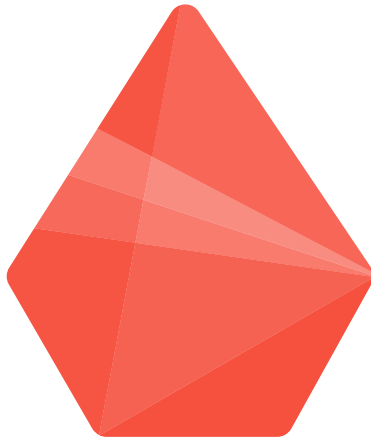




STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

8 WEEKS OF
NOTICING GOD
MORE

A Sticky Faith Curriculum for Your Entire Youth Ministry



FULLER YOUTH
INSTITUTE

fulleryouthinstitute.org

Sticky Faith Every Day

8 Weeks of Noticing God More

Introduction for Leaders



1 out of 2.



1 out of 7.

When it comes to preparing seniors for life after youth group, these are probably the two most important statistics you need to know.

Approximately one half of youth group seniors significantly struggle with their faith and with finding a church after graduation.*

Only about one-seventh of college freshmen felt well-prepared by their youth ministries for what they encountered after graduation.*

For us though, this research is about more than numbers. It is about real students—students just like the ones in your ministry right now.

For seven years, our team at the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) researched over 500 youth group graduates as they transitioned to college to try to understand how to help teenagers develop faith that lasts, or what we call *Sticky Faith*. **What started as a research project has become a movement**—a movement of churches, parents, grandparents, youth leaders, children’s leaders, and senior pastors who want to equip young people with faith that will not merely survive, but *thrive*, after high school. Check out stickyfaith.org for all kinds of resources we’ve created to help you along that journey.

Part of what we’ve learned through our research is that regular **faith practices** are important to Sticky Faith. Yet often teenagers aren’t sure how to nurture their own spiritual growth. FYI’s research has indicated that **only about half of graduating youth group seniors pray once a day or read the Bible once a week**. Beyond prayer and Scripture study, teenagers also don’t seem to have experience with a host of

These statistics come from a compilation of studies. For more on those studies, see fulleryouthinstitute.org/stickyfaith.

other timeless faith practices that could make a difference in their day to day lives.

As a follow up to the Sticky Faith research, we took a year to explore the disciplines that best connect kids with God and nurture lasting faith, in particular those that help integrate faith practices with all of life. We asked some thoughtful and experienced youth workers to join us, and a foundation generously made it all possible. Out of that exploration we've created this spiritual practices resource as an entry point for youth workers to invite students to create new, or deeper, faith rhythms. **Rhythms that will help them build Sticky Faith every day.**

How Do I Use This Curriculum?

We've created an 8-week series that we hope you can adapt to your context in whatever ways make the most sense. You don't even have to use it as an 8-week series if you'd rather rework it for four weeks or sixteen weeks. The hope is to give you a structure you can utilize to help students reimagine and re-engage spiritual practices as a way to notice God more every day, long beyond the series itself. We want young people to initiate a lifetime of engaging God.

Each week we'll provide:

1. Leader Guide

A 20-30 minute session that you can use during a youth group or small group gathering. If you'd rather only devote 5-10 minutes to the topic of the week (i.e., as part of your worship experience), feel free to use only one of the sections (listed below).



Notice the moment: An opening activity, discussion, or practice to help your group begin to focus on the topic for the week



Notice God's Word: A guided engagement with scripture, whether through teaching, meditation on the text, or other practice



Notice God: A communal prayer exercise or reflection that helps connect students with God's presence



Notice this week: Suggestions for actions that might flow out of this experience into the rest of the week

2. Daily Guide

Something a student, leader, or parent would do at home on their own once or more each week to continue to reflect on the theme and practice a discipline. The DAILY GUIDE follows the same pattern as the LEADER GUIDE each week. You might even engage your whole church in this series and use the DAILY GUIDE across generations.

3. Family Ideas

Practices that a family could do together, and questions a family could ask one another during the week.

This series was created by a team of youth workers who serve with teenagers and their families on a daily basis, alongside the FYI writing team. Most of these leaders utilized the materials in their own ministries during Lent, along with other ministry test sites around the country who gave input into this final product.

But please note that while we're all youth workers, we don't serve at your church and we don't know your students or regular ministry rhythms.

You might find that some of these ideas won't work in your context, so please feel free to use the parts of this guide that are helpful and adapt or recreate (or toss!) the rest. You might like scripted instructions or prefer more fluidity; adjust accordingly.

About Lent...

You may or may not be used to practicing Lent as a congregation or a youth ministry, but this rich church tradition gives us some incredible leveraging points for deeper discipleship. And it's about so much more than giving up chocolate.

Because Lent is a set 40-day period in the church calendar leading up to Easter and is practiced across various denominations, we invite you to harness Lent as an opportunity to engage students in new practices. You will see some of these themes built into the progression of the curriculum from week to week.

But you certainly don't have to use this alongside Lent; it could be a separate series or reworked for a week of camp. Or if your church doesn't talk much about Lent, you can still use it during the weeks leading up to Easter and never mention the word "Lent".

However you use it, we'd love to hear your feedback! Feel free to send us input or stories at fyi@fuller.edu, and follow the fulleryouthinstitute.org blog and FYI E-Journal throughout the series for other updates. Thanks for the privilege of serving Jesus together through this series and Every Day!

Kara Powell, Brad Griffin, and the Sticky Faith Every Day Curriculum writing team:
Josh Bishop (Mars Hill Bible Church), Mindy Coates-Smith (Bel Air Presbyterian), April Diaz (Newsong Church), Laura Larsen (2nd Presbyterian), Keegan Lenker (Pasadena Nazarene), Jesse Oakes (Lake Avenue Church), Mike Park (Newsong Church)

Special thanks to Daniel S. Kim for designing both the pilot and final versions of this curriculum, and for creating and managing the online components as well.



1

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 1: Notice

[Leader Guide](#)

A Sticky Faith Curriculum for Your Entire Youth Ministry

NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Learning to notice God is the core of the spiritual life. Practices and disciplines we do on our own or with others can help us grow in our awareness of God's presence and power.

You'll Need:

- Paper and something for each student to write with
- A whiteboard or poster paper and appropriate markers
- Bibles
- Alternate opener video*

Notice the moment

Distribute paper and writing instruments to students. Instruct them to draw a line down the center of the page, creating two vertical columns.

Open by saying: **Let's start by thinking about today for a few minutes. I'm going to give you 30 seconds to write down everything about your day (like what you have done or said, who you have been with) in the left column. Think about people, places, feelings, actions-whatever comes to mind as you think back through your day. Write down as much as you can.** *Note: If you're meeting in the morning, have students think about yesterday instead.*

Give students 30 seconds to do this, then ask them to look back over their list and circle 2-3 things that stood out the most today, whether because they were good or bad, or stirred up the most feeling.

Now invite students to get in pairs and share 1-2 things that stood out from the day with a partner.

After a few minutes, ask: **Now take a minute and share with your partner why you think one**

If you use this in connection with Lent:

Your church and/or youth ministry may already have traditions surrounding Ash Wednesday, perhaps including a worship service and the giving and receiving of ashes. This guide does not attempt to create or overstep the foundations already laid for Ash Wednesday worship (you can find a lot of great resources online if you need more ideas). Instead, this 20-30 minute session could be part of a regular large or small group meeting before or during the week Lent begins, perhaps even as an introduction to a more traditional ceremony of ashes.

particular part of your day stood out the most.

After bringing students back together, point out that we seem to notice certain experiences in our day-to-day lives more than others. If you have time, ask a few students to share aloud what they noticed the most, and perhaps even why.

Then remind students about the right-hand column on their paper. Say: **Now I'd like you to think back on your day again, and everything you wrote in the left column. But this time, imagine what God might have been trying to tell you, show you, or have you experience through the events of your day.**

Jot down some of those thoughts and phrases in the right column. If it's hard to come up with words to describe it, you can just put a star in the right column across from the people, places, events or feelings of the day in the left column where you wonder if you might have noticed God if you had been looking. If you have a younger group, or students seem stumped by this, you might give them an example from your own day.

Transition to introduce the season of Lent and the theme of Notice in this resource by writing the word "Notice" on your whiteboard/poster paper and sharing the following thoughts:

You probably feel like you "notice" lots of things during your day—the weather, the clothes other students wear at school, the texts from your best friends. That's good, but there's another kind of noticing too. Alongside the things we pay attention to every day (or not), we are invited to take notice of God's activity underneath and above it all.

Some people say "paying attention" is the core of the spiritual life. Why do you think some folks think that?

After students have given some answers, continue: **I tend to agree that "paying attention to" or "noticing" what God is doing is central to our spiritual growth, both as individuals and as a community. So this journey over the next 8 weeks is an invitation to notice God every day. Part of why I'm so glad we're experiencing this journey together is that by noticing God, you and I will both be more likely to have a faith that grows and sticks.**

What do you already do to try to notice God's presence or insights he might be trying to teach you?

One way lots of people throughout history have tried to notice God is through spiritual disciplines. These are things we do—or *practice*—in order to create space in our lives for God's spirit to work. Disciplines are the patterns or habits we form to open ourselves to notice God.

If you or a student present is wearing glasses, you might point out that just like glasses help us notice the world around us more clearly, spiritual practices help us notice God more clearly. You might also note that Jews and Christians have been using these practices for centuries to notice God in their lives and the world.

Continue: **Carving out time to pray, read the Bible, sing a spiritual song, or share in the Lord's Supper with other believers are all spiritual disciplines. One way to think of these practices is that they are ways we learn to notice God and God's work in and around us.**

Notice God's Word

Distribute Bibles and read Jesus' teachings in Matthew 6:1-18 together. Ask five different students to read v 1-4, 5-8, 9-13, 14-15, and 16-18 out loud.

Ask: **What different actions or practices does this passage mention?** (giving, praying, forgiving, fasting). Point out that Jesus says "when" you give (6:2), "when" you pray (6:5 and 7) and "when" you fast (6:16). Jesus assumes his followers will be doing these practices and wants to make sure they notice, and if needed, correct, their motivations.

Did you hear any common thread running through Jesus' instructions? Listen for what students bring up, and if they don't specifically say it, note:

Practices like giving, fasting, and praying can be something we do for the sake of others noticing, as a way to show off how holy or spiritual we are. As Jesus points out in this passage, this was happening in Jesus' day just like it happens today. For another example of this in Jesus' teaching, see Luke 18:9-14 (the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector).

Ask: **In what ways does it seem like folks today might be similarly doing spiritual practices in public, to be seen by others?**

If you're willing to be honest...when has your own spirituality been a status symbol rather than a way to seek God? You might want to share first to open the door for others to share.

After students share, conclude by saying: **In contrast, it seems like Jesus is saying that when we do practices like these, God hopes we do them not for the sake of *others noticing us*, but to help *us notice God more*. So when we pray, we become more aware of God and what God is doing. When we forgive someone, we notice that God is at work forgiving us too.**

These verses are part of a longer passage of the teachings of Jesus sometimes known as "The Sermon on the Mount," so named because Matthew 5:1 notes that Jesus went up on a mountainside to teach. Some scholars think chapters 5-7 are a collection of a number of Jesus' teachings from various times rather than one actual "sermon" on one particular day.

Notice God

Remind students that at the start of this session they wrote down different experiences they have had in the last 24 hours.

Continue: **We've already looked backwards at our last 24 hours. Now I want us to look ahead to our next 24 hours. What sorts of things will you be doing during your next 24 hours?** Write down their answers on the whiteboard or poster paper, under the word "Notice" that you have previously written. Keep this going until you have a fairly robust list.

Then invite students to look silently at the list for a few moments and consider one or two things represented on the board during which they'd like to be especially attentive to God in the next 24 hours. For example, *I want to notice God more while going to drama rehearsal and while doing homework in my room.*

After a minute or so of this reflection, invite students to come forward and write their initials next to these one or two items, maybe while you sing a song together.

Then close in prayer together. You might want to do this by gathering in a circle to pray, but as you gather face outward rather than inward. Then pray facing outward, perhaps even with eyes open, both as signs of your shared desire to notice God more over the next 24 hours and the next 8 weeks.

Notice this week

Encourage students to use the DAILY GUIDE materials throughout the week on their own to help build a rhythm of noticing in their day to day routines. If you're using this during the Lent season, you might note that the DAILY GUIDE introduces the idea of "adding and subtracting" as practices that can help us notice God during this series. Encourage students to consider "subtracting" something from their lives in order to "add" a way of noticing.

If you would like to incorporate the "Notice" emphasis into more aspects of your teaching, small groups, or other weekly engagement, you might want to consider exploring some of these other passages:

- John 1:35-39—Here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry are two invitations to notice, one from John the Baptist and one from Jesus. "Look—the Lamb of God," and "Come and see."
- Isaiah 58:6-8—The Lord indicts the people of Israel for the ways they followed the religious ritual of fasting without also caring for the needs of the poor. Quite the opposite, their showy religious acts involved exploiting the poor. Read these verses on God's perspective of the "point" of fasting, then consider ways your own fast (or as we're describing it in the DAILY GUIDE, "subtract/add") might lead you toward caring for the poor or speaking out on behalf of the oppressed.

1

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 1: Notice

Daily Guide

NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

Do you ever have trouble paying attention when you read the Bible or pray?

Yeah, we get that. And we want you to know from the start that the most important “rule” is not to beat yourself up about that.

But the second rule—or invitation, really—is that you give it a chance, even if it’s usually hard for you.

