best thing."

Sometimes parents will make decisions because they know what is best for you – whether you like it or not. No parent is perfect, and some are very tough, but you still have to honor them whether you agree or not. They are responsible for your safety and well-being. Sometimes they have to make hard decisions about what you can or cannot do, watch, listen to, who you can hang out with, where you can go, etc.

Look back at those 2 things you listed earlier. Why do you think your parent might be “tight” in those areas?

Do you feel like your parents are “bringing you up” to know and honor God with your life? Why or why not?

If the answer is no, write down the name of an adult that you respect and you think wants God’s best for you in your life: _____

Tell that person (*your parent or other adult*) this week about what you learned today and ask them to help you because you know they want God’s best for you!

Thank God that you are special to Him. Thank Him for all the things He has given you, and ask Him to help you live your life for Him.

WEEK 4: DAY 3: FAMILY

Get away from all distractions for the next few minutes. Ask God to help you focus.

Read Genesis 4:1-9.

Whether you have brothers, sisters, both, or none, did you know that the Bible tells us clearly how we are to treat our siblings? No matter what, we are to treat people with love and kindness. We are not to fake kindness, but we are called to show real, sincere kindness.

What are some things about your siblings that make you mad?

(If you don't have siblings, think of other family or friends.)

In Genesis 4, Cain asks if he's supposed to be his brother's keeper. The real answer is YES! Did you know that it is your job to take care of your family, your siblings, parents, and friends? If you see something going on with them that will not be good, you are supposed to do everything you can to help them. That's a big responsibility! It can sometimes be harder to do with older siblings. But especially with younger siblings, you need to first set an example *(by loving them and treating them with kindness even when they are annoying)*, and you need to protect them from their own mistakes and from others.

What are some things you can do to help take care of your siblings?

With Cain and Abel, what was the problem that started it all? Jealousy. They brought their offerings to God, and God did not accept Cain's, but He looked on Abel with favor. Have you ever been jealous of your brother or sister? What about a friend? It was not just that Cain was jealous; in verse 7, it says that Cain was not doing what was right. He wasn't bringing the best of what he had to God – he brought leftovers.

What areas of your life do you give your leftovers to God? Time? Attention? Prayer? Obeying God?

Do you think that treating your family the way God wants you to will impact your life as a whole? How?

What is your normal reaction when your brother or sister annoys you?

What do you think you should do the next time your brother or sister annoys you?

Read Colossians 3:12-13.

How can you apply these verses to your life beginning right now? Write down specific ways:

Close this time with God in prayer.

WEEK 4: DAY 4: FAMILY

Make sure you are in a place where you can spend the next few minutes with God without any distractions.

Describe a time that you hurt someone with your words:

**Who are the people that you tend to hurt with your words the most?
People you don't like? Friends? Family?**

Read Proverbs 10:17-21.

Write out what verse 19 says:

Have you ever said something and wished you could take it back? Sometimes, we get so fired up that we just throw darts out of our mouths – usually at the people we love and care about the most. Have you ever noticed that the people that can hurt you the most deeply are the ones that you care for the most? Did you know that just a few wrong words spoken at the wrong time can hurt the people that love you most?

How many times per week do you think you talk back to your parents? _____

How many times per week would your parents say you talk back to them or give them a hard time when you don't like something they say? _____

When was the last time that you knew, "If I say this, I am going to get into trouble," but you still said it anyway? It's interesting how we know what we should do, and we know there will be consequences, but we say things we shouldn't anyway. Have you ever met someone who always has to have the last word? Are you that person?

Too often our words come out before we have a chance to filter them. A great phrase to keep in mind is, "Load your mind before you shoot off your mouth." The key verse Proverbs 10:19 tells us to hold our tongue. One version says, "Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut."

What things do you get most frustrated about and shoot off your mouth?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

Close your time by asking God to help you honor Him in what you say.

WEEK 4: DAY 5: FAMILY

Before you open your Bible and start reading, just sit for a minute. Don't do anything. Turn off any music, TV, cell phone, or computer. After a minute, begin your time with God in prayer.

Read Ephesians 4:22-32.

Verse 29 says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Did you know that Christians are not the same people they used to be? They may still have the same name and look the same, but when the Holy Spirit enters your life, He creates a brand new you! The only way you can live out all these things you learn is if you choose to walk in the "new you."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Underline this verse in your Bible.

