

STRETCH

WEEK 3 (HYBRID)

BIG IDEA

You can stretch your faith by letting something go.

BIBLE

Romans 12:1-2, 16-21; Romans 8:13-14

WHAT?

GETTING STARTED & REMINDERS

DISCUSSION REMINDERS

- The DISCUSSION QUESTIONS throughout each lesson are created with the understanding that our ministry contains both middle and high school youth.
- While we want to challenge our older and more mature youth, we also realize some students may not be ready for all of the questions contained in this guide.
- You may also not have time to ask every question or feel they are all appropriate for the direction of your conversation.
- You have the freedom to determine which questions you ask, to change the wording of a question in order to make it easier to understand, or to add in new questions if you feel it will engage your group better or if the conversation goes in a different direction.
- Keep in mind, smaller groups tend to open up more than larger groups and are usually able to get through questions a bit faster. If you have more than 6 or 7 youth, it might be a good idea to divide your room up into smaller groups so everyone has more opportunity to share.

WELCOME & ATTENDANCE

- PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE ATTENDANCE OF THE STUDENTS IN YOUR ROOM. WE DO NOT WANT TO MISS ANYONE AT CHECK-IN SO THIS WILL HELP US MAKE SURE WE KNOW WHO IS HERE.
- ***TURN IN YOUR ATTENDANCE SHEETS TO CHAD AT THE END OF THE NIGHT.***
- Use a sharpie and write each student's name on a nametag sticker for them to wear. With facemasks, this will help you get kids name correct and it will help youth from different schools get to know each other better.

QUESTION | What's one of your bad habits?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- Welcome back! Last week, we spent a lot of time talking about habits — good ones! This week, let's talk about our *bad* habits. Whether it's biting our nails, daydreaming, checking our notifications nonstop, or playing that addictive game on our phone every chance we get, we all have bad habits.

Ask:

- *What is a bad habit that you have? Allow a couple minutes for students to share.-*
- *Pass out up to three tickets for the students you think have the most obscure or specific bad habits (or maybe the grossest, you decide)*

ACTIVITY | Bad Habit Shoot-Out

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- Raise your hand if you've ever thought, "I could stop my bad habit anytime I want. It's easy — I just don't want to."

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Choose two students (preferably two who are equally seated apart from the front of the room) to join you for a quick game.
- Before your program, prepare a table with 20 disposable cups, plenty of rubber bands, and a permanent marker.
- When the students join you at the front, write one common bad habit on each of the cups and stack them into two equal pyramids.
- Give each student a handful of rubber bands and 60 seconds to knock over as many cups as possible by stretching and flinging rubber bands at them.
- Award both participants with a ticket for a candy bar (only two this winners this week).

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- It would be nice if stopping a bad habit was as easy as flinging rubber bands at them. Unfortunately, it's not so simple.

DISCUSSION

INSTRUCTIONS:

- *What's the weirdest habit you have (not necessarily bad, just weird)?*
- *Have you ever struggled to quit a bad habit? What happened?*
- *If you could wave a magic wand and permanently change one of your habits or behaviors, what would it be?*

STORY | Talk about one of your bad habits.

INSTRUCTIONS:-

- *Share a personal story (or ask a student or volunteer to share a story) about a bad habit you have either broken, or are currently trying to break.*
- *Try to keep your example light and fun. You might talk about your habit of stopping at too many fast food restaurants, compulsively playing a game on your phone, or watching "one more episode" before you go to*

sleep.

- *Don't talk about how you broke this habit – just focus on what it's like to be stuck in a bad habit.*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- *We all have some habits we'd like to change. Even me. I wonder what we might be able to learn as we hear from Chad tonight.*

SO WHAT?

VIDEO - MESSAGE - WEEK 3

NOW WHAT?