Over this 8-week journey, we’re going to practice a way of reading scripture that you may or may not be familiar with. It’s more about *praying with* scripture, where you read not for the sake of getting through a passage or “learning something new,” but rather read scripture as a way to notice God.

Here are our suggestions for trying this out:

First, find somewhere you can be quiet and still for a little while. Turn off your phone and other electronics (yes, really) and begin to settle yourself down. Some people find it helpful to close their eyes, others like to look at something that helps them begin to center their attention, like a window, a candle, or a cross.

Take a few slow, deep breaths, and for a minute or so don’t do anything more than *breathe*. Let God know that you’re ready to notice.

Don’t rush this centering process. When it seems right, move on to the next step:

Things I'm Noticing

Use this space to jot down ideas, questions, or doodle pictures throughout each Daily Guide.

Notice God's Word

Below is a passage from the Bible (Psalm 25) that we are going to use in an exercise the church has done throughout history called *Lectio Divina* (which means “sacred [or holy] reading” and is pronounced “LEX-ee-oh Div-EE-na”). You can also use your Bible to read it if you prefer.

We know that David is the author of Psalm 25, and while we don't know the exact timing, it's thought that David wrote this after he committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba. This Psalm shows David's desire for an intimate relationship with God. For instance, in verse 5, in the midst of a culture that viewed God's word and truth as rules to obey, David asks God to “guide me in your truth.”

Instructions for Lectio Divina:

Read the passage through three times slowly, pausing to be silent in between each reading.

During the first reading, just listen to the words. It might help to read it out loud if you're somewhere you can do that.

During the second reading, see what else you notice. Maybe it's a phrase that jumps out at you, a word you didn't pay attention to the first time, or something else you become aware of. Perhaps it's an emotion, or a word picture that comes alive.

During the third reading, invite God to point out a particular word, phrase, feeling, or image that might stand out more specifically to you—on this day, at this time, during this reading—as a way God might be speaking through this passage. It's okay if nothing “happens” here, but just let God know you're open to that and listening for it.

Things I'm Noticing

Ready? Here it is:

- 1 In you, LORD my God,
I put my trust.
- 2 I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- 3 No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.
- 4 Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
- 5 Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
- 6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
- 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.

Psalm 25

Notice God

After the three readings, sit quietly for a moment with your word, image, or phrase if you have one. Give God thanks either way.

Now pray your own prayer. You might want to use Psalm 25:4-5 below as a starter prayer that leads into your own words to God, or your prayer might become silent awareness in God's presence for a few more moments.

*"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."
(Ps 25:4-5)*

Things I'm Noticing

- subtract + add

In the spirit of noticing God more, perhaps there is something in your life that you could subtract that would give you more space, energy, time and focus to pay attention to God in the midst of your days.

Similarly, perhaps there is something that you could add (maybe a bit more time in prayer, or more music that helps you focus on God) that would help you be more attuned to God.

Prayerfully contemplate what you might be able to subtract from your life and what practice(s) you want to add to create space to notice God more. Write some ideas here, and when you make a commitment, be sure to write it down as specifically as possible.

I commit to subtract the following from my life in order to notice God more every day...

I commit to add the following to my life in order to notice God more every day...



Notice this week

This week, take time each day to come back to Psalm 25. You might read it the same way, or different ways—it's up to you.

Also begin to cultivate (like digging up the earth in a garden) more awareness of God in your everyday life. Pause to look, listen, and feel for God's active presence at different points through the day. It's okay if you don't actually hear or feel anything tangible, but sometimes inviting God's Spirit to make us more aware can open us more to notice what God's doing around us over time.

Things I'm Noticing

Try reading this passage in active ways, like while walking to school or around your neighborhood, or just before going on a run. See what you notice differently as a result.

As you begin to look for ways to notice God's presence and activity this week, you might also consider using this prayer of Jesus that's often known as the "**Lord's Prayer,**" from Matthew 6:9-13. Some people find that praying this prayer every day is a helpful rhythm:

Our Father in heaven,
Your name is holy.
May your kingdom come,
May your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one,
For yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.
Amen.

Things I'm Noticing

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 1: Notice

Daily Guide Extra: Introduction to Lent

NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide Extra

LENT:

A 40-day journey of noticing God

If you've heard of Lent before, chances are one of the first things that comes to mind is "giving something up," as in "I'm giving up chocolate for Lent."

That's sort of right. But not quite.

When you stop doing something you're used to doing (like eating dessert), you notice different things. Lent is like that. It's a season—40 days to be exact (not counting Sundays)—when the Church throughout the ages has chosen to pause and notice something. That "something" is the journey of Jesus to the cross. Alongside his journey, we're also called to notice our own journeys toward death and resurrection. In many traditions, Lent starts out with "Ash Wednesday," when many Christians choose to wear a cross or smudge of ashes on their foreheads or hands. This is a symbol that represents our death, or "mortality." It's a reminder of the pain, suffering, and loss that are part of life. It's a reminder to turn away from sin and toward God.

Sounds kind of morbid, doesn't it?

But here's the thing. "Lent" actually means "Spring"—you know, the season of new life. So in the midst of the bitter winter cold and all the death that might be around us, there's this uncanny hope that rebirth is possible.

FAST:

-subtract+add

Lent often involves a form of “fasting”, which usually means some kind of hunger.

When most of us think “fast”, we think “speed”. You might be a fast runner or a fast test-taker. Ironically, the spiritual use of the word sort of means the opposite. Fasting is a “slow” thing. It makes us stop and notice something—something we’re missing, something we’re going without. Something we *subtract* from our lives. Like food.

Fasting may typically mean we avoid eating food, or certain kinds of food, for a set period of time. But fasting is a practice that goes beyond food. It can mean choosing to go without TV, Facebook, or Xbox. In fact, fasting is the opposite of *dieting*, which is about controlling our bodies for the sake of achieving a certain waist size or belly firmness. If that’s one of your goals, you should *absolutely not* fast from food, because it’s too easy to confuse the two (or celebrate one as a by-product of the other).

No, fasting isn’t about obsession with our bodies.

Here are a few other things fasting is NOT: It’s not punishing yourself for bad behavior. It’s not working to earn God’s favor, or doing something to please God. It’s much bigger than all that.

In fact, fasting isn’t just about subtracting for the sake of subtraction (which is what your math class might feel like most of the time). We subtract something so that we—or perhaps God—can *add* something new. In other words, what happens in the void left by whatever we choose to give up? If we give up an hour of video games, what do we do with those extra 60 minutes? If we give up lattes, what do we do with that money? Maybe it’s adding true hunger, a hunger for spiritual growth. Maybe it’s adding silence and stillness to a life full of noise and movement. Maybe we add prayer when we’re usually silent toward God. Maybe God adds passion for serving the poor where we’re usually pretty self-absorbed.

If all of this sounds intriguing, maybe you’d like to join in this 40-day journey of Lent together with other Jesus-followers around the world. Each week we’re going to give you ideas for becoming more aware of God in your everyday life. You can use them in whatever way is most helpful to you, though many people find that setting apart a particular time of day to pray and practice other disciplines helps them keep up a rhythm. As you consider the 40 days ahead, we encourage you to also think about what you might want to subtract and what you might want to *add* during the season of Lent to help you notice God more.



1

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 1: Notice

Family Ideas

NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

Random.

Chaotic.

Circumstantial.

Sound familiar? If you live with an adolescent in your home, chances are these words describe quite a bit of your daily life experience. Teenagers engage all kinds of vital life tasks in random, chaotic, and circumstantial ways. Like their friendships. And dating relationships. And homework. And probably their interactions with you.

But we aren't using the words random, chaotic, and circumstantial to describe any of those areas of life right now. **We're using them to describe what we've learned from research about the prayer life of teenagers.**

Research shows that faith practices are important to what we call *Sticky Faith*—faith that lasts beyond high school and into college and young adulthood.* Yet often teenagers aren't sure how to nurture their own spiritual growth. Our research at the Fuller Youth Institute has indicated that only about half of graduating youth group seniors pray once a day or read the Bible once a week. Beyond prayer and Scripture study, teenagers also don't seem have experience with a host of other timeless faith practices that could make a difference in their day to day lives.

As a follow up to the *Sticky Faith* research, we are exploring what disciplines best connect kids with God and nurture lasting faith, in particular those that help integrate faith practices with all of life. Out of that exploration we've created this resource as an entry point for youth workers and parents to invite young people to create new faith rhythms.

You might notice that we've tried to create ideas that get both you and your kids talking. Research shows that parents are one of—if not the—biggest influences on their kids' faith. Yes, even for teenagers. Further, our Sticky Faith research revealed that while it's important for parents to talk with their kids about the kids' faith, it's just as important for parents to *talk about their own faith journeys with their kids*. We're convinced you will all grow from these kinds of conversations.

The overall theme of this Every Day series is noticing God. Some people say "paying attention" is the core of the spiritual life. We think they're on to something. So this journey over the next weeks (for many of you, this 8 week journey might work well to use during the Lent season as preparation for Easter) is an invitation to notice. *Noticing* might mean you have to stop, listen, change up your steps a bit. It might mean trying some new things as a family. One way to think of these practices is that they are ways we learn to pay attention to and notice God and God's work in and around us.

Ideas to Engage Your Whole Family in Noticing God More

Below are some ideas and tips for you as you engage this journey together with your family. Please note that you won't be able to implement all of these ideas, so pick one or two you'd like to focus on and give them a try together!

- Many parents have noticed that the moment they pull out the printed family devotion is the moment the kids shut down. If you've experienced this, think about ways to have these conversations or try these activities without using this (or another) resource as a cue sheet. Your kids will appreciate your own words and your authentic presence more than anything we could write for you.
- Read Psalm 103: 6-14 together. Wonder together what it means that the writer uses such big language for God's love and for how dramatically God removes our sin. You might also ask: What does it mean that God is "slow to anger"? Do you think that describes our family, and why/why not? How do we need God to work in our family to make us all more like God in this area?
- Talk together about something your family might want to fast from as a family during this journey. If you do, be sure you choose as a *family*. Also consider how you can invite your kids to participate, but also give them permission not to participate. Remember that the point is creating ways we can notice God more during our everyday life.
- Acknowledge that certain sacrifices will likely mean something different to your kids than to you. For example, given the pervasive role digital technology plays in the lives of adolescents today (it's truly all they have ever known), living without the internet or their cell phone is comparable to an adult imagining life without electricity. So rather than fighting with your teenager over instituting a blanket "No media on Sundays" rule, invite them to work together with you toward something that's manageable as a practice everyone is willing to try together. In the end they might long for more time apart from their digital connectivity, but that desire will have to come from them, not you, in order to really be effective.
- Find a local or global outreach opportunity or cause to support as a family. If you're giving up something together that involves time and/or money, also decide together what you'll do with that time and/or money. Maybe you can channel money to help build a well in another community, or maybe you can visit pediatric cancer patients in your city at the local children's hospital. Do some research, incorporating your kids' web savvy, and try something new together.

- If you're doing this during Lent and you attend an Ash Wednesday service together, ask on the way to or from the service or over dinner, "Why do we wear the ashes on our bodies today?" and explore what it means to different members of your family. Be sure you answer this—and every—question yourself!
- This week the DAILY GUIDE invites your kids to read and re-read Psalm 25:1-7. Consider doing the same and sharing together about the impressions the passage has made on each of you at the end of the week.
- In the DAILY GUIDE we invite your kids to consider incorporating the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 into their daily and weekly rhythm of prayer. You might also want to do this in your family as a way to reinforce, wonder about, and be changed by this prayer. In fact, we encourage you to consider using the DAILY GUIDE yourself throughout this 8-week series!

Our hope is that this resource leads to new long-term rhythms for your family and for your children in their own life with God. Here's to nurturing Sticky Faith...Every Day!

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 2: Unplug

Leader Guide

UNPLUG

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Intentionally unplugging ourselves from the distractions in life can allow for deeper connection with God.

You'll Need:

- CD/MP3 player and pre-selected music of your choice for the opening activity.
- Other items you can plug in and unplug to create distractions (radio, flashing/strobe lights, you get the idea...).

Notice the moment

Open by saying: **To begin today, please find a partner and share: What's one great thing, or one not-so-great thing, going on in your life? Tell each other why it's great, or why it's not-so-great.**

As they begin to talk, create a distracting environment: play really loud music, have leaders walk around the room making loud phone calls or interrupting the students, and flicker the lights on and off. Depending on your context and what's available to you, ideally you'll actually plug some things in around the room during the discussion—extra bright or strobe lights, a radio tuned to a news channel, anything else that might be annoying.

After a few moments of this, say: **Okay, great. Find a new partner and share again: What's one great thing, or one not-so-great thing, going on in your life? Tell each other why it's great, or why it's not-so-great.**

This time, don't make the distractions; let students engage in discussions without background noise. You'll want to start by unplugging anything you plugged in to create noise or light. After a couple of minutes, bring them back together as a group.

Facilitate group discussion by asking: What was it like the first time you tried to share with someone?

What was it like the second time?

What differences did you notice? If no one mentions that you unplugged distractions the second time, you may also want to specifically ask, **What had to happen in order for the environment to change?**

Introduce this week's theme by holding a cord and plug from one of the unplugged items in your hand and saying: **It can be very difficult to connect with someone when there are so many distractions; this is also true in our relationship with God.**

Today we're going to notice the distractions in our own lives. Some of those distractions we can control; others seem out of our control. We're going to look for ways we can intentionally unplug some of those distractions to allow space to connect with God every day.

Notice God's Word

Ask students to find Exodus 20 in their Bibles.

Ask a student to read Exodus 20:8-11.