Imagine a butterfly that chooses to act like a caterpillar. She still crawls around from place to place and never chooses to fly, because that's what she knows. This caterpillar is a brand new creature, but she is missing out on the incredible things she can see and do, because she chooses not to live like the new creature she has become!

This can happen to Christians too!

Re-read Ephesians 4:25-32.

Of all the things listed in these verses, which are the most difficult for you?

Read Ephesians 4:29 again SLOWLY.

How can you live out this verse today?

Yesterday, you spent some time looking at verses in Proverbs about holding your tongue. Holding your tongue can keep you out of a lot of trouble, and it is definitely a great start, but what would happen if when you did speak, you spoke words that are helpful and beneficial to those who listen?

Proverbs 16:24 says, “Kind words are like honey - sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.”

What do you think would happen if the words your family spoke were always helpful and beneficial?

Below, list your family members and something helpful and kind that you should tell them today. (Example: “Mom, thank you for making this meal today.”)

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

WEEK 4: DAY 6: FAMILY

Take a minute or so before you start reading to empty yourself out in front of God. Lay down what's going on in your life at His feet, and ask Him to help you focus on Him and live for Him today.

Read Proverbs 23:12-25.

Proverbs 23:19, "Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path."

What does it mean to "keep your heart on the right path"?

Have you ever said something to someone who did not hear you? What was their reaction? If they really wanted to hear from you, they probably said, "What did you say?" They may have even leaned in so they could hear you better. The first verse you just read says that we are to focus our hearts and our ears on instruction and words of knowledge. We are supposed to lean in to hear more clearly.

We have all heard stories about how guys are "never lost." They never want to stop and ask for directions, and they never admit that they don't know where they are going. For all of us, it's easier to tell yourself that you're going the right way.

If you're lost on the road, which would you probably do?

(Put a circle next to your typical response)

- I would deny that I'm lost.
- I would stop and ask someone else who has never been there.
- I would ask someone who knows the directions from experience.

Now, put an "X" by the response you should have.

Obviously, the first two are easy and might make us feel better, but asking people who know from experience will always get us where we need to be the fastest.

How often do you actually lean in and try to learn from your parents and their experience? Does that sound weird to you? There are some things that you might think your parents "just don't understand." That is okay. The problem is when you think you know everything so much better than they do.

Re-read Proverbs 23:24-25.

Do you think that your parents have joy because you are their child?

YES

NO

Why or why not?

What are some areas that you think you should probably be more open to listening to your parents?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

Make a commitment to God, and ask Him to help you remember to do what you're committing to.

WEEK 4: DAY 7: FAMILY

Today is a big day! You get the chance to meet with God today! Make sure that you will not have any distractions for the next few minutes.

Read 1 Timothy 4:12.

Paul wrote this letter to a young guy named Timothy. He was trying to encourage Timothy, even though Timothy was very young.

What do you think Paul was trying to say to Timothy?

The first thing Paul says is, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young.” Paul is NOT SAYING that Timothy should act like he knows everything or to refuse to let people give him instruction. Paul is telling Timothy, “You can do great things – even as a young person!”

For the next few minutes, you’re going to have to consider what GREAT THINGS God might want to do, first in your life, then through your life to encourage other people.

This whole week you’ve studied your relationship with your family. Maybe there are some problems in your family – maybe your parents aren’t Christians, they’re split, they fight a lot, you have a bad relationship with them or your siblings, you don’t feel loved, or you aren’t encouraged by them. What can you really do in a family like that?

This verse is for YOU no matter who you are or who your family is!

Do you believe that God can use you to do GREAT (*not just good*) things in your family?

YES NO

Paul lists 5 areas for Timothy to focus on setting an example. Write how you can set an example in each of these areas in your family and with others:

SPEECH

Family: _____

Others: _____

LIFE

Family: _____

Others: _____

LOVE

Family: _____

Others: _____

FAITH

Family: _____

Others: _____

PURITY

Family: _____

Others: _____

WEEK 5: PEER PRESSURE

Leader Guide

Pray to open your group session.

Intro Game – Untangled Mission:

- Break up the students into even teams of 8 or more.
- Have them form a circle.
- Each team member must take their right hand and grab the right hand of a team member who is not standing next to them.
- Then, they must take their left hand and grab the left hand of a different team member who is not standing next to them.
- Without ever letting go, have them untangle themselves.
- Have a small prize (*ex. small candy*) for each team once they finish.

