



50 WEEKS OF CURRICULUM

TO HELP YOU GROW YOUR STUDENTS

Our curriculum has been created, shaped, and written by hundreds (literally) of real youth pastors, in real youth ministries, from a diversity of church contexts, cultures, sizes, and denominations.

WHAT'S IN OUR CURRICULUM

EACH SERIES

- **GRAPHICS AND VIDEOS:** Each series comes with editable series graphics, a 90-second bumper video, a title slide, and background slide.
- **SERIES OVERVIEWS:** Simple summaries of each series at a glance, plus biographies and insight into the author of each series.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL HACKS:** Tips and strategies to help you customize each series for a middle school audience.
- **HIGH SCHOOL HACKS:** Tips and strategies to help you customize each series for a high school audience.
- **SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** Tips and strategies to help you customize each series to include students with special needs.
- **PARENT EMAILS:** One parent email per series that's already written, designed, and built in HTML and PDF formats.
- **ACCESS TO OUR MESSAGE BUILDER:** We've build a brand new tool to help you build, prepare, and deliver your messages like never before.

EACH WEEK

- **A BIG IDEA:** Every week, we summarize the point of each message in a simple sentence that's easy to remember and easy to say.
- **A TEACHING BLUEPRINT:** A robust outline that's easy to customize and can be edited in Word or in our brand new Message Builder.
- **BUILDING BLOCKS:** Every week of curriculum comes with suggestions for at least three creative teaching strategies like props, images, activities, responses, polls, reflection, and more.
- **BONUS RESOURCES:** When a message calls for a special activity, handout, or experience, we'll provide the documents and instructions you need to pull it off.
- **DISCUSSION GUIDES:** Ready-to-print (or ready-to-customize) discussion guides for your small group leaders in both PDF and Word formats.
- **GRAPHICS:** Slides featuring the Scripture, Big Ideas, and key quotes of the week.
- **VOLUNTEER EMAILS:** One volunteer email per week that's already written, designed, and built in HTML and PDF formats.

WHAT OUR CURRICULUM WILL COVER

We've already said this curriculum is a collaborative effort with the youth ministry community, but our curriculum's scope and sequence is one example of that collaboration. When we were determining which topics we would cover, and when, we surveyed several hundred youth pastors about the topics they cover on an annual basis. When we combined the results of that survey with our team's experience, we came up with a list of key topics. Some of these topics will be recycled every year, while others may appear every other year. But, for now, here are the topics that will appear in Year 1 of our curriculum.

- **WISDOM:** A 4-week series on making wise choices. Scheduled for August.
- **FRIENDSHIP:** A 4-week series on developing healthy friendships. Scheduled for September.
- **LOVING OTHERS:** A 4-week series on putting others before ourselves. Scheduled for October.
- **IDENTITY:** A 4-week series on who God created us to be. Scheduled for November.
- **CHRISTMAS:** A 4-week series on . . . um, Christmas. Scheduled for December.
- **HURT:** A 4-week series on trusting God through crisis. Scheduled for January.
- **SPIRITUAL HABITS:** A 4-week series on spiritual growth. Scheduled for February.
- **DOUBT:** A 4-week series on doubt and questions. Scheduled for March.
- **EASTER:** A 2-week series on the resurrection. Scheduled for the two weeks leading up to Easter.
- **FAMILY:** A 4-week series on navigating family conflict. Scheduled for April.
- **JUSTICE:** A 4-week series on righting wrongs in Jesus' name. Scheduled for May.
- **EVANGELISM:** A 4-week series on sharing the Gospel. Scheduled for June.
- **JESUS:** A 4-week series on knowing and following Jesus. Scheduled for July.

WHAT'S IN THIS SAMPLE

We can't show you everything yet because . . . well, because we're still working on it. But here's what you can find in this preview of our curriculum.

- **A SERIES OVERVIEW:** Get a sneak peek at our series on spiritual habits, by Adam Mashni, called *Make It a Habit*.
- **A TEACHING BLUEPRINT:** A complete teaching blueprint for Week 1 of *Make It a Habit*.
- **A DISCUSSION GUIDE:** A complete discussion guide for Week 1 of *Make It a Habit*.
- **GRAPHICS:** A look at the graphics that will supplement the series *Make It a Habit*.
- **A BUMPER VIDEO:** Preview the bumper video for *Make It a Habit* [right here](#).
- **THE MESSAGE BUILDER:** Every series from Grow will be available to edit in our brand new Message Builder. Preview the Message Builder [right here](#).