Ask the group:

What is the Sabbath day? What is its purpose?

Don't worry if students can't define Sabbath well just yet. Get their honest first impressions of the word, even if they've never heard it before.

Ask:

Why do you think God included the Sabbath day as one of the Ten Commandments?

Explain:

In the Old Testament we read the instruction that a whole day every week was devoted to the Sabbath. Why do you think God asked people to set aside a whole day?

Ask:

What do you think the Sabbath can look like in our lives today? Give some specific examples.

After hearing students' ideas, you might add: **A Sabbath can be an intentional interruption of the work and school schedule; a time to reflect and worship God without distraction. It is an opportunity to trust God with our time and our lives.**

A Sabbath can happen every week, and even every day in small ways that become part of our lifestyle. Think of it like unplugging these distractions around the room in order to pause and notice God.

Exodus 20 contains the Ten Commandments, a central point in the narrative of the Old Testament. The Ten Commandments are much more than a set of rules. They describe in detail the fundamental principles for being in relationship with God. Each of these commandments speaks volumes about God's character and the redemptive nature of God's relationship with humankind. In other words, the Ten Commandments are ultimately about relationship, not rules.

Ask:

Why do you think Sabbath rest is hard for us? What obstacles tend to get in the way of Sabbath? You may want to share some examples from your own life before transitioning to the prayer exercise below.

You may want to note some of the following thoughts in your discussion about the Sabbath, depending on how much time you have and what ideas or questions students raise:

- Sabbath is a Hebrew word that means “stop.” Like what happens when we unplug something from a power source.
- Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that after the dramatic work of creation, the Creator stopped and rested. God then “blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” Apparently God wasn’t anxious about what would happen next, but instead boldly chose to rest, and to ask us to do the same.¹
- Deuteronomy 5:15 gives another rationale for the Sabbath: that it is to be a day we remember God’s redemptive work in freeing God’s people from slavery.
- In the time of Jesus’ ministry, the Sabbath – intended for freedom and rest – had become an instrument of oppression. More and more rules were created by the leaders to prevent people from living out the heart of the Sabbath. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that the Sabbath was intended as a gift. And Jesus installed himself as Lord of the Sabbath – Lord of rest (Mark 2:27-28; Matt 11:28).
- Hebrews 4:9 declares that Jesus came to usher in a “Sabbath rest for God’s people.” Though this will only be complete in the final renewal of all things, we have glimpses of it now when we take some sort of regular Sabbath. Jesus has invited us to take rest seriously. In our rest, we can freely worship, and can set others free to do the same.

Notice God

Let’s take time to practice Sabbath together. I’m going to instruct you as we read and meditate on God’s word without distractions – unplugged. This might feel awkward at first, but I encourage you to stick with it. If you have space, encourage students to spread out a bit before starting this exercise. Reinforce the “unplugged” idea by asking students to power down

1. Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 65.

their phones before you begin and put them someplace where they won't see them, assuring them that the world will wait if they take a short break from being electronically connected. You might even have a leader pass around a "collection basket" for phones so you can keep them safe, but not attached to students' bodies.

First, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Imagine all the distractions in your life – the things that cause you anxiety, fear or stress. Imagine these things are written on a whiteboard.

Now imagine the whiteboard being completely erased.

Let's sit in a moment of silence as we unplug from all of these distractions. I'm going to give us about 30 seconds to do this.

Allow about 30 seconds of silence. This may be uncomfortable for students. If students intentionally make noise or distract others, gently redirect them to the exercise. If you are working with a younger group, or if students are not accustomed to spending time together in silence like this, you might want to shorten this to 20 seconds. On the other hand, if students engage this kind of practice well, feel free to give them more time. Just be sure to prepare students either way for the amount of time to expect.

Instruct the students:

Now I'm going to read Psalm 46 twice. As I read this, take note of any words or phrases that stick out to you. Slowly read through the passage two times.

**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.**

**The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

Instruct the students:

If a word or phrase stuck out to you from the reading, take a moment to reflect on that word or phrase. I'm going to give you about 20 more seconds to do this.

Allow another 20-30 seconds of silence. Then say a prayer in your own words to close the exercise.

Ask the students to open their eyes. Take a few minutes to debrief the experience. Don't be afraid of silence during this time; allow space between each question before moving on.

Ask:

What did you experience?

Was it easy or difficult? What made it that way?

What word or phrase from scripture stood out to you?

How did the fact that you were unplugged from your phones help you better experience God and a time of rest?

How could you make something like this an every day or every week practice? What would need to change to create space for it?

At this point you may want to close in prayer in small groups, or close by worshiping together through music. If the latter, and you usually use sound amplification, try going “unplugged” for this closing worship as a way to hammer home the theme. You can also encourage students to keep their phones powered down during this time



Notice this week

Encourage students to use the DAILY GUIDE materials throughout the week on their own to help unplug in their day-to-day routines.

You may also want to encourage them to find one thing to unplug at home and leave unplugged for a whole hour, a whole day, or maybe even the whole week!

If you would like to incorporate the “Unplug” emphasis into more aspects of your teaching, small groups, or other weekly engagement, you might want to consider exploring some of these other passages:

- Mark 1:35-39—Jesus and the disciples were traveling and healing people along the way. Jesus was in high demand and people had very legitimate needs, yet Jesus stepped away from the busyness to spend time in solitude and prayer.
- 1 Kings 19:10-12—Elijah had a lot of distractions – he was literally running for his life! Yet he met God alone on a mountain. He waited through a windstorm, an earthquake and a fire (talk about distractions!), but met God in sheer silence.

2

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 2: Unplug

Daily Guide

UNPLUG

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

First, find somewhere you can be quiet and still for a little while. Turn off your phone and other electronics and begin to settle yourself down. Physically unplug something (your computer, TV or something else) as a symbolic act of “unplugging.” Close your eyes and take a deep breath.

Think of all the distractions in your life – the things that cause you anxiety, fear or stress. Imagine these things written on wet sand at the beach.

Now imagine the ocean tide sweeping in and completely erasing the words, leaving smooth wet sand.

Sit in a moment of silence, unplugged from your distractions.

Notice God's Word

We're going to engage scripture in a pattern that involves four steps: Read, meditate, pray, and contemplate. The first step is to read the passage:

Read **Psalms 46**. As you read, take note of any words or phrases that stick out to you.

Things I'm Noticing

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should
change, though the mountains shake in the heart of
the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the
mountains tremble with its tumult.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city
of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of
Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of
Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 46

Meditate on the word or phrase you noticed most. Focus in on it for a few moments. Make a list or draw some images of other things that are similar to this word or phrase. Why do you think this grabbed your attention?

Pray to God. Invite God to speak to you about your own life in light of this passage. Ask God to create a deeper connection with you day by day.

Contemplate on the characteristics of God that are highlighted in Psalm 46. Make a list of all the things we learn about who God is and what God is like based on this passage. Thank God for these truths.

Things I'm Noticing

Plan another time this week to set aside a Sabbath moment, maybe even every day. Try this pattern again: *read, meditate, pray*, and contemplate with another passage of the Bible.

Notice God

During the moments this week that you have intentionally “unplugged,” have you noticed any difference in your life or your time with God? Has God showed you something that you wouldn’t have noticed before?

If you haven’t really had a chance to “unplug,” how do you feel about that?

Part of noticing God is to look for ways in which God is at work in the world around us. This can be hard to do when we are overwhelmed with life’s distractions.

That’s why we create Sabbath moments. What is something you could temporarily “unplug” from to create space to notice God? This doesn’t need to be something that literally plugs in (like a computer or phone, although those are definitely included). This could be any of life’s distractions.

Could you choose to intentionally “unplug” from something – for an hour a week, ten minutes a day, one day a week or even for the rest of this series?

Take a moment to think this over and write something you want to unplug from, and how often or how long you want to unplug from it.

Things I'm Noticing

Remember that removing something from your typical routine is your choice. It is not a punishment or something you “should” do. **It is an opportunity.** The things you unplug from are not bad things; you are just taking a purposeful break. Make sure to use the unplugged moments to notice where God is at work. If you choose to not unplug right now, that is an okay choice.



Notice this week

If you do choose to unplug from something, take notes (mental or written) of what the experience is like for you. Is it hard to let go of what you unplug from? Do you find yourself thinking about it instead of being focused on noticing God? If so, don't worry—that's a common experience.

Here are some ideas of things to do while you are unplugged:

- Go for a walk or run and thank God for the different things you see that you are genuinely grateful for.
- Choose a word or phrase to focus on each time you're reminded of the thing or experience you are unplugging from. For instance, when you think about it, you might silently say, “God, I want to notice you,” or “Jesus, be near.” This can be a helpful way to redirect your thoughts and frustrations toward God.

Things I'm Noticing

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 2: Unplug

Family Ideas

UNPLUG

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

This week our focus is on making room for Sabbath rest in our lives: time to intentionally interrupt our week's activity in order to notice God at work.

Here are some ideas for you to engage the whole family this week (please don't feel like you have to do all of them; just pick one or two):

- Part of noticing God is to look for ways in which God is at work in the world around us. This can be hard to do when we are overwhelmed with life's distractions. This is what Sabbath practices invite us to do. What is something you could temporarily "unplug" from to create space to notice God? This doesn't need to be something that literally plugs in (like a computer or phone, although those are definitely included). This could be any of life's distractions. Could you choose to intentionally "unplug" from something (like cell phones or television) – for an hour a week, ten minutes a day, one day a week or even for the rest of this series? Lead by example and unplug. Share this commitment with your family, and discuss as a family how you might find a way to unplug together.
- In the spirit of the Sabbath (a regular interruption of our normal routine to notice God), could you surprise your family with a Sabbath moment? Perhaps dismiss a usual weekly chore to give kids a break. Take everyone on a field trip to a local museum or park to notice God's creation. Say "no" to an unnecessary commitment on behalf of your family (a birthday party or extra soccer practice) and treat them to a relaxing night home instead. Or instead of working on the computer when you're around the house this weekend, keep it turned off and see who notices. Then at the end of the weekend ask what it was like for other members of your family for you to spend the weekend away from your computer.
- Connect with a friend or two this week and ask for ideas their family has tried in order to create more Sabbath rhythms in their lives.



**STICKY
FAITH
EVERY
DAY**

Week 3: Receive

Leader Guide

RECEIVE

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Despite the obstacles in our lives, God invites us to receive the gift of grace with “no strings attached.”

You'll Need:

- 3 \$5 bills
- 3 pieces of string of different lengths
- Bibles or print-outs of John 1:1-16
- a pen or something to write with for each person
- one index card or sticky note per person
- an additional index card or sticky note per person and as many pieces of string. Ahead of time, tape a piece of string to each index card
- a large box that you have wrapped as a gift
- a stack of extra index cards and a marker, placed by the gift
- tape
- a trash can
- alternate opener video*

Ahead of time:

Roll each of the \$5 bills tightly and tie a piece of string around each one. Tie or tape a piece of paper at the other end of each string, with one of the following instructions written on the three pieces of paper:

1. “You can have this \$5 if you sing ‘I’m a little teapot’ as loud as you can.”
2. “You can have this \$5 if you can name every person in this room by name.”
3. “Take the string off, put the \$5 in your pocket and sit down.”

As an alternative to the opener idea below, one youth ministry test site suggested using a YouTube video by Amy Krouse Rosenthal entitled “Amy KR presents... “The Money Tree.” It is about 5 minutes long, and shows a social experiment done in Chicago in which \$1.00 bills were attached to a tree with labels indicating they were free. The most common response was that people walked by without noticing, and the second most common response was that people looked at the tree but weren’t able to see that the money was a free gift. This could introduce a discussion about how we respond to grace. At the time of publication, this link was active:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsN8FUV9nS4>

Notice the moment

Start by saying: I need three volunteers who would like to receive a gift. Have the volunteers stand next to you, and one by one offer each person a \$5 bill with a string attached. Make sure you save the \$5 with the “Take the string off” instructions for the last person. If the first two do the activity, go ahead and give them the money.

After all 3 have gone, ask the group: **What was the difference between the first two bills and the last?** If students don’t directly say it, note that some people might use the phrase “no strings attached” to describe what happened with the last \$5 bill.

What connections do you notice between what just happened and the ways we tend to give and receive gifts?

Distribute index cards and pencils/pens. Ask students to write down on one side of their index card a time they can remember someone giving them something that came with “a string attached.” After a few moments, ask them to split into groups of 2-3 and say, **Quickly share with one another what you were asked to receive with a “string attached.” What was the “string,” and how did it make you feel?** You might want to have an example from your own life ready to share to help prompt students’ own reflection and sharing.

Notice God's Word

Explain: **Part of what makes the message of Christ so radical is that in a world that comes with so many strings attached, God’s gift through Jesus is exactly the opposite.** Point to the large, wrapped gift and explain: **It’s an expensive gift, but a gift that we don’t earn.**

Distribute Bibles and continue: **In the first chapter of his gospel, John uses some powerful words to describe the gift of Jesus. As we read John 1:1-16, I want you to try to pay special attention to the wording John uses to describe Jesus.** Ask for volunteers to read

- John 1:1-18 mirrors the pattern of ancient creation songs, and in particular alludes to the creation language of Genesis. By echoing the opening phrase of Genesis (“In the beginning...”), the author of John is immediately locating Jesus in the larger story of God and God’s people recorded in the Old Testament writings.
- The themes of “Word” and “Light” are used throughout John, tying together these powerful images from the creation account with the person and work of Jesus.
- The word “receive” in verses 11, 12, and 16 can be translated “receive,” “accept,” or “believe,” and implies our transformation as a result of God’s gift of grace.
- The phrase “grace in place of grace already given” in verse 16 emphasizes that God’s offer of grace through Jesus continues the work God has been doing since the beginning of creation, even through the Old Testament law, by initiating a new era of grace through Jesus.

portions of John 1:1-16 aloud.