Questions to discuss...

- **Did your team follow the rules the **WHOLE** way?**
- **Why is it not as cool to complete the mission, knowing that you broke the rules? Doesn't it take away some of the excitement of *really* completing the mission?**
- **What did you feel if your team accomplished their mission exactly like you were supposed to?**

God has a PLAN, PURPOSE, and MISSION for every one of us...

Have a student read this verse:

Acts 20:24 - "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me..."

Illustration: Tortoise & the Hare

- We've all heard the story of the tortoise and the hare.
- Have a student explain the moral of the story.
- **It's not how fast you START the race, it's how you FINISH.**

PREPARING FOR THE CHRISTIAN MARATHON

1. Train to FINISH the race.

Have students read these verses:

1 Timothy 4:8 – “Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

2 Timothy 4:7-8 – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...”

1 Corinthians 9:24 - “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”

2. Plan for ENDURANCE.

Have a student read this verse:

Hebrews 12:1 – “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

3. Develop the SKILLS.

Question to discuss...

What are some important skills you need to make it through the Christian marathon?

- Reading the Bible (God’s love letter, road map, playbook...)
- Prayer
- Bible memorization (Psalm 119:11)
- Etc.

4. Find the RIGHT PEOPLE to train with.

Have students read these verses:

1 Corinthians 9:25-26 – “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly...”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 – “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work; ¹⁰If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Proverbs 18:24 – “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

YOU NEED...

Friends with a similar PURPOSE

Activity:

- You will need a rope (about 10-feet long) for this activity.
- Have a student tie one end of the rope around their waist. Have another student tie the other end around their waist.
- Tell them to walk in opposite directions.
- What happens?
- If your friends are not going the right direction (straight toward God), they are only going to keep you from moving straight toward God yourself.

YOU NEED...

People that will MENTOR or CHALLENGE you

5. Rely on the COACH.

Have a student read this verse:

Colossians 1:29 (NCV) - “To do this, I work and struggle, using Christ’s great strength that works so powerfully in me.”

Challenge the students to do their quiet times this week.

Close your time in prayer.

WEEK 5: DAY 1: PEER PRESSURE

Make sure you are in a location where you can spend the next few minutes with God without any distractions.

Read Colossians 3:1-10.

Look at verses 2-3. What are these verses saying?

Imagine, down the road, you meet “the one” for you... What if you decided to get married, and on your wedding day, that person looked at you and said, “I think I’m still going to date the same people that I used to and act like I’m not actually married. But I still love you, and I am 100% committed to you.”

What would you think? Would you believe them?

No way! Any person in their right mind would say, “No, you have to let go of (or lay to rest) those other relationships, or you’re not really committed to me at all!”

Why do you think the writer of Colossians (*Paul*) says that we should “set our HEARTS on things above”?

Why would he also say to set our “MINDS on things above”? What is the difference?

God wants your heart (*all of your feelings and emotions*) as well as your mind (*the way you think*) completely focused on Him and thinking like Jesus.

What are the things that keep your heart and mind from being focused on God?

What things would change if your heart and mind were focused on God all the time?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.

What do these verses say we have been given, and what does that mean for you?

NOW WHAT?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

WEEK 5: DAY 2: PEER PRESSURE

To begin your time today, get away from all distractions and pray. Thank God for all He has given you, and ask Him to speak to you today.

What 3 things do you value most?

Read Matthew 6:19-21.

What are these verses saying?

What are some “treasures” that people store up on earth?

Have you ever met someone who had their priorities mixed up – someone who would give up what’s most important in life for what seems to be important at the time?

As a high school student, you have to make choices everyday between what is most important in life and what seems to be most important at the time. Will you trade in your greatest relationships for popularity? Your grades for television? Your purity for someone to like you? Hard work to get better for laziness? Will you trade in your witness and relationship with God to do things that gain the attention or approval of others? You can’t have both. Which will it be?

What are the most important things in your life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Did your relationship with God make that list? YES NO

What are the things that you are tempted to trade for the things that are most important?

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

“Discontentment happens when we trade in what we want most for what we want at the moment.”

Read Philippians 4:8.

What does this verse say that we are to think about?

What needs to happen for you to be able to think on these things?

NOW WHAT?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

Take a few minutes to ask God to help you do what you've learned.

