

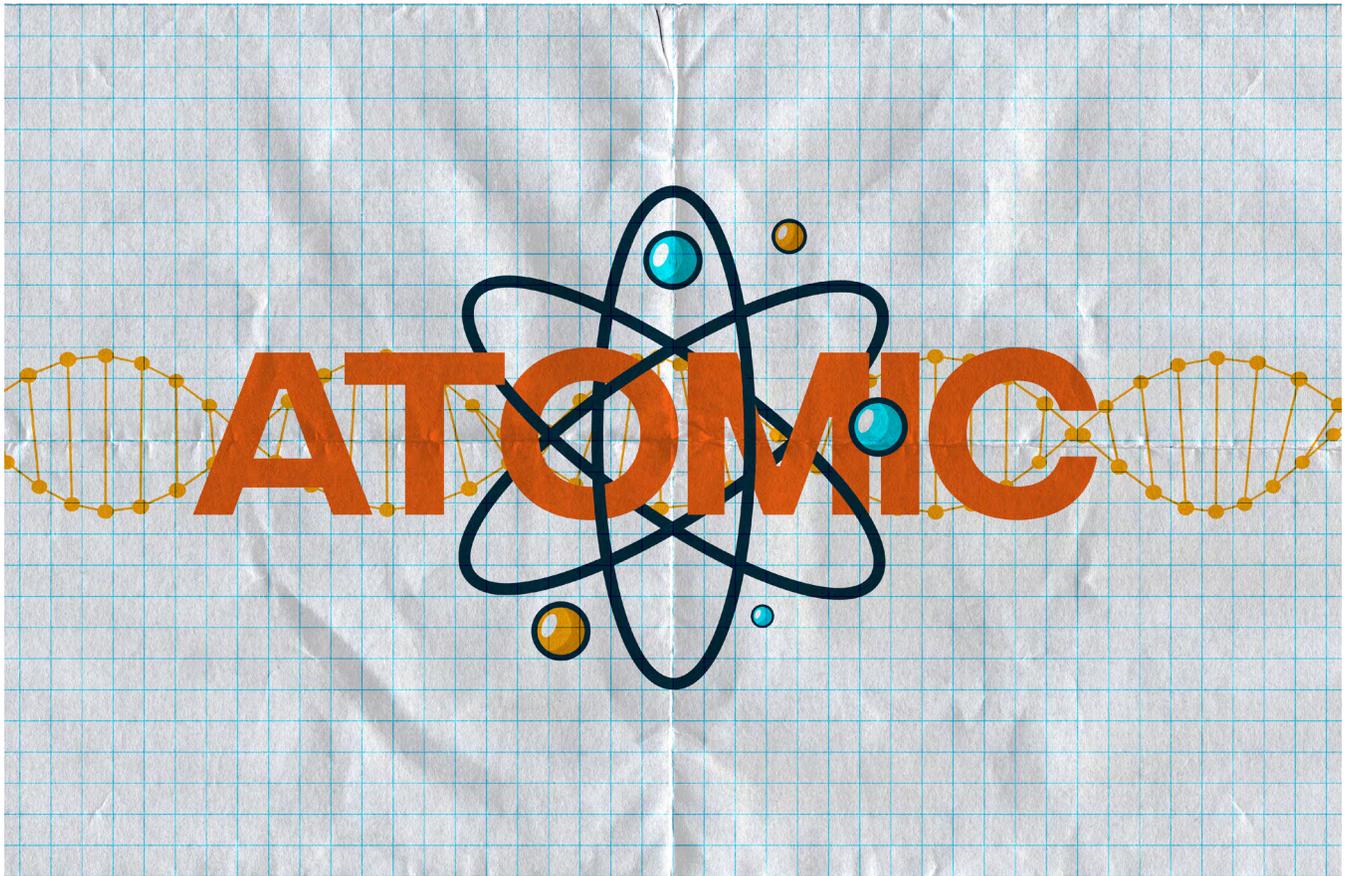


A 4-WEEK SERIES ON

# SPIRITUAL HABITS

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*

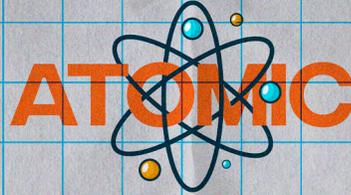
BY JACOB URREA



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All aspects of Grow Curriculum and Strategy (including all images, language, resources, and related products) are owned by Stuff You Can Use. Stuff You Can Use gives permission to the organization that purchased this resource to download, print, and use its components for its use only. No part of Grow Curriculum and Strategy may be copied, shared, resold, or republished outside of that organization in any way, except in the case of brief quotations or product reviews that credit and link back to Grow Curriculum and Strategy ([growcurriculum.org](http://growcurriculum.org)). Reproducing any of this material or incorporating it into a new work that does not follow these guidelines (including a blog post, podcast, video, or other resource) is a violation of U.S. copyright laws. Stuff You Can Use is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for us to earn fees by linking to Amazon.com and affiliated sites.

## OVERVIEW



### STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

#### THIS SERIES

- ▶ [About This Series](#)
- ▶ [Room Design, Music, and Games](#)
- ▶ [How to Prepare for This Series](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Middle Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for High Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Students with Special Needs](#)
- ▶ [About the Author](#)
- ▶ [Devotional for Volunteers](#)

#### MULTIMEDIA

- ▶ [Graphics & Video](#)
- ▶ [Spotify Playlists](#)

#### COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Weekly Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Monthly Parent Email](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Scripts & Videos](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Plan](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)

### STUFF FOR EACH WEEK

#### WEEK 1

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 2

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 3

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 4

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact – habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

## THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

### WEEK 1

This week, we'll see what Jesus' transfiguration reveals about the connection between our transformation and time in God's presence.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Make it a habit to spend time with God.
- **THE BIBLE:** Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2; Psalm 51:10-12
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Question, Activity, Object Lesson, Video, Story, Discussion, Image, Response

### WEEK 2

This week, we'll discuss what Jesus meant when He told us to lay down our lives for each other.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.
- **THE BIBLE:** John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Proverbs 27:17
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Video, Object Lesson, Questions, Discussion, Image, Response

### WEEK 3

This week, we'll discover why Jesus challenged us to share the gospel with others and why His gospel is such good news.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Make it a habit to share your faith stories.
- **THE BIBLE:** Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27; Romans 1:1
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Story, Video, Question, Discussion, Image, Response

### WEEK 4

This week, we'll see how everything we do can be a form of worship, but especially the things we do in love.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Make it a habit to worship with your life.
- **THE BIBLE:** Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63; James 2:14-17
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Video, Story, Question, Image, Response, Music, Discussion

If you're looking for a new addition to your bookshelf, check out the book *Atomic Habits, by James Clear*. Some of the practical habit-developing concepts featured in this series were inspired by James' work!