When they are finished, ask: **What do we notice about Jesus in this passage?** As students explain what we can learn about Jesus, have a student volunteer jot down each idea shared on an index card. Ask another volunteer to tape those cards to the large gift so that the group has a vivid reminder of the gift of Jesus.

When you're finished, ask students to huddle again in their clusters with one or two others and discuss this question: **Of all the index cards taped to the gift, which is most meaningful to you? Why is it meaningful?** Bring the group back together and ask for a few volunteers to share what was most meaningful to them.

Focus students' attention on John 1:12-13. Ask: **How is the Jesus described in these two verses different than a gift given with strings attached? According to this passage, besides believing, is there anything else we need to do receive the gift of salvation through Jesus?**

Notice God

Explain:

I don't know about you, but part of what makes it so hard for me to truly receive God's grace is because it's so unusual. I'm so used to thinking I have to work, or earn, good things. The gift of God's salvation is so counter-intuitive it is literally unbelievable. It's like the \$5 with no strings attached, but on a life-changing scale.

Sometimes people confuse repentance with earning grace. Repent means to turn around and go in the opposite direction.

Note: Students might at this point suggest that we need to obey, or do "good works" in order to receive salvation. You might want to think ahead about how you would theologically want to answer that question. When we at FYI hear that sort of perspective voiced by students or adults, we try to explain that by and large, receiving the gift of salvation comes first, and then our obedience follows. You may want to be ready to read Paul's words in Ephesians 2:4-10, which help emphasize that we are saved by grace, out of which our good works flow.

It means to reorient my life from a destructive path to a path where God restores me.

Like obstacles that keep us from grace, sins can distract us or stand in the way of our receiving what God is offering through Jesus. Sometimes we need to name those obstacles, turn the other way, and walk into the gift of grace God is offering us.

You might also want to clarify that there are steps of obedience God wants us to take in our lives, but the point you're trying to make is that those acts aren't part of the way we earn God's salvation or favor. They are part of the way that once we've received God's love, we in turn want to honor God with our lives. God's love inspires love back.

Next distribute the index cards attached to string you have already prepared, keeping one for yourself. Share one way that you tend to believe, or act as if, relationship with God was something that had to be earned. It might be something you do, or an attitude you hold toward God. Perhaps you tend to think that if you pray every day, God will somehow think

more highly of you. Or if you avoid certain types of temptations, that God will be more pleased with you. Publicly before your students, write that way you try to earn, instead of receive, God's love on the index card attached to string.

Give students a few minutes to think about ways they might also be trying to earn God's salvation or favor, instead of simply receiving it like John describes in John 1:12. If appropriate, invite volunteers to share what they have written.

Point out the trash can and invite students to come forward and put their index card with the string in the trash can as a sign of their desire to repent of the ways they try to earn God's favor and instead receive God's grace.

Close in prayer, thanking God that He is a God who gives **"grace upon grace"** (John 1:16, CEB) with no strings attached, every day.

As an alternative, you may want to read **Ephesians 2:4-10** as part of a closing prayer, or have a student read it aloud.



Notice this week

Invite students to utilize the DAILY GUIDE this week to help them further engage the themes of repentance (turning) and receiving God's grace.

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 2: Receive

Daily Guide

RECEIVE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

It can be hard to receive a gift when something's in the way.

Imagine an obstacle course with a prize at the end. The obstacles in the way make it more difficult to get to the goal. But once we get through the obstacles, the prize becomes easier to receive.

The same can be true of our walk with Christ. God freely offers us great love and grace, yet it can be difficult for us to receive these from God because of the obstacles sin props up in the way.

Perhaps in the first few weeks of this journey of noticing God every day you have become more aware of some of these obstacles. This week you will have the opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to remove these obstacles in your life so you can receive the gift of God's love.

Notice God's Word

In our attempt to wrestle with obstacles that make it difficult for us to receive grace, we will journey through Psalm 51. It's important to keep in mind that Psalm 51 was written by David, the second king of Israel, after the prophet Nathan had confronted David about his adultery with Bathsheba (for the background story, read 2 Samuel 11-12). Recognizing his sin, David is desperate to receive forgiveness and cleansing from God.

Things I'm Noticing

Each day you'll be invited to read Psalm 51 through a different lens. Have a pen ready to write down fresh insights from scripture with each new reading.

Every day before you work through the passage, pray the following prayer:

“God, help me to receive today what you want to say to me.”

Say it a few times before you begin, then read Psalm 51:1-17.

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- 5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.
- 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Things I'm Noticing

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
15 Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

Psalm 51: 1-17

Day One: Read the passage and write about the emotions that you notice the author expressing.

Day Two: Read the passage and underline where David appears to be acknowledging his sin and failure.

Day Three: Read the passage and circle the words where the author is seeking God's love, mercy, or forgiveness.

Day Four: Just read verses 1-5.

Day Five: Just read verses 6-14.

Day Six: Just read verses 15-17.

Day Seven: Read the passage from start to finish out loud one time.

Notice God

Day One: Do you relate to any of these same emotions? How do they affect your ability to receive God's good gifts?

Things I'm Noticing

Things I'm Noticing

Day Two: Ask God to reveal areas of sin that block or hinder your ability to receive or hear God speak. Journal or pray about those.

Day Three: In what areas of your life do you need to receive God's mercy and love? Write those down and pray over them.

Day Four: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 5 verses?

Day Five: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 9 verses, especially as it relates to receiving from God?

Day Six: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 3 verses, especially as it relates to receiving from God?

Day Seven: As you think back through your journey of Psalm 51 this week, how has God spoken to you? What new insights do you have about yourself or about God? What new questions do you have?

Every day, we invite you to close your time by praying this verse:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)



Notice this week

Part of this week's journey is to think about repentance. Repent means to look at the direction of your life and decide to turn and go in a different direction.

As you walk through this week, there may be areas where you recognize the direction you are going is destructive and you need to go in a different direction.

This may happen as you read, as you sit at school or work, listen to the radio, or hear people around you speak.

So while you work through the obstacles that may keep you from receiving God's mercy, make note of repentance moments and ask God to pour grace and love over you as you continue on this *every day journey* of faith.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail. They are new every
morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Things I'm Noticing

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 3: Receive

Family Ideas

RECEIVE

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

Too often in life, gifts come to us with “strings” attached—expectations, obligations, or work we must do to earn them. This week we look at a different kind of gift. In John 1 the Bible describes Jesus’ grace as a free gift to us, something we are invited to simply receive. Below are a few suggestions for talking as families about our ability to receive with “no strings attached.”

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in RECEIVE

- In the DAILY GUIDE there is an invitation to journey through Psalm 51 in different ways each day. You may want to sit down together over dinner and walk through this journey as a family, or practice the exercises individually and process them together.
- An unspoken affirmation is no affirmation at all. During the week when you see family members doing things you appreciate, jot it down on a note and express your appreciation in a location you know they will see it. See how many come up during the week, and at the end of the week talk about how it felt to receive affirmation from one another.
- Plan a specific date with your children to shop for inexpensive gifts for another family member. Go together to a store and with \$5 or \$10 each, break away and in 30 minutes come up with the best gift you want the other person to receive. When you come back together, share why you chose that gift. Talk about the concept of receiving and what it’s like to give or receive gifts freely. (NOTE: As an alternative, you might go to the store and pick out the gift you would want the other person to receive if you had any amount of money to spend, and talk about it in the store).
- Create an obstacle course as a family, go to one nearby, or make one up on the spot at a local park playground. You can decide whether to time each other or race through all at once depending on your family’s style and competitive preference. Afterwards go out for ice cream or a dessert somewhere (or bring one with you from home) and talk about some of the things that get in our way of noticing God. Perhaps look over Psalm 51 and the obstacles that kept David from receiving all God had for him. You may even talk about obstacles as a family that can get in the way of noticing God as well. What obstacles—personal or family ones—keep us from receiving the gifts of God’s grace and love?

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 4: Yield

Leader Guide

YIELD

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Yielding to God helps us to trust God, and when we trust God we begin to know God more.

You'll Need:

- One piece of paper for every participant
- One pen or other writing instrument per person
- Bibles or a print-out of John 13:1-15 for each participant
- Approximately 50 dried beans (like pinto or kidney beans) for each student, pre-sorted into one cup for each student

Notice the moment

Greet your students and ask them to share with one other person: **What's the most fun way you've spent your time this week? What was the least fun thing you did this last week?** Be prepared to answer these questions yourself.

Then ask: **Now that we've thought about different ways we spend our time, I'd like you to think a bit further about the specific time commitments that make up your week. What are some things you are committed to?** Students might think about school, homework, extracurricular activities, time with friends and family, and part-time work. Also remind them that sleep is probably a commitment that deserves mention, as well as eating meals.

Next have each participant take a sheet of paper and pen. On one side of the paper, invite them to list the 5-10 regular commitments that show up in a typical weekday. On the other side of that paper, have them make one large circle for each area they listed. The circles should fill up that side of the page. For example, a high school student's sheet might have five circles: Sleep, School Hours, Homework, Extracurricular Activities, and Random. An adult's might swap School for Job.

Next, distribute the cups of beans, and ask students to place one bean inside each circle for every 30 minutes of their 24-hour day they spend with that commitment. So for example, 8 hours of sleep equals 16 beans inside the “sleep” circle. Hopefully, what emerges is a visible representation of where everyone’s time goes.

Ask a few questions to get students thinking about their time. Say: **This is where your time goes. What are your thoughts on seeing this?**

How do you feel about where your time goes?

What surprises you about this?

What would you change?

Which of your time commitments is the most life-giving?

Which is the most tiring?

After collecting some responses, continue, **Time might be our most valuable resource because it can’t be replaced. We give it every day to all kinds of things. Chances are, if you had a day all to yourself to do whatever you want, you’d use the hours differently than what’s on your page. But we can’t always do that. Instead, we yield our time in various ways.**

Ask students to help you define “Yield.”

Depending on what they say, elaborate their definition in a way your group would

understand. To yield is to give up, relinquish, or give away, usually by choice. Yielding is linked to the idea of *submission*—giving up some of our own power in order to submit to the will of another.

Continue, **Yielding things like our time, talents, gifts, and money is not easy. In fact, it’s really difficult. Yielding requires loss, and it also requires us to trust that the loss is for the better. When it comes to following Jesus, yielding is often the pathway to growth and maturity.**

Let students know they’re going to return to this sheet and their beans in a little while, so they should put them aside for the next few minutes but keep the beans in the circles.

Note:

This idea of “losing” returns as the theme of Week 7 in this series. You may want to read ahead to understand more of how “Lose” is framed in the LEADER GUIDE and DAILY GUIDE for Week 7 in order to help this discussion connect with Week 7.

Notice God's Word

Explain

In the passage we're about to read, it's Jesus' last night here on earth. He and the disciples have just eaten their final meal together.

Have someone read John 13:1-15 out loud, invite the group read it through again in silence, and then have the same person read the passage one final time.

Ask

What do you notice Jesus yielding in this passage?

Answers might include his regular clothes, his place at the table, his status, or the ability not to argue with Peter.

After you debrief this question, explain: **In verse 15, Jesus says that he's given his followers an example. An example of what? What is Jesus trying to teach us, specifically about yielding?**

You might want to include some of the following insights in your discussion:

- Jesus is suggesting that his followers should be known for giving up social status and privilege so that they can serve others, and identify with whom our society considers "the lowliest" or "on the outside."
- Jesus is giving us an example of humility, of servant leadership, of standing firm in godly purposes & convictions despite resistance, serving others regardless of whether they'll appreciate it.

You might help the group to understand some of the metaphorical yieldings going on as well:

- Tables in Jesus' time and culture were typically shaped like an upside-down U. The best place at the table would've been at the middle of the U. The least prestigious place would've been at the ends of the U. As the group's leader, Jesus would probably have been at the best place. For him to give up his place would also be an act of giving up power and status.
- Just like today, clothing in Jesus' time was an indicator of status and social standing. To trade his clothes for a servant's clothes (wrapping himself in a towel) means Jesus is yielding his status and rights for those of a lowly servant.
- Footwashing was one of the least desirable tasks of the entire ancient world. If you were the footwasher, it meant you were among the lowliest of the low when it came to status. By doing this job, Jesus clearly identified himself as a servant and as someone who cares about the people who usually get overlooked.

- Jesus' followers are meant to yield their lives, their gifts, their wills – in essence, everything we are – so that God can make our lives all that they are meant to be. You may want to refer back to John 13:3, which notes that Jesus knew God had put “all things under his power,” but was choosing to set aside that power in order to model the life of a servant to his followers.

At a natural transition point, wonder aloud: **I wonder what it might look like for you and me to yield more of our lives to Jesus? Can you think of some examples?**

Notice God

Next invite students to find a comfortable place to sit (spreading out from one another if possible) and explain you're going to read some more scripture to them a few times out loud. Pause in between each reading for as long as the group can bear. Encourage them to consider how this passage calls us to yield our lives in the same way Christ yielded his life.

Invite students to be open to the ways this passage may speak into specific areas in their lives. Once everyone is ready, read **Philippians 2:1-11**.

After this, ask: **What did you notice about yielding as we read this passage?**

What new questions did it raise for you about your own life?

How is the yielding we're talking about today connected to the theme of receiving God's grace that we focused on last week?