WEEK 5: DAY 3: PEER PRESSURE

Go to a place where you won't be distracted. Pray and thank God for giving you another day. Ask Him to speak to you in the next few minutes.

Read Matthew 6:25-34.

What are these verses saying?

Verse 33 says to seek God first. What are some other things that students "seek" each day?

Did you know that the average American student sees over 40,000 commercials per year? Advertisers spend over 15 billion dollars a year in America so that they can convince kids and students to buy their products.

A basic marketing principle is to create a need that is so strong that you must have that product. Marketers, TV producers, radio hosts, and everyone else is trying to tell you that if you do not seek to have what they offer, then you are missing out.

Jesus says, "Don't worry about all that other stuff... the people who worry about all that stuff don't know God. If you know God, spend time to know Him more, trust Him and do what He says – He will take care of the rest!"

Have you ever worried about something and then exactly what you worried about actually happened? Write down what it was.

Did you know that you can worry about a million things all day long and most of those things are out of your control? God is in control of everything, but He will not force you to do anything!

What do these verses in Matthew 6 say that God will do if we give Him control?

What specific things most often get in the way of you seeking God first?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are you going to do anything about it? YES NO

What will you do about it? Write next to them (*above*) what you are going to do.

Read Philippians 4:6.

What does this verse say to do?

NOW WHAT?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

Close your time today by writing out a prayer asking God to help you seek Him first.

WEEK 5: DAY 4: PEER PRESSURE

Make sure that you are in a place where you won't be distracted. Ask God to speak to you and help you honor Him in all you do today.

Read Galatians 5:7-13.

Write out what verse 7 says.

Have you ever tripped on stage or in front of people? It's funny how you could have taken 100 steps in front of people, but it only takes that one step to be completely embarrassed.

Sometimes, people think that it's not a big deal when they trip up in their spiritual lives. This couldn't be further from the truth! It doesn't matter if you tripped up yourself or if someone helped cause you to trip up. You can't blame others, and you always need to make sure that you watch out for others that might trip you up. Watch out for people who might "cut in on you and keep you from obeying the truth." Ultimately, your spiritual life comes down to YOU!

What are some things that trip people up spiritually?

Look again at verse 9. Did you know that if you take 11 good eggs, break them and put them into a bowl to make scrambled eggs, then you take just 1 rotten egg and put it into the bowl, it ruins your eggs?

The same is true with your life! You cannot separate sin in your life from the rest of your life. Once it is in your life, it impacts everything else!

What does Galatians 5:13 mean?

If you've ever seen a basketball game, you know that there are boundaries. What if a basketball player said, "I want to play in the crowd instead of the court"? He would be called out of bounds and would lose, and it wouldn't be fun. What if he said, "This isn't fair, I should have the freedom to play wherever I want"? Pretty ridiculous, right?

There is so much freedom to run and enjoy the game, but it has to be within the boundaries. The same is true of Christianity – we are FREE! We have the choice to stay "in bounds" or not, but we will only experience the fullness of life when we run inside the freedom that is marked out by God!

LISTEN...

Stop for a minute. Look deep into your life and your heart. What are some areas that you are living out of bounds? Take a couple of minutes and ask God to reveal some areas where you need to get back in bounds and live in the true freedom that God has created you for.

NOW WHAT?

What are the areas that God showed you?

What are you going to do about them beginning now?

WEEK 5: DAY 5: PEER PRESSURE

Before you open your Bible and start reading, just sit still for a minute. Don't do anything. Turn off any music, TV, cell phone, computer, whatever. After a minute, pray.

Write down a time that you have felt a lot of pressure.

What are some other pressures you face right now as a student?

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Pressure impacts a lot of things. Did you know that a car won't run without pressure? You wouldn't be able to take a shower in your home without water pressure. You wouldn't be alive if your heart were not creating enough pressure to pump the blood throughout your body.

There is no doubt that you have a lot of pressure in your life to get good grades, to perform, to make the team, cast, band or squad, to deal with family issues, or to live up to high expectations from parents, teachers, coaches, friends, boyfriends or girlfriends, acquaintances and peers. Not all of this pressure is bad, but no matter what, when we allow pressure to build, it can cause serious problems.

We have different words for when pressure builds. One common word is stress. Other ways that pressure reveals itself is through drama, temper, depression, bitterness, and weakness.