DISCUSSION

ASK:

- * **You don't have to tell us what it is, but are you struggling right now with a harmful habit you just can't break? How is it holding you back?**
- * **How do you usually react when someone tells you not to do something? Do you feel the same way when that "don't" comes from God?**
- **Which of these is the hardest for you to let go of, and why?**
 - **Being proud.**
 - **Being a know-it-all.**
 - **Holding a grudge.**
 - **Looking for revenge.**
 - **Letting sin control you.**
- **Which of these do you most want to grab onto, and why?**
 - **Humility.**

- **Compassion.**
- **Integrity.**
- **Peacemaking.**
- **Goodness.**
- **What's something you need to let go of, and something you can hold onto instead?**

ACTIVITY | Rubber Band Reminders

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- Changing any habit is hard because our habits are the things we do automatically, without really thinking about them. But although our habits are automatic, they don't need to be permanent.
- One of the best things we can do when we're trying to break a bad habit is to seek out accountability. We have to get clear about which behavior we want to let go of, and then ask others to help us.
 - We can't be accountable to ourselves until we get really specific about what we want to change.
 - We can't be accountable to others until we ask people who love us to check on us, encourage us, and challenge us.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- *Give every student a wide rubber band (there should be plenty of them on your floor!) and a ball point pen.*
- *Encourage them to write two words on their rubber band:*
 - *one word they want to let go of (pride, anger, gossip, fear) and*
 - *one word they want to grab onto (humility, forgiveness, kindness, trust).*
- This week, there are two reasons I hope you wear this rubber band around your wrist:
 - As a visual reminder to you of the transformation you want to see.
 - As an invitation to the people you trust to help you continue growing, stretching, and becoming more like Jesus. If there is someone in this room who you'd like to invite to keep you

accountable, don't leave today without talking to them.

REFLECTION | Stretch Commitment Card

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- I want to give you the opportunity to commit to stretching your faith again. Even if you filled this out last week, maybe you have a new commitment you want to make to let go of a bad habit that's keeping you from growing.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- *Don't forget, every week of this series, we're asking you to make one of five "stretch" commitments. This week, which stretch will you commit to doing?*
- - **SHOW UP.** To start, maybe you'll commit to showing up next week (our final week of this series) to listen, discuss, and consider how God might want your faith to be stretched.
 - **FOLLOW JESUS.** If you've never made a commitment to follow Jesus before, today might be a great day to let go of the life you've been living so you can start a new life with God.
 - **LOVE GOD.** Maybe you already love God, but you want to grow. If that's you, identify one thing that is pulling you away from God and choose to let go of it today.
 - **LOVE OTHERS.** If you know you could work on loving people better, try to identify one bad habit that causes you to hurt or overlook others. Then decide to let go of it so you can build a new habit – one that allows you to love people like God loves them.
 - **ASK QUESTIONS.** If you're not ready to make any of these commitments right now, that's okay! If you have questions or doubts, or you want to know more about why so many people in this room have decided to follow Jesus, this is a safe place for those questions. You may not find every answer you're looking for, but there might be something new for you to discover.

RESPONSE | My Stretch

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give students a few minutes to pray, write, reflect, and turn in their cards. If you want to play a song to provide a little background music for them while they write, I suggest the song "[Be Still,](#)" by Hillsong Worship.
- Give students an opportunity to turn in their cards to you or share them with Chad as confirmation of the commitment they decide to make each week. You can do this quickly by asking students to drop their cards on their way out,-

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- No matter what you decided to let go of today, remember this – if you want your faith to grow and be strengthened, it doesn't happen overnight. It has to start somewhere, and it can start today with a simple stretch. **You can stretch your faith by letting something go.**

DISCUSSION

HAVE SOMEONE READ:

- Read Romans 8:13–14.

ASK:

- **How can we work together with God to break our bad habits? What's God's role and what's our role?**
- **To stretch our faith this week, what's one thing our whole group can commit to letting go of and one thing we can hold onto instead?**

PRAYER

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- Even though we're physically distanced tonight, we can still be connected through our faith and one of the best ways we can do that is by praying for each other.

- Tonight, please find one other person that is near to you. Ask them if they have anything they would like you to pray for them this week. Also, ask them to share with you the words they wrote on their rubberband.
- Pray for that person, both for the thing they want to let go of, the thing they want to take hold of, and any other request they may have shared with you.