You might want to remind students that grace is a gift with “no strings attached,” yet out of that gift we are moved by gratitude to offer—or yield—our lives to God. In other words, yielding is not a way we earn God's favor, nor is it a forced submission to God's will, nor is it something we do to “perform” Christian acts in front of others. We yield as a free offering back to God.

- 1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
- 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
- 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
- 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
- 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!
- 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,
- 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-11

Depending on students' ideas, transition by saying, **In many ways, you and I are making choices every day about whether and how we want to yield to God. I want you to look at the "time" exercise you did earlier in which you dispersed beans among various aspects of your life. Reflect silently on this question:**

What aspects of the way that I'm spending my time show that I'm yielding to God?

Give students a few moments of silent reflection time and then give them another short period of quiet time to individually reflect on this question (you might want to repeat it a couple of times):

If I wanted to yield my schedule to God even further, what might I want to change?

After students have had some time to think about this, give students a few minutes to rearrange their beans to reflect any changes they would like to make to more fully yield to God. Close in prayer, thanking God that it is the grace we have received (and talked about last week) that enables us to make these changes.

If it feels appropriate, invite students to take one or more beans with them (put them in their wallets or pockets) as a reminder of any decisions they have felt prompted to make today.



Notice this week

Encourage students to use the DAILY GUIDE materials throughout the week on their own to reinforce the YIELD theme in their day-to-day routines.

4

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 4: Yield

Daily Guide

YIELD

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

Find a place where you can be free of distractions for a little while.

This week we are engaging God through the idea of “yielding.” To yield something is to *give it up for some other reason or purpose*. You probably see yield signs on the road, where cars from one direction must yield—or give way—to the cars coming from a different direction.

Among other things we may yield to God and God’s purposes, this week we want to think together about what it means to yield our *relationships* to God.

Notice God's Word

Read **Colossians 3:1-14**, and keep this “yield” idea in your mind as you do.

Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil

Things I'm Noticing

desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on

Colossians 3:1-14

Think back on the words, phrases, ideas, or images that strike you from this passage. You might want to underline, circle, or jot some of those down.

Ask God to help you focus even more deeply, and to help you notice what God might reveal through this text. After you do this for a moment, read through Colossians 3:1-14 again.

Notice God

What do you read about in this passage that offers a new picture (or pictures) of what it means to yield to Christ?

How would you rephrase Colossians 3:7-10 in your own words?

Things I'm Noticing

How would you try explaining Colossians 3:12-14 to a 6-year-old?

Much of Colossians 3:1-14 describes what our relationships with others look like as we yield our lives to Jesus.

When it comes to your relationships with others, what do you gain when they are more like Colossians 3:12-14 than Colossians 3:7-10?

Odds are good that as you've been reading these words in scripture, you've thought of specific relationships that would be different—and better—if your life and your relationships were more yielded to God. What are those relationships, and what would you like to see be different in them? Write some of those names and thoughts down here:

What steps might you take over the next week to try to have these relationships be more fully flavored with the attributes Paul describes in Colossians 3?

When we yield ourselves, and everything that means, to God, we gain a huge opportunity to trust God. In other words, we have the chance to grow in our faith. Yielding to God makes a statement:

“God, part of me would rather do _____ with my relationships, but I’m grateful to you, and I want to honor you and learn to trust you. So, here I am offering my relationships to you.” Maybe you’d even like to pray a prayer like that as you close this time.

Things I'm Noticing



Notice this week

As you think about your relationships this week—with your friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, your family, and others—and the ways you might yield them more fully to God, you may realize you need to have some conversations.

Perhaps it's a conversation with someone about your relationship with them and the ways you'd like it to be different. Maybe it's a conversation with a trusted friend or adult about how you need to be held accountable for new commitments you'd like to make in your relationships. Throughout the week consider those conversations that need to be had, and look for opportunities to make them happen.

Things I'm Noticing

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 4: Yield

Family Ideas

YIELD

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

This week our focus is yielding. To yield something is to give it up for some other reason or purpose. By learning to yield our will to God's will, we open ourselves to trust God more, and know God more every day.

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in YIELD

- To help your family understand this, think of some ways you yield already. Where do you personally yield your time or resources? Where does your family do this? Do you have any stories where yielding to God's purposes produced a memorable, positive result? By celebrating where you already do this, you can start this process with some momentum and a clear definition of what success looks like. Once you've done this reflection, start to dream of where God might be leading you to other yielding.
- Give your family a real-life example of yielding. Maybe you can take a chore off someone's plate, or run an errand, or clear out "your shows" on the DVR... something that is an act of yielding what matters to you for the sake of another. It could lead to some beautiful and creative "pay it forward" moments.
- If your family were to yield a few hours some time, or even half a day, what could you do together? Dream of ways you can team up and bless others and each other. This might be helping out for a morning at the local food bank, or visiting some older folks in a home, or just spending unstructured down time with one another if it's been awhile. If the thought of yielding that time seems nonsensical since everyone is so busy and has important commitments (and believe us, we're there with you) – even better! Talk about why you feel that way as a family, and what it might look like to yield less of your time to certain commitments in order to yield more time to serving or playing together.
- The DAILY GUIDE invites us to imagine yielding our relationships to God in light of Colossians 3:1-14. Consider reading this together as a family and asking about ways your family might live more in line with Paul's words in this passage in your relationships with one another. You might want to read on to Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Perhaps this becomes a passage you post somewhere in your home this week to encourage one another to yield all that we do to God.

5

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 5: Simplify

Leader Guide

SIMPLIFY

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Simplifying our lives by letting go of stuff helps us to notice and trust in God's provision for us each day.

You'll Need:

- A whiteboard and markers or large notepad and markers
- Paper and pens or pencils for students. Hand these out before you start.
- A leader or leaders with phones or tablets ready to do some quick online research of product costs

Notice the moment

Open by saying: **What if I could give each of you one million dollars?**

We're going to start today by doing a little dreaming together. I'm going to give you 3-5 minutes to break up into groups of 3-4 people and share for about a minute each about what you would do with your million dollars.

Don't worry about giving the "right answer". Just be honest and have some fun with it.

Have your students break up into groups and share their responses. After the time is up, go to the whiteboard or notepad and ask students to start sharing aloud some of their ideas. The goal is to get a lot of ideas on the board, and you may want to share a couple of your own ideas at the beginning to get the ball rolling if students are slow to share.

As you write, have a leader or two working to quickly search online for cost estimates for the products mentioned. If they want to buy a certain sports car, have the volunteer find out how much it is and interject that amount into the conversation so you can add it beside the item on the wall. If they want to build an orphanage in Rwanda, likely several charitable organizations offer sponsorship

opportunities as grand as that. Some of the ideas will be hard to quantify, but this should add a layer of both fun and reality to the conversation.

Once you are close to filling the space on the board, you may want to wonder aloud how much all of these ideas would actually cost if we added them up, and whether that total amount would exceed everyone's million dollars. If it does (which is likely), you may want to remark that a million dollars sounds like a lot of money at first, but actually may not feel like enough for everything we want to do or to buy.

At this point, you can transition to talking about this week's theme, SIMPLIFY. You might use some of the following thoughts:

Many of us probably feel like we need more stuff in our lives. But isn't it interesting that even having a million dollars doesn't seem like enough? What if what we really needed was less stuff in our lives, not more?

We've been spending the last several weeks reflecting on different ways that we can notice God more in our lives every day. One of those ways is to simplify our lives.

Notice God's Word

Either as a large group or in small groups, next read **Ecclesiastes 2:10-11**.

Say: **There's a whole book of the Old Testament written by a guy who had everything that he could ever need or want. But instead of being happy and satisfied, he ends up depressed because he finds out it's all meaningless. That's the**

word he uses over and over again.

Does that sound like the kind of life any of us would want to live?

Now ask your students to read Matthew 6:25-34 together. You may want to point out to students that this passage in Matthew 6 is part of the "Sermon on the Mount" you read together during Week 1. It's also a scripture passage in the DAILY GUIDE for this week. In this passage, Jesus not only gives us a reason to simplify (God provides for our needs), but also the result of our simplifying (we can seek God's kingdom).

Ask:

What stands out to you about the words of Jesus in the passage from Matthew? What do you hear Jesus encouraging us to think and do?

Many believe that Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon of Israel, one of the richest kings of his day. Part of the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes explores the consequences of a life spent pursuing human wisdom, work, and pleasures. It's clear that Ecclesiastes is written from personal experience. The conclusion of that experience is that a life lived for human satisfaction is "meaningless" and a "chasing of the wind."

Ask:

How is the life and attitude that Jesus calls us to different from the life that the writer of Ecclesiastes describes? What makes

them different? As a follow-up, you may want to ask which kind of life students would prefer to have themselves.

Then say: **The writer of Ecclesiastes chased after everything, but nothing was good enough. Jesus gives us a reason why we don't have to worry and chase after all the things of this world: we can trust in God's provision for us. Jesus calls us to notice the birds in the air and the lilies in the field and see how God provides for them. And when we trust in God, it gives us space to "seek first [God's] kingdom and [God's] righteousness" because God is providing for our needs.**

We don't have to spend all of our time chasing, worrying about how to get more "stuff." Choosing to simplify can give us the space to notice God and seek God's kingdom.

If time allows, it would be good for you to share a story from your own life about how simplifying an area of your life allowed you to notice more of God's activity in and around you.

Notice God

Invite your students to spend some time in reflection and prayer. Have them take out their paper and pen and write down some thoughts as they sit before God. Lead them slowly through this reflection, giving them enough time to write (or sketch, if they prefer) after each prompt:

First, ask students to *write down* what they are worried and anxious about right now.

Then, ask students to *write down* what they feel they are chasing after right now. Why are they chasing after these things?

Next, ask students to circle one (or more) things on this list that they would like to release to God so that they can experience peace and rest instead.

Finally, ask students to *write down* one step they can take this week to try to simplify their lives, thereby experiencing greater peace and less anxiety.

As a starting or closing prayer, you may want to pray **Psalm 103:1-5** aloud or invite a student or an adult to pray:

- 1 Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- 2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
- 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalm 103:1-5

Notice this week

Remind students to use the DAILY GUIDE materials during the week. In particular, point out the Notice this week section in the DAILY GUIDE where it asks this question:

What is one thing that you can let go of this week in order to simplify?

If you are in (or can easily break into) small groups and you have time, you may want to talk about some ideas that students can come up with to get them thinking for the week.

Also, if you'd like to explore some different Scriptures for teaching or discussion around the theme of "Simplify," you may want to check out:

- Acts 4:32-37 – The believers in the book of Acts see their possessions as a way to care for people in need.
- Luke 19:1-10 – Zacchaeus the tax collector has an encounter with Jesus, and his life is forever changed. He gives back the money he has cheated and gives money to the poor. This may be a helpful passage in conjunction with the Matthew 6:25-34 passage.

Here are a few other ideas that may help flesh out this week's theme:

- If there are students or adults in your church who have spent time in another country, you can invite them to share what their experience was like there. Especially if it was in the context of a short-term mission trip, ask them to share how their views on their lifestyle and attitudes might have been impacted or changed. Be sure to talk with them ahead of time about including any particular choices they make differently now in an effort to simplify.
- Consider doing a simple service project with your students, e.g. an elderly congregation member who needs her yard cleaned up, a family who needs the garage cleaned out, spending time at a local nursing home, etc. Talk with students about the impact of simple acts of service, and invite students to share what they notice when they do them together.



**STICKY
FAITH
EVERY
DAY**

Week 5: Simplify

Daily Guide

SIMPLIFY

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

It's a word we don't often use, especially to talk about our own lives.

The older we get, the busier and more complicated our lives often become. School, work, family, friends, sports, fashion, the future, and everything else under the sun compete for our attention. And, to keep up with all of that, we need computers, smart phones, credit cards, club teams, social media sites, and lots of caffeine.

How complicated has your life become? How much stuff do you need to get everything done? Notice how you're rarely ever satisfied with the amount of stuff that you have.

Chances are you don't need everything you want or even everything that you already have. It may be that one of the best ways to notice God in your life and in the world is to simplify.

Through Jesus' life we're invited to live another way. A way that isn't complicated by the fear and worries of this world, but is guided by this simple truth:

We can put our trust in God, who knows our needs and provides for us.

The invitation this week is to simplify your life by letting go of some of your stuff. Now, this doesn't mean that we have to live in the dark ages before Facebook and Starbucks. It does mean, however, that you can probably afford to let go of some stuff in your life—what you're spending your money on, how you're spending your time, and maybe most importantly, what you're worrying about during the day.

Simplifying helps us to put our trust in God and to realize that we are not at the mercy of the pressures, worries, and

Things I'm Noticing

materialism that swirls around us. By simplifying, we are able to recognize what is important—not just for a season but for a lifetime. And we are given space to see God and to see people in our world we can give to and bless.

Notice the moment

Where do you have the most stuff?

It might be your closet where your clothes or shoes are. It might be your Facebook page. It might be the place where you keep your phone, watch, jewelry, hats, or collections. It might be your calendar. It might be your credit card bill. It might be your computer or your video game collection.

Maybe it's where you have the most actual stuff, or maybe it's where you care about the stuff the most. You might even say that it has a sort of control over you.

Go there right now and take a look around. What do you notice? Think about where, when, and why you got all the things you have now. What are some things that aren't there that you wish were there?

Now spend a few moments silent before God. Take a look at your stuff again. Ask yourself some different questions. Do you really need all of this stuff? What could you afford to subtract? If you made a list of what was really important to you, would all of this stuff make the list?