The most common form of pressure you encounter right now and all throughout high school is **PEER PRESSURE**.

Here is the big question you always have to ask when it comes to peer pressure:

What am I willing to sacrifice to make myself believe that others really accept me?

It is an exhausting life to live under all that pressure.

Read Matthew 11:28-30.

What does Jesus promise that He will give us if we come to Him?

Is this a relief? When it comes to peer pressure, how is this a relief?

Jesus will take that pressure off of you EVERY DAY if you just give that pressure to Him!

NOW WHAT?

As a commitment to God, write down some things that you are not going to sacrifice because of pressure. As you write them down, pray and release the burden of those areas to God.

Share these with someone you trust and commit to stay strong together!

WEEK 5: DAY 6: PEER PRESSURE

Before you start reading, ask God to help you listen to Him today.

Read Romans 12:1-2.

Re-read verse 1 in your Bible, then stop.

Did you notice that it says to offer your body as a LIVING sacrifice? Is that weird to you at all? Isn't a sacrifice something that dies? But Paul, the writer of Romans, says that because God had mercy on you (*you deserved death, but He sent Jesus to die in your place*), you should live for Him!

What are the areas of your life that are most difficult to live for God?

When you give your life to God, you become a living sacrifice, because you are giving up (*sacrificing*) living your own way for living God's way. But it's not always easy. The biggest problem with a living sacrifice is that it can get up and walk away from the altar. A lot of times in our lives, what happens is that we commit our lives to God. Distractions and temptations come into our lives, and we begin to think we know what is best. We have committed our lives to God, but then we get up and walk away, doing what we think will satisfy us. It never does. Only God's way leads to complete and lasting satisfaction in life.

Read Jeremiah 29:11.

What does this verse say about God's plans for you?

God offers each of us great things if we would just give up trying to live our own way.

Now go back, and re-read Romans 12:2.

What do you think is the difference between conforming and transforming?

Conforming means you're becoming just like something else. As you look at the patterns of the world – violence, war, divorce, disease, depression, etc. – do you really want to conform? Transformation means that you're becoming something brand new! Not just improved, but brand new! Paul says that the way you become new is to change your mind (*"renew your mind"*).

Imagine a baseball player giving up baseball to play professional basketball. What if he ran onto the court in his baseball uniform, hat, glove, and bat, saying, "Hey batter, batter." Everyone would laugh at him. You'd say, "Dude, you're playing a new game. You're not a baseball player anymore." He would need to renew his mind!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

What does this verse say that you are if you are in Christ?

What area of your life are you not living new?

NOW WHAT?

What specific things are you going to do starting right now, based on what you learned today?

Close your time in prayer. Commit to living new and ask God to help you!

WEEK 5: DAY 7: PEER PRESSURE

Make sure you are in a location where you can spend the next few minutes with God without any distractions.

Read Proverbs 21:5.

Imagine that you're in the American Idol finale. You have made it through months of tiring competition, and you're just left with one other person to compete with for the recording contract.

What would you have been doing for the last 5 days if you were really in that situation?

Now imagine, the other person has just stepped off the stage after completely blowing the crowd away with their talent and ability. You step onto the stage and think, "I wonder what music they're going to play for me. Maybe I should have practiced..." Right now, you're probably thinking, "NO WAY! That would never happen! If I have a chance like that, I would have practiced and prepared until I knew I was going to make it happen."

The incredible truth is that every day, you have the chance to make something huge happen in your life! You have the chance to be in relationship with God who created the whole universe, created you, and wants you to know Him more. God wants to speak to you and use you to do awesome things!

There are 3 types of people:

- **People who MAKE THINGS HAPPEN**
- **People who WATCH THINGS HAPPEN**
- **People who ASK, "WHAT HAPPENED?"**

Which type of person are you?

Which do you want to be?

One version of Proverbs 21:5 says, "Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty." It takes planning and preparation to make things happen.

DO YOU WANT GOD TO SHOW UP BIG IN YOUR LIFE THIS YEAR?

NOW WHAT?

Take time to think and pray before answering this question...

WHAT will it look like for God to show up BIG in your life?

HOW will you be a part of making it happen?

WEEK 6: SERVING IN A LOCAL BODY OF BELIEVERS

Leader Guide

Pray to open your group session.