MAKE IT A HABIT

A 4-WEEK SERIES ON SPIRITUAL HABITS

BY ADAM MASHNI



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ABOUT THIS SERIES

If you're an adult (or maybe even a "professional" Christian) the idea of spiritual habits is probably pretty familiar to you. Spiritual disciplines, quiet time, devotions — whatever you call it, you've probably established at least a few rhythms that help you grow spiritually. (Or, at least, you're working on it.) Since you're a grown up, you've had some time to figure out this whole "spiritual growth" thing. The teenagers in your ministry, on the other hand, might need a little help from you to figure out how, exactly, to grow spiritually. So in this 4-week series, **you'll help your students discover four habits that can help them grow spiritually.**

The four habits we'll cover are **Spending Time with God, Spending Time with Others, Using Your Gifts,** and **Sharing Your Story.** They work for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and — yep — even adults. By introducing these habits to your students now, you'll help set them up for a lifetime of spiritual growth.

THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

WEEK 1

This week, you'll look at the spiritual habit of spending time with God. It's sometimes the *only* spiritual habit we can name, but it's actually only the first of four spiritual habits.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Time with God grows your relationship with God.
- **THE BIBLE:** Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:11-12, Matthew 14:13
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Question, Image, Story, Discussion, and Activity.

WEEK 2

This week, you'll look at the spiritual habit of spending time with others, because we grow spiritually when we choose to engage in community — both with people who believe like we believe, and with people who don't, too.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** The right people around you can grow faith within you.
- **THE BIBLE:** Hebrews 10:24-25
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Question, Image, Story, and Activity.

WEEK 3

This week, you'll look at the spiritual habit of sharing your story, because when you begin to understand how God shows up in your story (past, present, and future), your trust in Him and His story begins to grow.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Sharing your story can grow your faith in God's story.
- **THE BIBLE:** Mark 5:1-20
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Discussion, Story, and Activity.

WEEK 4

This week, you'll look at the spiritual habit of using your gifts, because sometimes the thing that grows our faith most is serving God by loving and serving others.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Loving others can grow your love for God.
- **THE BIBLE:** I Peter 4:10, I Corinthians 12
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** A Story, Prop, and Activity.

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with special needs, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique audience.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HACKS

HACK #1: Keep your expectations reasonable.

Whether it's remembering to shower, wear deodorant, do their homework, or read the Bible, middle schoolers are not very disciplined. They're aren't incapable of establishing good spiritual habits, but **developing any kind of habit or routine may be a challenge for them.** So as you talk to your middle schoolers about developing spiritual habits, encourage them to set new goals and make new habits. Remind them how much you believe in them! But, at the same time, be sure to keep your expectations reasonable, doable, and age-appropriate so you don't discourage them.

HACK #2: Provide paper versions of your weekly activities.

Throughout this series, you'll be challenging your students to set and track goals for their spiritual habits. Some middle schoolers may have access to smart phone apps where they can track those habits easily, but some won't. So provide paper versions too, so your phone-less middle schoolers can still participate.

HIGH SCHOOL HACKS

HACK #1: Challenge them. In high school, students are much more capable of setting and maintaining good habits than they were in middle school, so go ahead and give them a challenge. In high school, **the habits your students develop (whether good or bad) will likely stick with them into college and young adulthood.** Remind them of that reality and encourage them to start making good habits right now.

HACK #2: Consider unchurched or unbelieving students.

Because this is a series about growing spiritually, it could be easy to lose any students in the room who haven't yet chosen to follow Jesus. So each week, acknowledge them. You might say, "Hey, even if you're not sure what you believe about Jesus, we're really glad you're here." Second, help them see how these spiritual habits could still impact them, even if they're not sure what they believe right now. And third, encourage them to jump into the Bible, do some research on their own, and see what's in there that you didn't get to cover during your teaching.

HACK #3: Encourage the use of habit-tracking smart phone apps.

At this point, your high schoolers probably all have a smart phone in their pockets. So, in the activities that close each week of this series, take advantage of that technology by helping your high schoolers see how it can be used to help them develop helpful spiritual habits.

HACK #4: Provide ways for them to serve.

Most high schoolers can serve your church or their community in some way. In Week 4, don't just talk about the value of serving others. Give practical ways for your high schoolers to actually start serving somewhere.

SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS

HACK #1: COMING SOON. We're still working on it! Check back this summer!

HACK #2: COMING SOON. We're still working on it! Check back this summer!