## HOW TO PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

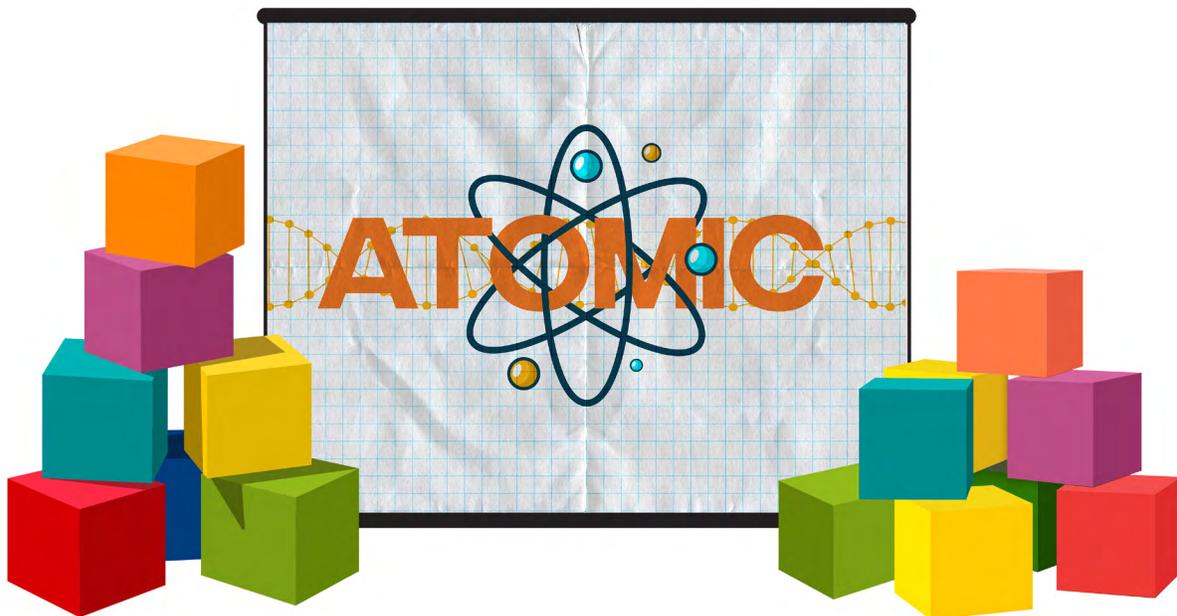
Outside of your teaching time, we have a few programming ideas to help this series really come to life — everything from how to **design your room**, to which **games to play**, to what **music to play and sing**.



### ROOM DESIGN

Heads up! For this series, you're going to need plenty of "blocks" for both this room design and a key object lesson that shows up in every week of this series. You can either purchase some [jumbo plastic blocks](#) or [jumbo cardboard bricks](#), or start scavenging for cardboard boxes. Whatever you choose, we recommend painting the boxes in colors that coordinate with the series graphics (white, orange, blue, and pink). Mix and match your colors, then build at least four different block towers with them (one for each week). If you don't plan on using these boxes for your object lessons each week, you can tape them together so the towers don't fall unexpectedly.

Next, you'll need a backdrop. There are tons of ways to create a backdrop that you can re-use multiple times each year. Check out [this post](#) for a list of ideas. For this series, you'll need the series title painted or printed on a large white backdrop. You can either have this printed professionally with the graphics we've provided or paint it yourself. If you want to go the DIY route, we suggest painting a subtle brick texture on the backdrop in the same dimension as the boxes you used in your block towers.



## **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

We give you editable graphics so you can make everything your own! If you're going to **edit our graphics** or **create something brand new . . .**

Use this font!

# INTEGRAL CF BOLD

Download this font [here!](#)

And use these colors!

 HEX #D87A0D  
CMYK: 13/60/100/1

 HEX #009C9F  
CMYK: 81/18/40/1

 HEX #002440  
CMYK: 100/82/46/52

## **MUSIC**

In addition to any music you might see woven throughout your teaching time, you'll probably want to have a time of worship with your students. Here are a few worship songs you may want to feature throughout this series . . .

- **"Morning By Morning"** (Pat Barnett)
- **"Available"** (Morning & Evening)" (Elevation Worship)
- **"See Your Face"** (Canyon Worship)
- **"Christ Be Magnified"** (Cody Carnes)
- **"Make Room"** (The Church Will Sing)
- **"You Get The Glory"** (Jonathan Traylor)
- **"Move Your Heart"** (Maverick City Music & UPPERROOM)
- **"Lift You High"** (Housefires)
- **"Counting Every Blessing"** (Rend Collective)
- **"Graves Into Gardens"** (Elevation Worship)

We've added these songs to our [Grow Students \(Volume 5\) Spotify playlist](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)

And if you want to sing or sample a non-worship song or two (maybe as an opener, a closer, a bonus song during your program), try some of these . . .