This week we will be discussing the importance of serving in the body of Christ. Serving in the body of believers is extremely vital to all of our walks with God. It is also important for us to remember that as we serve we become more like Christ.

Have a student read these verses:

Matthew 20:26-28 – "...whoever wants to become great among you must be your SERVANT,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your SLAVE –²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Questions to discuss...

What do these verses mean?

How can you apply it to your life?

Why is it important to serve others?

It is important to serve in a local body of believers because:

- 1. It allows us to be a part of the BODY OF CHRIST.**
 - **How does serving connect you to others?**
 - **What impact can serving have on others around you?**
(encouragement, meeting needs, influencing others to serve, etc.)
- 2. It teaches us how to SERVE like Christ served.**
 - John 13:1-17 – story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet
 - Jesus humbled Himself to do a servant's task of washing the disciples' feet.
 - **How can you serve others like Christ did?**
- 3. It CHALLENGES our faith and helps us GROW CLOSER to God.**
 - Ephesians 6:7 – "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men."

Have a student read these verses:

¹ Peter 1:22-23 – "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

Questions to discuss...

What are some ways that you can serve other Christians?

What are some ways that you can serve in our church?

Have students write out some of the ways that they (personally) can serve.

Challenge the students to serve within the body of Christ in some way this week.

Split students up into “service groups” with others that are interested in serving in the same ways that they are. (*i.e.* – *greeting on the weekends & Wednesdays, prayer team, visiting elderly, outreach, etc.* – *nothing is off limits!*)

Spend time praying in groups over your church campus and body of believers, and ask for God to reveal ways for the students to be a part of this body.

WEEK 6: DAY 1: SERVING – BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Get alone and spend the next few moments with just you and God...without any distractions.

Read Matthew 20:26-28.

What do these verses say that you need to do if you want to be “first” or “great”?

How does this make sense?

In order to be like Christ, we must lay down our lives and become servants in all that we do. Jesus always put others first and served everyone around Him. He is an example that we are called to follow.

How can you serve someone else TODAY?

God has blessed you with SO much! Many of you have come from a family where you have never really needed much. Many of you have also come from families where you have grown up with many needs. No matter what your background or family is like, compared to the majority of people in the world, you are very rich. There is much to be thankful for. As God blesses us in our lives, we are called to give back to Him and to others.

What are some ways that you could give to someone who is less fortunate than yourself? Be creative. Think of one or more ways that you could give of yourself, your time, your money, etc.

WEEK 6: DAY 2: WAYS TO SERVE

Find a place without any distractions and spend the next few minutes with your Bible and God.

Read John 13:16-17.

Write out what verse 17 says:

What is the difference between “head knowledge” and “heart knowledge”?

It is one thing to know something. You can know facts and really believe them, but until you begin to act on your beliefs, it means nothing. God has called you to serve with your life. You can know this and believe it, but you must begin to do it. The Bible says that you will be blessed if you do. This is the difference between knowing something in your head and truly believing it in your heart.

God has called us all to serve within our church. One of the things that our church wants every member to do is the 1+1+1 principle. What this means is we would love for every person to be involved weekly in 1 hour of a Worship Service, 1 hour of Bible study, and 1 hour of serving in some area.

If you're not quite sure what's out there, here are some different ways that you can serve within the church:

1. Pray for your church.
2. Tithe – God calls His children to give at least 10% of what they earn back to God.
3. Be a greeter – help welcome people to church.
4. Sing or play in the worship band.
5. Help clean or prepare for events.
6. Write cards or make phone calls to visitors.
7. Be available to do whatever, whenever.

No matter what you do, you should do it for the Lord. The greatest blessing we can receive is by serving and being a part of the Church.

List some things that you could do to help serve at church: *(even if it wasn't on the list above)*

Close this time in prayer asking God to help you become a servant. Commit this day to Him and find ways to serve throughout the day today.

WEEK 6: DAY 3: CHRIST IS THE HEAD

Today is another day to spend with God! Get excited about it! Dive into today's time with anticipation for what God wants to teach you.

Many people agree that we must be "born again" (see *John 3:1-21*), but they think that being a church member or serving in your church is unimportant. We need to consider that being "born again" makes us members of the family of God and that the church is the family of God. God wants us to serve and minister to those who are a part of the church.

What does it mean that you are a part of the family of God?

How can you serve within that family?

The church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of the body. There is only one body, just like there is only one God and Father.