During this series, you've been invited to subtract something from your life (Week 1) and also to unplug from something (Week 2) in order to notice God more. The invitation this week is to simplify your life by letting go of some stuff AND letting go of the worry and dissatisfaction that come when we are chasing

Things I'm Noticing

after stuff. It's an invitation that extends beyond these 8 weeks. Instead of only practicing this discipline for a season, what if you could simplify for a lifetime and notice God more every day?

Notice God's Word

Below is a passage from the Bible that shares the words of Jesus. Read through the passage slowly three times, pausing to be silent between each reading.

What do you notice about Jesus' words? Take note of specific words or phrases that stick out to you. You may want to write the words, thoughts, and feelings that come to mind as you read the scripture.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25-34

Things I'm Noticing

Notice God

After reading the passage, sit quietly for a moment, holding all the words, feelings, and thoughts before God. Reflect on this question:

Do I believe these words of Jesus to be true?

Then spend some time in prayer with God. For a long time, people have used a simple prayer to turn their hearts to God called the "Serenity Prayer":

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
courage to change the
things I can, and the
wisdom to know the difference.

You may want to use this to start your prayer time with God. Think back to the Matthew 6:25-34 passage and lift up to God the areas of your life where you feel stressed and worried. Consider the ways you can simplify and let go of some stuff in order to trust God more and experience greater freedom.

Don't worry about making your prayers fancy or long. God hears simple prayers.

Things I'm Noticing



Notice this week

This week, spend some time each day with this passage of scripture and this guided prayer. Again, don't worry about being formal or fancy.

Think through how you're spending your money and your time this week. What is one thing that you can let go of this week in order to simplify? Maybe it's unplugging from social media and entertainment for a day. Or deciding that you don't need to buy that hoodie you've been eyeing for a while. Or even ordering a burger and not getting the fries.

Finally, as you go through your day, make a physical (or mental) list of all the ways that God is providing for you. End your day thanking God for God's care and concern for you.

Things I'm Noticing



5

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 5: Simplify

Family Ideas

SIMPLIFY

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

Below are some ideas and tips for you as you continue to engage this series with your family. This week we are considering the ways that we can simplify our lives by letting go of stuff in order to have space to notice God and to trust in God's provision. Please note that you won't be able to implement all of these ideas, so pick one or two that you would like to focus on and give them a try together!

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in SIMPLIFY

- It's an age-old adage that "more is caught than taught." As parents, think about some ways that you can simplify your lives in order to notice God more this week. What is something that you can let go of? Share your thoughts and plans with your kids, including why it can be hard to simplify and also some of the worries and concerns that you are bringing before God. Remember that letting your kids know why you're engaging in these practices is just as important as letting them know what you are planning on doing. If your family has made a specific choice to fast from (or "subtract") something, now is a good time to check in on that in light of this discussion of simplicity.
- Open up a conversation with your kids about their worries and concerns and what they find themselves chasing after. This may not be the time to try and fix their problems or to question their judgment. Listen first, invite your kids to think about how they can trust in God's provision, and spend some time praying for your kids and their worries and concerns.
- Read Matthew 6:25-34 together as a family and invite everyone to share one way that they have seen God provide for themselves or for someone else. Again, this does not need to be a rigid family devotion moment. This is something that can happen in the car with the help of a smart-phone Bible app and a little bit of traffic. Just make sure the person reading is not the person driving!
- Spend one mealtime together as a family this week sharing a simple meal and then preparing a meal together to deliver to a member of your church or someone in your neighborhood. Discuss as a family how simplifying your own lives gives you space, time, and resources to bless others.

- Have a family night where everyone unplugs from computers, internet, texting, and even television to play a board game or go out for ice cream, or even go for a hike together. Try to keep the activity as simple as possible, making sure that it doesn't cost you much to do it. To be really effective it's best to make this an *invitation* with your kids and not an *imposition* on them.
- In many communities there are local shelters or rescue missions that help distribute clothes, toys, and certain necessities to those in need. Consider as a family donating one item each to a local organization. But here's the catch: ask everyone to choose something that they would *actually wear or use*. It's easy to give away the sweater that Grandma gave you two Christmases ago. Again, make this an invitation and give your kids permission to say no. Hopefully as they are engaging in the SIMPLIFY theme, they'll start asking questions about what they really need. Dropping off your donations together may also be a great experience for your family.



6

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 6: Lament

Leader Guide

A Sticky Faith Curriculum for Your Entire Youth Ministry

LAMENT

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

Lament helps us keep our relationship with God honest. It's about naming and embracing our deepest emotions and bringing them to God instead of ignoring or not dealing with our disappointments.

You'll Need:

- A way to play part of a song or video as an opening exercise
- Paper and a pen for each of your students
- Psalm 13, either using Bibles, print-outs, or screen projection

Notice the moment

Start with a trip down memory lane by playing all or part of a song (or a music video) that reminds you of the time when you were the age of your students. Share a short story about why TLC's "Waterfalls" will always remind you of 7th grade summer camp when no one wanted to share a bunk, or how dreamy it was to dance to LoneStar's "Amazed" at your senior year prom. This is a great time to be super honest and let your students have a laugh at your questionable taste in 70s/80s/90s music.

Next, hand out paper and a pen to every student.

Say: **Music is often an important part of our lives. Take a couple of minutes and write down your top five favorite songs. Not just your favorites that are getting radio time right now, but your top favorite songs of all time.**

After a few minutes say: **Now look back over your list. Why do you think you picked these songs as favorites?**

Listen to what students are saying and if it hasn't been mentioned, say: **Sometimes songs become our favorites because they have a good beat or a catchy tune, but often songs move us**

because they help us articulate our feelings. They help us express how giddy we feel about a special guy/girl or how angry we are at our parents' divorce.

This would be a great place to interact with what your students have just said. If they mention songs that you're familiar with, use those songs as examples of what emotions music helped them articulate.

Then ask: **Are these emotions expressed in your favorite songs also emotions you regularly express to God?**

Should you express all of your emotions to God?

Listen to their responses, then say: **Romans 8 reminds us that nothing will separate us from the love of God. Paul writes in verses 38-39 that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ESV).**

As we'll see today, that includes our feelings: joy and thankfulness, as well as anger, disappointment, and resentment.

Notice God's Word

Say:

There are many places throughout the Bible that we find examples of lament, but the most prevalent places are in the books of Lamentations and Psalms. Since the psalms were originally sung, we know people have been using musical prayers to express their feelings since at least the

time of King David and before.

Using Bibles or projecting the words on a screen, invite the students to slowly read through Psalm 13. Consider having a student or two read it aloud as well.

- Psalm 13 is an individual lament. There are also corporate laments, crying out as a community to God. This could have been a song used in some kind of temple worship ceremony.
- The initial question, "How long?" is a common phrase in lament language. It's sort of like saying, "Enough already! I can't take this anymore!"
- Some interpreters think the "enemy" in this psalm is probably the fear of death, perhaps because of a severe illness.
- Verses 4-5 voice a prayer for deliverance. "Look" and "answer" are cries that God would rescue the psalmist. "Look" is also a plea that God would bless the psalmist with God's presence and healing power.
- The change in verse 6 is likely based on a change in attitude rather than a change in the psalmist's actual state of being.
- The hopeful turn at the end of this psalm is characteristic of many laments, in particular its emphasis on trust in God's "steadfast love"—the faithful covenant love God promises to God's people. The promise of future praise anticipates God's positive answer to the psalmist's cries for help.

Ask:

Is there anything surprising to you about Psalm 13? If this is a student's first interaction with the idea of biblical lament, the depth of the feeling of abandonment or disappointment in God within this psalm might be surprising. If your group is expressing surprise or concern, it is a great time to affirm our ability to bring all of our emotions to God.

Ask:

If you had to divide Psalm 13 into two major sections, where would you make the break? Why?

Verses 1-4 are a major section with a change in voice leading to verses 5-6. The author's "but" at the beginning of verse 5 a major clue that the Psalm is now headed in a different direction)

Close your discussion by saying: **Lament is an important part of an honest relationship with God.**

Lament is probably an unfamiliar word to most of us. Lament is a form of prayer and worship that allows us to cry out to God in the midst of painful experiences. This doesn't just mean complaining. David, the author of this Psalm, brings all of his feelings of abandonment and disappointment to God – he doesn't hold anything back! But at the end of the psalm, David returns to the truth about who he knows God to be. Maybe he's reminding himself about those truths even in the midst of feeling abandoned by God in the moment.

Notice God

Now invite your students to write their own psalm of lament based on Psalm 13. It might be helpful for your students to have access to Psalm 13 during this exercise.

Say:

We're going to take a few minutes to write our own psalm of lament based on David's model in Psalm 13. This might be a little uncomfortable, but as we practice coming before God in this way, it might help us learn to bring these kinds of honest prayers to God more often. This won't be an activity we share with each other, so feel free to be as honest as you can.

Depending on the set up of your room, you may want to invite students to spread out a bit for the sake of focus and privacy.

The emotion is so raw in Psalm 13 it can almost make us (and our students) uncomfortable. Inviting your students to write their own version of Psalm 13 isn't something you'll want to do without practicing yourself. Just like any spiritual practice, be sure you take some time to lament on your own with God before you lead a group through this practice.

First, take a few moments and remember a difficult time in your life. It could be something you are going through right now, or it could be a past experience. Think about the situation and the feelings it stirred in you. Were you angry? Scared? Disappointed? Sad? Betrayed? In a couple of sentences, write about that to God.

After about 2 minutes say: **Now pause your writing and spend some time thinking about a specific time when you have been confident of God's presence or faithfulness. It may be a very different time from what you were just writing about, and that's okay. Remember as much detail as you can – what was the situation? How did you feel? Why were you so sure of God's presence?**

After another short pause, about 2 minutes, say: **Now we're going to use that memory to write a section of praise or thanksgiving to God. Using Psalm 13 as a guide if you'd like, write a sentence or two praising God's faithfulness or presence in your life. This is a deliberate way to remember that God is faithful even when our current circumstances are painful.**

If this is your group's first time to practice lament together, some of your students might be a little (or a lot!) uncomfortable with the idea. Consider leaving some time after this section to help students explore how they felt about writing their own psalm of lament. Remember that lament is about inviting students' honesty, so be open to any response. Do not force students to share their laments with anyone, but invite them to consider sharing their lament with a trusted adult or friend this week if they need to process the experience more.

Since this exercise has been primarily about individual lament, you might want to use the last few minutes to practice communal lament as well. Listen to or sing a song that expresses some of the characteristics of lament that we explored in this session (see some suggestions below; note that some of these songs are from artists who are Christian and others are not).

- "The Reckoning (How Long)" by Andrew Peterson from the "Counting Stars" album
- "December" by Taylor Swift on the "Speak Now" album
- "Psalm 13" Shane Bernard & Shane Everett on the "Upstairs" album
- "Take it All" by Adele on the "21" album
- "O God Where Are You Now?" by David Crowder Band on the "A Collision" album
- "The Fall" by Gungor on the "Ghosts Upon the Earth" album
- "Dry Bones" by Gungor on the "Beautiful Things" album
- "It's All Coming Back to Me Now" by Celine Dion on the "Falling into You" album
- "Colder Weather" by Zac Brown Band on the "You Get What you Give" album
- "How to Save a Life" by the Fray on the "How to Save a Life" album
- "Pain" by Tupac (*please note this song is very explicit, so judge your context appropriately*)

Lament can be a fairly heavy subject, so be sure to prep your other team members/volunteers ahead of time to be especially perceptive to students' needs to process afterward.

Notice this week

There are plenty of psalms of lament. If you have a longer teaching time, or additional time later in the week during small groups or another gathering, consider some of the following psalms. Now that students are familiar with lament as a literary category, invite them to dig a little deeper into these passages. Do the lament psalms follow a standard pattern? What is the same or different between the lament psalms? Which lament psalm is the easiest for your students to relate to? The hardest? You might also post psalms or phrases on your group's social media sites or push them out via text to get students thinking and talking about this radical language of honesty in prayer.

- Psalm 6
- Psalm 42
- Psalm 74
- Psalm 77



6

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 6: Lament

Daily Guide

LAMENT

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Life isn't always butterflies and rainbows. In fact, life is often very painful. Doubt, fear, anger, disappointment and grief are all emotions that play a significant role in our humanity.

Sometimes it's tempting to withhold those feelings from God. But the Bible is filled with stories, poems and songs written by and about people who were sometimes very disappointed, and who brought those disappointments to God.

In lament we pour out our emotions to God—pain, doubt, disappointment, grief—and then remind ourselves of God's continued presence. Lament doesn't always finish with a happy ending. Sometimes heartache comes and stays for a long time, but lament always ends with a reassurance of God's presence.

Notice the moment

Take a couple of deep breaths and let yourself wind down a little bit. Consider lighting a candle near you; some people have found this helpful as they spend time with God. The constant light of the candle is a tangible reminder of God's presence; even as our minds sometimes wander, God is fully present with us.

Notice God's Word

Once you've begun to wind down your mind, open your Bible to **Psalms 77**. Slowly read through the whole psalm.

Now read through it again, paying attention to the emotions that the psalm brings up in you. How do each of the verses make you feel?

Things I'm Noticing

1 I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.

2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.

3 I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.

4 You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.

5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;

6 I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:

7 "Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?

8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?

9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

10 Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his
right hand.

11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.

12 I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."

13 Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?

14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.

15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

16 The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.

17 The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.

18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.

19 Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.

20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 77

Things I'm Noticing

Notice God

The writer of Psalm 77 has essentially created two lists. The first nine verses line up disappointments and grievances against God and don't seem to hold anything back! Then in verses 10-20 the list switches to the character and actions of God.