- **"Only Human"** (Lecrae)
- **"Be the Light"** (Wande, Evan and Eris)
- **"Woke Up This Morning"** (FLAME, Wes Writer)
- **"Survival"** (NEEDTOBREATHE, Drew & Ellie Holcomb)
- **"Tomorrow"** (Jor'dan Armstong)

For more fun (and clean) song suggestions, check out all of [our Spotify playlists](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)



## GAMES by Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant & Jordan Floro

If you have a designated time for games before your worship and teaching time, we have a few suggestions for games you can play . . .

- [Atomic Images](#)
- [The Human Atomic Clock](#)
- [The Gravity Eggsperiment](#)
- [Molecular Movies](#)

Since this series talks a lot about atoms, the games for this series are all science-themed. To get the instructions and graphics for each game, click the links or visit the Games section of your Grow Students dashboard.

### HOW TO PREP FOR THIS SERIES

## WHAT TO GET

If you want to try all of our suggestions for this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

### WEEK 1:

- [Cones](#)
- [Rope](#)
- [Masking tape](#)
- [Atomic Fireballs](#)
- Box
- [Pillow](#)
- Blanket
- Toothbrush
- Bowl
- Spoon
- Box of cereal
- [Hairbrush](#)
- A video clip of a [Kid Being Surprisingly Good at Dancing](#)
- The image provided in your Week 1 folder
- Small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#)
- Three [jumbo building blocks](#) or cardboard boxes

### WEEK 2:

- [Foam dodgeballs](#)
- [Cones](#)
- [Rope](#)
- [Masking tape](#)
- A video clip of [Something Being Crushed](#)
- [Normal bucket](#)
- [Clear bucket](#)
- [Ping pong balls](#)
- A video clip from "[A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise](#)" ([Soul Pancake](#))
- [Camera Tripod](#)
- The image provided in your Week 2 folder
- Small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#)
- Three [jumbo building blocks](#) or cardboard boxes

**WEEK 3:**

- [Cones](#)
- [Rope](#)
- [Masking tape](#)
- [Ping pong balls](#)
- Spoons
- A video clip from [De Lijn's "It's Smarter to Travel in Groups" Commercial](#)
- The image provided in your Week 3 folder
- Small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#)
- Three [jumbo building blocks](#) or cardboard boxes

**WEEK 4:**

- [Cones](#)
- [Rope](#)
- [Masking tape](#)
- [Frisbee](#)
- A video clip of [Beatlemania](#)
- The image provided in your Week 4 folder
- Small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#)
- Three [jumbo building blocks](#) or cardboard boxes
- The song "Graves Into Gardens" (Elevation Worship)

---

## WHAT TO MAKE

**WEEK 1:**

- Set up a space to play **Atomic Tag**.
- Fill a box with things like a pillow, blanket, toothbrush, pair of clean socks, bowl, spoon, box of cereal, or hairbrush for the **Your Morning Routine** object lesson.

**WEEK 2:**

- Set up a space to play **Atomic Dodgeball**.

**WEEK 3:**

- Set up a space to play **Atomic Relays**.

**WEEK 4:**

- Set up a space to play **Atomic Frisbee**.

## WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so there are probably some things you'd like to change about this series before you start teaching. Here's what you'll need to update if you make changes . . .

- **TEACHING:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group. You can edit each message using the Word documents provided or the [Grow Message Builder](#).
- **SMALL GROUP:** If you make any changes to your teaching, make sure your small group questions reflect those changes. You can edit these using the Word documents provided.
- **APP:** If you make changes to your teaching or small group questions, don't forget to update your content in the [Grow App](#) for your team!
- **GRAPHICS:** We've provided graphics in your [Graphics & Video folder](#) already, but we've also provided a blank slide in case you need to make your own.
- **EMAILS:** Customize and send the [volunteer and parent emails](#) we've provided for this series.

## WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your students, volunteers, and families are in the loop . . .

- **STUDENTS:** Throughout the month, post the [Graphics & Video](#) we've provided on social media, like the Big Idea images and Bumper Video. Post the [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) we've provided or use the One-Minute Sermon Scripts to film a recap video each week and post it on social media.
- **FAMILIES:** Before you begin teaching this series, send families the [Parent Email](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). After each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to families online. You can also copy and paste the social media examples we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Before you teach each week of this series, send volunteers the weekly [Volunteer Emails](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). Before each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to volunteers online. You can also copy and paste the social media posts we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).

For a more in-depth digital communication strategy, **customize the [Social Media Plan spreadsheet](#)** we've provided. And hey! When you post on social media, **don't forget to use the [#growcurriculum](#) hashtag** to share your ideas and stories with our team and with other churches who are using Grow!

## 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 and diverse audience.

## HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

 by Eddie Witkowski, Crystal Quintero

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for middle schoolers, here's what to adjust . . .

**In all four weeks, revise the opening activities to become upfront games.** If you decide to play these games with your whole group, it might take some time to get middle schoolers refocused. So instead of playing as a whole group, make these games fast-paced upfront games that students can watch.

**In Week 2, spend extra time helping middle schoolers make informed decisions about who they spend time with.** Because middle schoolers are still early in the process of identity formation, they're more susceptible to being influenced negatively by others. Help them consider their relationships carefully and look for ways to guide them in making informed decisions about who they are spending time with.

**In Week 4, for the Passion Charades activity, choose your students in advance.** When put on the spot, middle schoolers might struggle to identify their passions, or figure out how to act them out, or feel uncomfortable. So invite a few students during the week to help you during the message. With a little preparation (and the ability to opt in) you'll likely have a better outcome.



### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

**In Week 4, replace the "Beatlemania" video clip for something more recent.** Your middle schoolers may be too young to find this piece of history interesting, so if you think you know of a recent trend that has the same or more passionate followers for The Beatles replace this video and use that instead! Think about celebrities, musicians, YouTubers, TikTok stars your students are familiar with — and if you're not sure, just ask them! They'd probably love to give you some suggestions.



### REMEMBER

**Remember middle school students will need plenty of reminders to continue forming spiritual habits.** Your middle schoolers are developmentally going to struggle with building and maintaining any kind of habit intentionally. That's okay! Consider empowering your volunteers to follow up with your students during the week on how their habits are going, or add a new element to your teaching each week that allows students to showcase the ways they've worked on building their habits during the previous week.

## HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS by Andy Disher, Areli Ortiz

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for high schoolers, here's what to adjust . .

**In all four weeks, invite high schoolers to read the Scripture passages.** When you are teaching, ask one or two of your students to read the Scripture for you. By changing up the pace of your teaching, you'll reengage your students' attention and keep them engaged by having one of their peers read. To make sure this goes well, invite your readers in advance, before your teaching begins. This will give them a chance to practice reading the passage on their own so they're more confident reading it in front of everyone.

**In Week 1, encourage your students to get honest about how their time with God hasn't worked out.** The discussion time around the question "How are you supposed to spend time with God?" is a great opportunity for this conversation! What does spending time with God look like in day-to-day living? When is it challenging? What is most difficult for them when they're trying to connect with God through personal spiritual disciplines.

**During any of the weeks, add a little levity with a Pavlovian prank.** Since this series is all about our habits, add a little humor with a light prank and see how long it takes your students to catch on. You know how Pavlov's dogs were trained to associate certain cues with getting food? See if you can condition your students each week to respond in a certain way to a certain cue, maybe by getting your volunteers involved. Try having them perform certain actions whenever a certain word or sound is heard.

### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

**Replace the opening activities if you need to!** Each week opens with a fun group game, but not all high schoolers are into that kind of thing. If you don't think your group needs the opening game, it's okay to skip it and head straight into the rest of the teaching time. If you need to fill any time after deleting those activities, simply extend your discussion time during the "Now What?" sections of each week.