Read Ephesians 5:23-27.

We need to understand that as believers, being a part of the body of Christ is very important. God designed YOU individually to be a part of a church. The church needs everyone to be a part, just like a body needs all of its parts to function properly. Christ is the head of the church, and He is the One who leads us in all that we do.

Have you been serving in your church? YES NO

If so, how have you been serving?

Reflect on if and how you have been serving. Ask God to show you a way to get more involved, so that you can help be a part of the bigger story of making Christ known in the way that you live and serve with your life.

WEEK 6: DAY 4: BY GRACE

Begin this time by getting your heart right before God. Ask Him to help remove all distractions, so that you can focus on Him alone during this time.

Read Colossians 1:17-18.

Christ is the head of the church – the body of Christ – CHRISTIANS! He has called each and every one of us to follow Him and trust in Him with our entire lives. We can know without a doubt that He has saved us from our sins. It is by grace that we have been saved through faith. (*Ephesians 2:8*)

Read Romans 12:3-5.

What are these verses saying?

God has poured out His grace (*undeserved favor*) onto us, and we are called to live humble and unselfish lives.

Why are you thankful for God's grace?

Knowing that we don't deserve all that we have received, how can you turn those blessings around and refuse to live selfishly?

Thank God for His grace that He has given to you, and commit to living for His glory.

WEEK 6: DAY 5: GOD IS WITH YOU

Today you get to meet one-on-one with the God of the universe! Begin this time with eagerness to meet with Him – your Father and Creator!

Read Acts 4:13.

What was it that people recognized about Peter and John?

Do people recognize that God is with you in everything you do? Is there something about your presence in your neighborhood or schools that causes others to sit up and take notice? The reality is: we have all messed up! At times, we all prove to be hypocrites in the way that we live. But in spite of this, is God still revealing Himself through you to the world you live in?

How do you think that God could reveal Himself through your life to others?

What needs to change in your life for others to see Christ through you?

God can take the most ordinary and simple people and use them in mighty ways! He did this with Peter and John. It says in Scripture that people were able to see that they had “been with Jesus.” How cool is that! It would be so awesome if people could look at your life and know that you had been meeting with Jesus on a regular basis – if they could tell that your life was totally saturated with Christ’s love and grace.

Just like Peter and John in the Bible, our courage comes from God, and the world can see it in us if we spend time with Him.

Spend some time today in total silence and allow God to speak to you. Ask Him to reveal to you areas where you have been sinning. Ask Him for opportunities to stand up in your school and among your friends so that you can be an example to them. Pray for boldness and courage. Now be silent and allow Him to speak...

WEEK 6: DAY 6: BE LIKE CHRIST

Begin this time by going to a quiet place without any distractions. Ask God to reveal Himself to you today in new and exciting ways.

Read Philippians 4:8-9.

What are the things that these verses tell us to set our minds on?

Life isn't always easy, and we don't always get along with everyone. However, God has called us to have a Christ-like attitude during any and all experiences with conflict. The reality is that there IS conflict even in the church. We are all human, and we all mess up at times. Our goal needs to be to learn to work like a "team" and serve the church and God TOGETHER!

We must choose to set our minds on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. We must think on these things and refuse to let conflict and ultimately the enemy gain a foothold in our lives and relationships.

What do you need to set your mind on this week?

How are you going to do this?

Take a few moments thanking God for walking through every moment of life with you. Commit to thinking on the things that would please Him, and ask Him to help you be a team player with your fellow Christians.

WEEK 6: DAY 7: GOING FORWARD

Find a place with no distractions and spend the next few minutes with your Bible and God.

Over the past week, you should have learned about being a part of a local church, serving in your church, different ways to serve, and how to deal with conflict inside of the church.

It is now time to take what you have learned and begin doing it. Find out ways to get more involved with your church and serve in whatever ways you can. God is true to His Word and He will bless you for your faithfulness.

Read 1 Peter 1:22-23.

What do these verses tell you?

It is so amazing to see Christians when they “love one another deeply.” When we choose to live this way, it is then that God can use us in powerful ways as we work together for His glory. There is nothing like a unified group of Christians seeking God wholeheartedly. Nothing can stop the movement that this will cause!

What has God shown you throughout this week?

How have you implemented what He has shown you into your daily life?

End this time by praying and asking God to help you be unified with the Christians around you. Commit to living for Him in every area of life.