HOW TO PREP FOR THIS SERIES

WHAT TO GET

If you want to try every Building Block mentioned in this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

- Lots of white paper
- Pens
- Cardboard or foam board
- Duct tape
- A jumbo black permanent marker

WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so you'll probably want to customize a few things.

- **Teaching Blueprints:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group of teenagers.
- **Discussion Guides:** If you make changes to your Teaching Blueprints, make sure your Discussion Guides reflect those changes.
- **Graphics:** We've created a number of slides for you already, but we've also provided a blank slide in case you need to make your own.
- **Emails:** For every series, customize your weekly volunteer emails and your monthly parent email.

WHAT TO PRINT

When you're done customizing, be sure to print . . .

- **Discussion Guides:** One for every small group leader . . . plus a few extras.
- **Activities:** For this series, print one Make It a Habit habit tracker for every teenager in your ministry. Then replenish that stack each week of the series.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure the adults in your ministry (both volunteers and parents) are prepared and in the loop, here's how we'd recommend communicating with them . . .

- **Volunteer Emails:** We've written one volunteer email for every week of this series. After you've customized them, send them out every week, at least a few days in advance, using either a plain old email or an email service like MailChimp (which we recommend!)
- **Parent Emails:** We've written one parent email for this series. After you've customized it, send it at least a few days before you begin teaching this series.
- **Social Media:** We've also written some helpful social-media-sized posts for you to go along with this series. Use them wherever you communicate to your volunteers, parents, and students.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ADAM MASHNI



adammashni.com



facebook.com/AdamMashni



instagram.com/amashni



twitter.com/AdamMashni



Adam has worked in youth ministry since 2003 and has spent most of those years working with middle schoolers. He is currently one of the youth pastors for Elevate, the Junior High Ministry of Willow Creek Community Church. If he really had to pick, Adam's favorite part of youth ministry would probably be figuring out how to teach God's Word to teenagers in a way that's clear, compelling, and calls them to live up to their God-given potential.

When Adam isn't doing ministry stuff, he's hanging out with his incredible wife, Meagan, probably watching *Designated Survivor*, *Modern Family*, or *Once Upon a Time*. He once beat Meagen in Settlers of Catan, which is apparently a pretty big deal because he asked us to include it in his bio.

If Adam could hang out with any celebrity, he'd invite Jimmy Fallon and Justin Timberlake to play Top Golf with him.

Oh, and even though he moved to Chicago-land in 2016, Adam will never give up on Detroit sports – for better or worse. As a die-hard Lions fan, he's definitely totally positive this is probably the year they're going to the Super Bowl!

If you want to talk to Adam to talk about ministry, the Detroit Lions, or why he hates mushrooms on his pizza, [email him!](#)



WEEK 1

TEACHING BLUEPRINT

MAKE IT A HABIT

THE BIG IDEA

Time with God grows your relationship with God.

THE BIBLE

Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16,
Luke 6:11-12, Matthew 14:13

WHAT?

WE ALL HAVE HABITS

- Have you ever had a habit? Of course you have! We all have habits. Some of your habits are probably good habits, like brushing your teeth, working out, or picking your clothes off the floor . . . sometimes.
- But some of our habits are not-so-good.
- Just to make sure we're on the same page . . .

QUESTION: "Give me an example of a really terrible habit."

HABITS ARE HARD TO BREAK

- Okay, so we're on the same page. We all know what bad habits look like.
- And if you've ever had a bad habit, you know it's kind of hard to break that habit.
- I don't know about you, but I really identify with this . . .

IMAGE: "One does not simply hit the snooze button once."

STORY: Talk about one of your bad habits.

- It makes me feel better to know I'm not the only one with bad habits.
- So, if it makes you feel better, let me tell you about one of my bad habits.
- *Tell a fun and relatable story about a minor bad habit you developed and how difficult it was to break. Maybe it was compulsively checking Instagram, or binge-watching Netflix, or drinking milkshakes from Sonic every day for a month. Then talk about its consequences.*

SO WHAT?

YOUR HABITS SHAPE YOU

- Your habits might seem harmless at first, but eventually your habits shape you.
- **Bad habits keep us from being all that we could be.**
- **Good habits help us become the kind of people we want to become.**

YOUR HABITS SHAPE YOUR FAITH

- For the next 4 weeks, we're not going to talk about bad habits. We're going to talk about good habits - four of them, actually.
- But they're not the kind of habits that shape your grades, or your morning routine, or your biceps. They're the kind of habits that shape the most important thing about you - your faith.

DISCUSSION: "What's one habit that can shape your faith?"