### REMEMBER

**Remember high school students are getting to the age where they can hold each other accountable.** Consider encouraging your high school students to form group texts each weeks to see how they are doing with their habits. Remind them not to shame others through this form of accountability, but to provide support to their peers.

# HACKS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

by Alyssa Roberts, Sunny Brown

## REVISE

To make this series more accessible for students with special needs, here's what to adjust . . .

**Every week, revise all of the opening activities to include those with disabilities.** Find creative ways to include those with physical disabilities in the "Atomic" games that open each message, even if you're doing these as upfront games rather than all-play games. Considering having students with special needs get involved as a referee, a time keeper, or the game master who explains the game and its rules.

**Every week, add visual aids to every passage of Scripture.** Having pictures will help students with certain kinds of disabilities understand the concepts and stories better. In Weeks 1-3, the passages of Scripture are already story-based, so images of Bible characters you find online or dramatizations would help. In Week 4, you don't have a story to work with, but you could show images that represent the qualities and behaviors Paul lists in the Colossians passage. For example, you might show images that represent someone showing another person compassion, or being patient, or forgiving someone. Feel free to do this for not only your Scripture modules but for all of your teaching.

**Every week, add visual aids to each example of a habit.** As you explain and talking about habits each week, make sure to find a picture representing the habit you are talking about or act it out. For students with certain special needs, it might be difficult conceptualizing the habit you are talking about without actually seeing the habit. For example, you're talking about time with God, show a picture or video of someone reading the Bible, attending church, or singing a worship song. You could even ask students to submit these examples in advance.

## REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

**In Week 2, replace the video "A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise" with a video that highlights someone with special needs.** Too often, we portray people with special needs and disabilities as the people who need to be helped, but they can be heroes too! Try finding a video (or telling a story) that highlights a person with special needs who showed love to someone else.

## REMEMBER

**Remember this helpful hint as you structure your meeting time:** some students with special needs will benefit from knowing the schedule of the program ahead of time. Post it publicly, send it to them, or meet with them one-on-one to relieve any anxiety they might be feeling about not knowing what is going to happen next. Even sharing the order of your sermon would be helpful for some students!



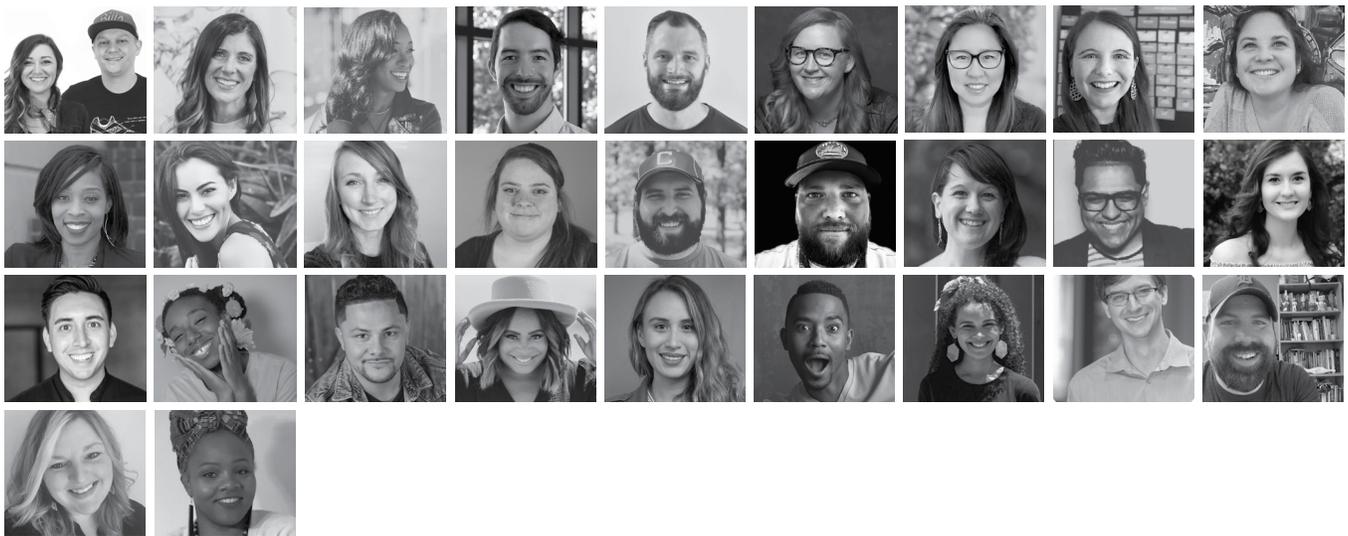
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Urrea is a Family Pastor at Hope Summit Christian Church in Rochester, Minnesota. He has led the kids and youth ministry there since 2016. When Jacob isn't doing ministry with the church, he's at the local skatepark connecting with scooter riders. He has been scootering since 2002 and hasn't broken a single bone! If you'd like to chat with Jacob about writing messages, or delivering messages, or scootering, reach out! He would love to connect with you!