Now take as long as you need to create your own two lists. First, write down your "dirty laundry" list of doubts, hurts, fears and disappointments. Take courage from the author of Psalm 77 and don't hold anything back.

Pause for a few minutes with that list.

Then write another list of what you know to be true about God. Think through the character and attributes you know to be true about God from the Bible, but also think through your personal life. Where has God been present and faithful to you personally?

Close by praying that God will hold all of the things on your first list, and that God will be especially present to you as you lean into trusting the second list to be true.

Things I'm Noticing



Notice this week

Like other disciplines we've tried in this series, lament takes practice.

We're often very comfortable turning to a friend or close family member with our anger or heartache, but a little timid when it comes to expressing everything we feel to God. Psalm 62:8 is a great reminder that God is interested in everything we're feeling, not just the good stuff:

"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us."

Let that phrase be a reminder to you this week. You might even want to take a few moments to memorize it or write it on a notecard and place it somewhere you'll notice it throughout the week.

Things I'm Noticing



**STICKY
FAITH
EVERY
DAY**

Week 6: Lament

Family Ideas

LAMENT

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

Lament isn't a topic we often spend a lot of time talking about, so below are some ideas to help start conversations within your family about lament. Not all of these will be applicable or helpful to your family (and there are too many to tackle them all!), so just pick one or two that stand out to your family.

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in LAMENT

- Music often helps us articulate our emotions. Take some time to share songs (Christian or secular) that have been significant in your spiritual journey – either songs that have expressed your lament in a particularly difficult time or songs that have reminded you of the goodness of God. Why were those songs significant to you? Be sure to share your own as well as inviting your kids to share their songs. Also, be prepared to listen without judgment even if your kids share songs that you think hold little value (musical or otherwise); this is a time to listen and affirm!
- More than a few biblical characters have experienced disappointment or grief and expressed their lament to God. Read through one of these stories and talk about how the main character dealt with his emotions. What part of this lament is the easiest for you to relate to? Which is the most difficult to relate to?
 - Job (the whole book of Job would be worth reading through, but particularly Job 23:1-12)
 - Abraham (Genesis 15:1-6)
 - Can you or your kids think of other Biblical characters who went through struggles and cried out to God?
- Lament begins and ends with the understanding that God is present in the midst of our suffering, but sometimes the middle of suffering is the hardest time to remember God's presence. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel sets up a stone monument, which he calls an Ebenezer (literally, "stone of help"), to remember the place that God led the Israelites in victory over the Philistines. Talk about any physical reminders of God's presence and faithfulness that your family might have. What might it look like to begin a practice of collecting physical Ebenezers (reminders) of God's faithfulness to your family?
- The DAILY GUIDE encourages individuals to practice pouring out their hearts to God (see Psalm 62:8). Talk about how different members of your family pour out their hearts to God. Praying out loud? Journaling? Song writing? Dancing? What could it look like to try a new way of praying, individually or as a family?



7

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 7: Lose

Leader Guide

A Sticky Faith Curriculum for Your Entire Youth Ministry

LOSE

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

If we want to experience the fullness of life God offers through Jesus every day, we must be willing to lose everything as Jesus did.

You'll Need:

- Bibles for each student
- Pens & Paper
- Whiteboard or poster paper & markers
- At least one student or adult with internet access (via smart phone or tablet)

Notice the moment

Loss is a difficult topic to help students engage. It gets to the very core of our existence, and it reminds us of our own mortality and that life can be extremely painful.

Spend some time thinking about how you'll introduce this topic to your students. You may want to say something like this:

So much of the time in our conversations, we talk about the good things happening in our lives. But the reality is that we also experience hard and challenging things. We encounter suffering, loss, and death.

If it feels appropriate, share about a recent way you've personally experienced suffering or loss.

It's not easy to talk about suffering, grief, loss, and death, but they are a part of our everyday lives. Why do you think it might be so hard for us to talk about loss and death? Give students a few moments to think about and respond to this, even if their answers are "it's depressing," or "because we like to be happy." These are actually helpful answers to frame this week, because our avoidance of loss and death as a culture keep us from fully experiencing the hope of resurrection life.

Continue:

Once a year we reserve a week to reflect on Jesus' suffering and death as well as our own suffering and, eventually, death.

Although it may be uncomfortable to talk about death and loss, there is something comforting in the fact that Jesus experienced death and loss too. We'll find that comfort today by focusing on Jesus' last words.

Have your students get into groups of 2-3. Give them the task of finding the last words of Jesus before his death in each of the four gospels. Give them a few minutes and then bring their attention back and ask: **What did you notice?**

Allow them to share what they noticed, and write what they share on a whiteboard or poster paper.

If no one mentions it, point out that while Matthew and Mark generally agree on Jesus' last words, Luke and John offer something different. For Matthew and Mark, Jesus' last words are a quote from Psalm 22 and a question to God: Why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). They mention that he cries out again but don't mention whether his cries were words or just cries.

Luke's account ends with Jesus telling God, "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46), and John writes that Jesus said, "It is finished." (John 19:30). Ask students to comment on why they think these writers emphasized different last words. Explain to them the importance of a person's final words and why you think it would be important for the writers to record it differently.

Scholars debate why the gospel writers recorded the events of the crucifixion differently. Some suggest the eyewitnesses simply saw things from different perspectives, others suggest the authors are trying to make a certain point, so they focus on certain details. If students begin to ask questions about the different accounts, give some of the talking points in this paragraph but try to avoid conversations or debates about the nature or accuracy of the Bible. Save those for another time.

Notice God's Word

Say:

Because we are focusing on the topic of loss today, we'll take a closer look at Matthew's account together. We'll pick up at the place in the story where Jesus has been arrested, sentenced to death and hung on the cross. Ask a student or adult to read Matthew 27:45-50 out loud.

Ask:

What do you think it means for God to have forsaken Jesus? Give them a minute to share and then have someone use their phone to look up a definition for the word "forsake". They'll find definitions like, "to abandon," "to renounce," or "to give up". Reword Jesus' prayer by saying something like this:

So if we reword Jesus' prayer, it could be something like, "God, why have you abandoned me?" or "God, why have you given up on me?"

Christians talk a lot about how God will never give up on us, but here we find that Jesus thinks God has given up on him. That's a hard concept to grasp, isn't it?

We've heard the story of Jesus' death so many times that we don't always let ourselves feel the pain and absurdity of it.

Ask someone to reread Matthew 27:50 ("And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.")

Ask:

What do you think it means that Jesus gave up his spirit? Do you think this means Jesus had some choice in when he would die?

Give them a moment to share. Point out that not only does Matthew describe Jesus as feeling like God had given up on him, but Matthew also describes Jesus finally giving up too. You might say something like this:

Jesus gave up too. Everything he had worked his whole life for was gone.

He had tried and tried and had lost. He may have felt as if everyone had given up on him, even God. You might remember that the night before in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46), Jesus had desperately prayed to God, asking God to make a different way than for Jesus to be crucified, but God had not given him another way than to lose his life.

The emotion is so raw in Psalm 13 it can almost make us (and our students) uncomfortable. Inviting your students to write their own version of Psalm 13 isn't something you'll want to do without practicing yourself. Just like any spiritual practice, be sure you take some time to lament on your own with God before you lead a group through this practice.

Notice God

Continue to explain this reality: Jesus invites us to come with him toward resurrection. But as Jesus learned in the Garden of Gethsemane, there is no way to get to resurrection without going through crucifixion. There is no way to new life other than through giving up, surrendering, and losing.

This gives us a better understanding of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 16:24, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for me will find it." Apparently losing is a central part of following Jesus.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to God, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Let’s spend some time together praying this prayer of loss: Not as I will, but as you will.

Invite the students to close their eyes and place their hands in front of them with their palms facing up, fists closed.

Ask them to imagine something they are holding on to in their life in an effort to be in control, as if they were holding it in their hand right now. Then after a few moments invite them to turn their palms down and open their hands, symbolizing their willingness to let go of these things.

As they do, instruct them to pray **“Not as I will, but as you will,”** silently to God several times.

You could also invite them to pray those words out loud. You may want to avoid playing music in the background to let the students really experience loss, or you may want a song (perhaps the line from the song Blessed Be Your Name, “you give and take away” would be helpful to your group).

End this time with a spoken prayer and a reminder that Good Friday isn’t the point of the story—Easter Sunday is—but that Jesus shows us that the only way to the joy of Sunday is through the loss of Friday.

You might want to end your gathering by turning down the lights and/or asking students to leave in silence.

Notice this week

Encourage students to use the DAILY GUIDE throughout the week on their own to help build a rhythm of noticing in their day-to-day routines.

You could also encourage them to re-read all of Jesus’ final words at least once this week, to continue to pray with open hands, and, if you’re doing this series during Lent and this falls on Holy Week, to participate in Good Friday and Easter Sunday gatherings.

If you'd like to expand your time, here are a few other ideas:

- Look through each of Jesus’ last words with your students more closely, asking what we can learn from the perspective of each gospel writer.

- Do a deeper study on Psalm 22 to understand why the psalmist originally wrote the line Jesus quotes in Matthew's account, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- Find a botanist or biologist to explain the integral role of death involved in a plant dropping new seeds to create new life and compare it to our lives and to Jesus' death and resurrection, or his teaching in John 12:24.
- You might invite students to notice pain, death, and loss around them or in the world this week and come back next week prepared to share what they see. If you set this up, be sure to make a note next week to follow up and make space for sharing.
- There are several good videos online (or make your own) that use the phrase, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming," (search the phrase in YouTube for examples) to help us understand that life comes through death and that our suffering is not the end of the story.



7

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 7: Lose

Daily Guide

LOSE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

Our bodies require constant cycles of filling and emptying, living and dying, gaining and losing—we just aren't always aware of them.

We're usually aware of the digestion process, but we don't often pay attention to many of the other daily cycles. Every day we lose and re-grow hair. We constantly shed and build new skin cells, blood cells, and most other kinds of cells. Our body is constantly gaining and losing. We just don't notice.

Today you'll notice your breathing, connecting it to the idea of gaining and losing.

Think of it like this: you need to fill your lungs with oxygen several times each minute, but you can't fill them if they are still full with your last breath. In order to gain your next breath (and stay alive) you need to lose your last breath. This is often how life is, and as we think this week about how Jesus lost and regained his life, we can experience it better if we notice the constant cycle of breathing.

Did you know that most of us don't breathe properly?

Optimal breathing is done with the diaphragm (so that your abdomen moves out as you inhale and in as you exhale) at a rate of about 6-8 breaths per minute. Most of us breathe shallowly and rapidly through our chest and shoulders, which doesn't provide the best amount of oxygen to our brain and body.

Try this breathing exercise and as you do it, think of Christ's death as a cosmic, divine exhale of loss and think of his resurrection as a cosmic, divine inhale of new life.

Things I'm Noticing

1. Find a quiet place to sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Notice your breathing. What does it feel like to take air into your lungs? What does it feel like to exhale?
3. Now focus on breathing with your diaphragm (place your hand on your stomach—it should be moving in and out).
4. Finally, begin to notice the pace of your breathing. It should take about 5-7 seconds to inhale and about the same to exhale.
5. Do this for a couple of minutes. (Remember, this should feel comfortable, so if it's not, just relax and breathe at your normal pace again for a few moments.)

What was it like to breathe this way? How does noticing your breathing help you focus on the weight of Christ's death and resurrection?

Notice God's Word

Through the centuries, Christians have combined breathing patterns with reading scripture or praying. Often this is done with the psalms.

Today you can try it out with a paraphrased passage from Job 1:21. Job was a character in scripture who lost everything and felt as if he was about to lose his life.

As you read the italicized lines, inhale slowly; as you read the bold lines, exhale slowly. You can repeat this practice several times.

Naked I came into this world

Naked I will depart

God has given

God has taken away

Blessed be God's name

Blessed be God's name

Things I'm Noticing

Notice God

Each breath that you've taken today—and every other breath you have ever taken—is a gift from God.

In Genesis 2:7, the creation of the first human is described like this: "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." One of God's first acts of love towards us is to give us life through breathing. Breath is our first experience of God's grace—it is not something we earn or deserve from God, it is something God gives to us out of goodness and love.

Someday you'll take your last breath, and you don't know when that day will be. This week, become more aware of your breathing as a cycle of life and death, gaining and losing, every day.

Notice this week

- There is a lot of science and research behind breathing rates. If you're interested in finding out more about optimal breathing rates, talk to your doctor or do some studying. There are several apps for computers or smartphones that will help you become aware of your breathing pace. (Note: talk to your doctor or your parents before taking medical advice from apps, websites or others.)
- Try pacing your breathing with some other scripture passages like Psalm 46:10, Psalm 131, or Romans 8:38-39.
- One of the most common "breath prayers" is called the "Jesus prayer":

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Or sometimes it's shortened to just,
"Lord Jesus, have mercy on me."

Try saying this prayer as you breathe in and out, or while walking, running, or driving this week.

Things I'm Noticing

7

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 7: Lose

Family Ideas

LOSE

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

If we want to experience the fullness of life God offers through Jesus every day, we must be willing to lose everything as Jesus did.

This week, experiment with one or more of these ideas as a family to help you process and learn together about what it means to experience loss.