- For the next 30 seconds, turn to the people next to you and tell them what you think.
- Okay, now let's hear what you said.
- A lot of you had great answers. If I could combine a few of those answers and sum them up into one single habit, it would be this: **spending time with God.**

ONE WAY TO SHAPE YOUR FAITH IS TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD

- I don't know what you think about when you hear "spending time with God." Maybe some of you love spending time with God, but there are probably a lot of you thinking, "I don't really know what you're talking about, but 'spending time with God' sounds pretty weird."
- So to get started, I want to look at someone who spent a lot of time with God during His lifetime. And that's Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:11-12, Matthew 14:13

- Jesus spent a lot of time alone with God. He went to be alone with God when He was tired, when He was grieving, when God had just done something amazing, and sometimes just because.

JESUS MADE IT A HABIT TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD

- For Jesus, spending time with God was a habit.
- I'm not saying you need to spend all night alone on a mountain. I'm just saying maybe there's something we can learn from Jesus' example.
- It seems like Jesus spent time with God the same way you and I spend time with our friends or family. He may not have been able to text God whenever He wanted to, but they were in constant communication.
 - Why do you spend time with your friends or family? Probably because you like them.
 - When you're around people you love, what happens? As you spend time with them, hang out with them, laugh with them, your relationship with them grows.
 - **Jesus understood that time with God grows your relationship with God.**
- But, okay, maybe you're thinking, "Yeah, I hang out with my friends because it's fun. Hanging out with God . . . like, in silence . . . sounds super boring." But it doesn't have to be.

NOW WHAT?

THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD

- Prayer is an obvious and important way to spend time with God. So is reading or reflecting on Scripture. But what about . . .
 - Singing, dancing, drawing, painting, or creating something that honors Him.
 - Going outside to enjoy His creation.
 - Having a conversation about Him with friends.
 - Learning something new about Him.
 - Helping, serving, and taking action for others in His name.
- While you and I probably have some things in common, the ways I enjoy spending time with God won't be exactly the same ways you enjoy spending time with God.
- God created you unique, so the ways you'll connect with Him best will be unique, too.

THERE ARE SO MANY REASONS TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD

- We don't spend time with God because it's an obligation.
- We spend time with God for the same reasons we spend time with anyone we care about . . .
 - When you're happy.
 - When you're confused, afraid, alone, or disappointed.
 - When you have good news you want to share.
 - When you have bad news you need to get off your chest.
- Spending time with God can bring us peace, comfort, clarity, hope, wisdom, joy, peace, and refreshment.
- But most importantly, spending time with God helps us know Him better.
- **Time with God grows your relationship with God.**

ACTIVITY: Make It a Habit to Spend Time with God

- This month, I want to challenge you to make a new habit.
- Throughout this series, choose just one way you're going to spend time with God. It doesn't have to be an entire night alone on a mountain. Maybe it's just five minutes of conversation, or talking with Him while you walk outside, or a decision to read just a few verses of Scripture.
- Experts agree it takes *at least* twenty-one days to develop a new habit. So let's get spend the rest of this series trying to develop a new habit or two together.
- Wherever you are in your relationship with God, decide to take one step closer to Him.
- **Time with God grows your relationship with God.**
- So go spend time with God today. And then make it a habit.

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

MAKE IT A HABIT

THIS SERIES

If you're an adult, the idea of spiritual habits is probably pretty familiar to you. Spiritual disciplines, quiet time, devotions — whatever you call it, you've probably established at least a few rhythms that help you grow spiritually. (Or, at least, you're working on it.) The teenagers in your ministry, on the other hand, might need a little help from you to figure out how, exactly, to grow spiritually. So in this 4-week series, **you'll help your students discover four habits that can help them grow spiritually.** The four habits we'll cover are **Spending Time with God, Spending Time with Others, Using Your Gifts, and Sharing Your Story.** By introducing these habits to your students now, you'll help set them up for a lifetime of spiritual growth.

THIS WEEK

THE BIG IDEA

Time with God grows your relationship with God.

THE BIBLE

Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16,
Luke 6:11-12, Matthew 14:13

- **Nail-biting, sleeping in, forgetting to put on your deodorant . . . what's one of your bad habits?**
- **Talk about a time you tried to develop a new habit. How'd it go?**
- **Have you ever tried spending time with God? What happened?**
- **Why do you think it's so difficult to spend time with God regularly?**
- **What are the benefits of spending time with God regularly?**
- **What are some of your favorite ways to spend time with God?**
- **When it comes to spending time with God, what's one habit you'd like to work on developing this month?**
- **What's one tip or trick that could make developing a new habit easier?**