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in LOSE

- **Talk about a recent loss.** Some families participating with this curriculum will have no problem talking about loss. Perhaps you just experienced the loss of a loved one, a broken relationship, or the loss of a job or a house. Talk about it and compare your feeling to how God must have felt when Jesus died or to how Jesus may have felt as he realized everyone had abandoned him. End by reading Psalm 131 together. Here's the whole thing:

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed myself and quieted my ambitions.
I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.
Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

- **Practice breathing together.** Breathing is a natural pattern of gaining (inhaling) and losing (exhaling). Just as there is no way to gain the joy of Easter Sunday without experiencing the loss of Good Friday, there is no way to fill our lungs without first emptying them. Being aware of our breathing is a way of connecting our everyday lives to the story of crucifixion and resurrection. Choose one person in your family to be the "counter" while everyone else breathes along. [Say something like, "Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6."] After a few minutes, talk about what you noticed. How does your pace of breathing reflect your normal pace of life? What do you wish were different? You might want to incorporate a prayer practice from the DAILY GUIDE involving pacing our breathing alongside scripture in prayer.
- **Parents, talk about losses in your life.** Some kids haven't experienced much loss in their lifetime. This would be a good week to take time for parents to share their experiences of loss, suffering and pain with their kids.

- **Read the four accounts of Jesus' death.** As you read, notice how they are different from each other and discuss why each author may have wanted to emphasize different parts of their experience.
- **Encourage each other.** Loss is a part of life and of following Jesus, but it's not the end of the story. Maybe your family can repeat this phrase (or one like it) to each other all week to remind each other that even though life can be hard, we can still have hope:

"It's Friday, but Sunday's coming."

IF YOU'RE DOING THIS SERIES DURING LENT...

- **Go to a Thursday Passover/Last Supper service as a family** or create your own reminder at home on this evening when Jesus shared his last meal with friends and talked about how his loss would usher in the new Kingdom. John 13-17 gives the most extensive account of the Last Supper and final words of Jesus to his friends, but you could read any Gospel account together.
- **Go to a Good Friday service as a family.** Add something to your experience like riding to and from the service in complete silence, fasting until after the service, or journaling and sharing your experience of the service.

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 8: Made New

Leader Guide

MADE NEW

Sticky Faith Every Day Leader Guide

Big Idea:

In Christ new life is always beginning over...and over...and over. This last week we want to focus on the powerful act of Jesus' resurrection and the ways we're invited to live out the hope of resurrection life *every day*.

You'll Need:

- Paper and something for each student to write or draw with
- Copies of the small group questions in the "Notice God's Word" section
- A recording of the song "Beautiful Things" and a way to play it (see the opening exercise)
- A Bible for each student or print-out of Romans chapter 6

Notice the moment

Start by listening to the song "Beautiful Things" by Gungor (from the "Beautiful Things" album). At the time of the writing of this curriculum, there are multiple powerful renditions of "Beautiful Things" (that show the lyrics and/or include photography) available on YouTube. If the time and tenor of your group allows, distribute paper and pencils and play the song more than once. Invite students to draw or write whatever thoughts and feelings come to mind.

Split into groups of 3-4 people, plus a leader if possible, and discuss (while sharing what has been drawn or written, if you chose that option): What words or emotions did you notice as you listened to this song?

What are the beautiful things God has done in your life throughout this series?

If you or your students chose to "subtract" something and "add" something during these 8 weeks (as suggested in the first session), ask about the impact of those choices. You might mention some of the other weekly themes as well (Unplug, Receive, Yield, Simplify, Lament, Lose) and ask about the ways these themes are still lingering in students' and leaders' lives. Beautiful things sometimes come out of the most unexpected places.

Ask about some of the practices that students and adults would like to continue on after Lent, like praying with scripture or fasting from something specific for a period of time. **What practices can translate into every day life with Jesus?**

Close this sharing time by reading **Philippians 1:6** out loud in your group as a reminder of God's promise to make us new: *"[I am] confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Notice God's Word

Transition by saying something like: **This series is coming to an end this week. But what's next? Do we just go back to life like it was 8 weeks ago?**

Or do these practices and rhythms we've created in our lives translate into the way we follow Jesus every day?

Distribute copies of Romans 6 as you continue: **The Apostle Paul talks about this in Romans 6. Before we read this entire chapter, we are going to split into 2 groups – guys and girls.**

Guys, I want you to listen to Paul's words about "slavery" and what that means as we finish this series. Girls, I want you to listen for what Paul says about "freedom" and what God wants for us in light of the resurrection of Jesus.

Note about the below exercise:

If you're using this curriculum in same-gender small groups rather than as a large group, just split the group in half instead and don't mention the guys/girls idea. That'd probably be really confusing.

Split the group into guys and girls. Read Romans 6:1-23 slowly, out loud. You might want to have a male student or adult read verses 1-14 and a female student read verses 15-23.

Next, give each student a piece of paper and a pen or marker. This time invite them to turn to Romans 6 in their Bibles or on the printed sheets. Ask students to read through this passage on their own, this time writing words, pictures, or ideas that relate to their topic of 'slavery' or 'freedom' on their paper.

After giving them time to do this, ask students to share in the next 10 minutes in small groups of guys and girls separately (Note: you will need to make copies of these questions or somehow project them to aid in the small group discussions):

- **What words, pictures, or ideas relating to "slavery or "freedom" did you write down?**

- **What thoughts do you have about what that means for your life tomorrow and every day going forward?**
- **What else did you notice from Paul's words about what God has done for us?**

Invite a representative or two from each group to share with everyone what they learned about slavery or freedom. As the leader, be sure to encourage each group's discovery process and highlight truths and applications from their insights.

Some of these insights might be helpful to your discussion on Romans 6:

- While Paul makes it clear in Romans 7 that believers still sin, Romans 6:1-3 shows that the Christian life doesn't have to be dominated by sin because of what we experience in Christ.
- In Romans 6:11, Paul uses verbs in the present tense, implying that we are to continue to count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ.
- We play a part in the process of continuing to experience our death to sin and our life in Christ, as Paul states clearly in Romans 6:12-14 by using commands directed at Christ-followers.
- In an interesting twist, Paul teaches that we're still slaves—but instead of being slaves to our sin, we are slaves to Jesus Christ (see Romans 6:16-18).

Notice God

Continue:

I don't know about you, but when something good happens to me, I want to tell others about it. In the first century, when God did "beautiful things" (to quote the song we listened to earlier), he often expected his followers to tell others about what they had experienced.

Continue:

Acts 5 recounts a story of early believers who were captured and put in prison for their faith. When they were released in the night by an angel of the Lord, he said, "Go, stand in the temple courts, and tell the people all about this new life" (Acts 5:20).

After God brings freedom to the apostles who had been arrested, they're asked to go right

back to the public square and keep talking! God may not have broken you out of a literal prison these past 8 weeks, but he has done something new. That's probably different for each of us.

Give students a few minutes in silence to consider the "something new" they've received during this series and who the people are with whom they'd like to share it. Invite students to share their reflections with their small group.

Then have students close in small groups by praying together for one another and for the others they've mentioned who they hope to share good news with. After each person prays, the group can recite the following line (you may want to write or project this prayer somewhere):

"Lord, every day help us count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ."

Notice this week

Encourage students to use the DAILY GUIDE materials on their own or with a partner to help build a rhythm of noticing God more in their day-to-day routines.

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY



Week 8: Made New

Daily Guide

MADE NEW

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Notice the moment

Before and After: Take out your journal or a piece of paper. Draw a line down the center of the page and write “before” on the left side of the line and “after” on the right side of the line.

Spend 5-10 minutes prayerfully reflecting on your life before this series. Write down everything that comes to mind – the good, bad, and ugly. Use these questions to help you focus:

- What spiritual practices and rhythms were present in your life?
- What emotions dominated most of your days?
- Where did you spend your discretionary or spare time?
- What did you spend your money on?
- How would you describe your language and conversation?
- How much did you notice God’s activity in your life and around you?

Now, spend another 5-10 minutes reflecting on your life at the end of this series. Use the same questions above (and any others!).

Finally, reflect on both columns. What differences and similarities exist between the two columns? How would you summarize your life *before* and *after* this “Every Day” series into a few words or an image? Celebrate even little changes you see God working in your life.

Notice God's Word

The truth is that God is at work in your life and all around you at all times, every day!

Things I'm Noticing

Things I'm Noticing

Our hope and prayer for you through this series has been that you would notice God's miraculous and powerful work in your life more and more. And we are confident that God has changed you in the last 8 weeks.

Another mind-boggling truth is that God is continually transforming your life, a transformation that will only be complete when Christ makes all things new. This theological truth is called "**already and not yet.**"

You are *already* made new like Christ Jesus, but you are not yet what you will someday be when you meet Jesus face to face. Just as the Holy Spirit has already made you new, you are also not yet all you will be in eternity.

As we live in this tension of already being made new and not yet fully renewed, we enter into this next season reminded of God's great love. Open up God's Word and turn to **1 John 3**. Here are some questions to guide your reflection as you read this passage:

- Where do you see this idea of "already and not yet" in 1 John 3?
- What might God be saying to you as you wrap up this series and in continue into the next chapter of your discipleship journey?
- How can you continue remembering that you are loved by God? How might you bring your thoughts and choices in alignment with that love?
- What sin may God be illuminating as you read this chapter? How can you turn from that and toward God's grace?
- How is God prompting you to act in love and not just talk about it?

Notice God

If you have a copy (or can easily find it online), listen to the song “Beautiful Things” by Gungor (from the “Beautiful Things” album) which you can find on YouTube or any music download service. Let this lead into a prayer of commitment of your whole life to God, who is continually making us new.

You may want to write a prayer to God naming your commitments. You may want to open your hands in submission, or kneel. Do whatever will help you receive God’s love and express your desire to be made new.

Notice this week

Here are a few ideas that may help you continue noticing what God’s doing to make you and this world new every day:

- Memorize Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 as a reminder of being made new.
- Study the book of Romans this year. This letter Paul wrote to the Romans is all about how Jesus came to make all things new again.
- Search these words in the Bible: reconcile/reconciliation, restore/restoration. Study what these words mean in the context of scripture.
- Study the people whose lives God reconciled and restored in scripture. Not sure where to begin? In the Old Testament, check out Abraham (Genesis 12-25), Joseph (Genesis 37-50), Moses (Exodus—Deuteronomy), David (1 Samuel 16—1 Kings 2), Jeremiah (Jeremiah, Lamentations), and Nehemiah

Things I'm Noticing

(Nehemiah). In the New Testament search out Mary Magdalene (Mark 15-16, John 19-20), Saul who became Paul (Acts 9-28), Zacchaeus (Luke 19), sisters Mary and Martha (Luke 10, John 11, 12) and Timothy (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy; also Acts 16-20).

- Make a playlist of songs that remind you of your new life in Christ and how he's continuing to transform your life.
- Read one psalm each day and let it be a starter prayer for you. Don't skip over the laments! Praying through the psalms is a centuries-old "every day" practice.

Things I'm Noticing

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 8: Made New

Family Ideas

MADE NEW

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in being MADE NEW

Congratulations – you’ve finished this 8-week “Sticky Faith Every Day” series. Our hope has been that you’ve noticed much more about silence, rest, your brokenness, submitting to God, simplifying your life, lamenting pain in your life and this world, loss, and ultimately about NEW LIFE.

But this journey is not over. It’s just beginning. There are probably at least one or two changes you notice in your family’s life since you started this journey, but it’s also likely you sense how much further you still have to go. Be encouraged by Paul’s words to the church in Philippi when he says to “be certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” (*Philippians 1:6*)

As your family reflects on these past 8 weeks, consider these questions for discussion and commitment for new rhythms in your life:

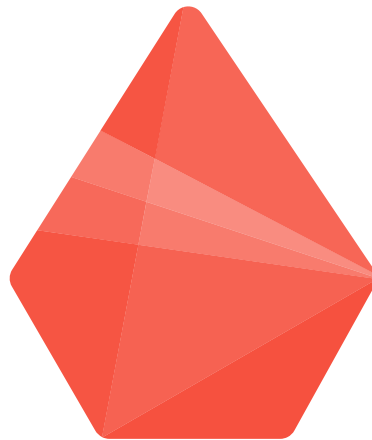
- What surprised you about this series?
- What did you notice in each other these weeks? (e.g., You were more present during the Unplug week. You grew in patience so much these last 40 days. You were more emotional during this season. I noticed you didn’t watch as much TV.) Spend some time encouraging each other.
- What has God made new in your life and family these last 40 days?
- What ongoing spiritual practices and rhythms is God prompting you to continue in the future?
- If you experienced this series during Lent, talk about the traditions your family has throughout the year. You likely have some family Christmas and birthday traditions, but Lent and Easter traditions are much less common. Did you start any this year that you want to continue as a ritual for years to come? As you’ve completed Lent and Easter this year, are there any rituals or traditions you’d like to start next year?

Seal these 8 weeks of “noticing” with a note to each of your family members (or if the size of your family makes this daunting, every person can write a note to one family member). We’re sure there have been moments – days! – in the journey when you wanted to give up, felt discouraged, or wondered if God was making anything new in your life. If you’re feeling that way, your family probably is too. Take some time in the next couple of weeks to notice how God is making your family new. Write your family members a note so you can adequately express yourself and allow them to remember what you notice. Use this note only to encourage and bless your family members, not to challenge or criticize them. If you want to get really creative, purchase them a small, inexpensive item that symbolizes these changes and encourages them on the Philippians 1:6 path.

As God continues to work in your life until Christ returns, remember that God’s in the business of making things new. All the time. Every day. Be encouraged by these words from **1 John 3:1-3**:

“See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him. Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.”

May you know the depth of your Father's love for you and your family. And may you wait in eager expectation for the day when we are fully made new.



FULLER YOUTH
INSTITUTE

fulleryouthinstitute.org/stickyfaith

STICKY
FAITH
EVERY
DAY

8 WEEKS OF
NOTICING GOD
MORE