CONNECT WITH JACOB!



ALONG WITH . . .



**SERIES DEVELOPMENT:** Jacob Urrea, Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Amber Stephens, Stephen Switzer, Candace Williams, Bianca Quezada, Erwin Rodriguez, Steph Whitacre

**HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS:** Eddie Witkowski, Crystal Quintero

**HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS:** Andy Disher, Areli Ortiz

**HACKS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Alyssa Roberts, Sunny Brown

**GAMES:** Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant, Jordan Floro

**ONE-MINUTE SERMONS:** David Magallanes, Elle Campbell, Jose Rodriguez, Erica Rodriguez, Vanessa Serrano Cruz, Damean Easter, and the Rescue a Generation team

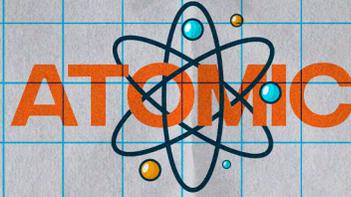
**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Josh Gosney, Amber Gaddis

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Elle Campbell

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Linda Moon, Ali Anne, Kellee Gentry, Emily Acton, Jada Smith, Jay Logan, Eddie Irvin, Daniel Wallis

# DEVOTIONAL

FOR VOLUNTEERS



## **STUDY**

Whose habits do you imitate? There's your favorite podcast host, your best friend, that person who really cracks you up . . . who else? James Clear, author of the book *Atomic Habits* says, "We imitate the habits of three groups in particular: the close, the many, and the powerful." If this is the case, then who is helping you grow spiritually? Who are the people close to you helping you **make it a habit to spend time with God?** Do you have a community with more than a few people encouraging you to **make it a habit to invest in your relationships?** Whose stories have you reminded you of the need to **make it a habit to share your faith stories?** If you're not sure about who is helping you **make it a habit to worship with your life** then spend some time with God in the Scripture looking for the reminders. To get ready for this series about spiritual habits, **spend a few minutes reading the stories you'll be teaching students this month.** As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

**WEEK 1:** Make it a habit to spend time with God.  
(Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2; Psalm 51:10-12)

**WEEK 2:** Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.  
(John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Proverbs 27:17)

**WEEK 3:** Make it a habit to share your faith stories.  
(Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27; Romans 1:16)

**WEEK 4:** Make it a habit to worship with your life.  
(Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63; James 2:14-17)

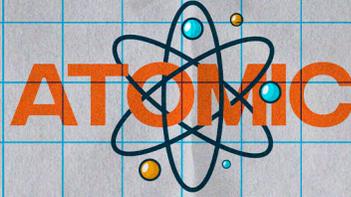
## **PRAY**

Ask God to give you a greater desire to maintain habits that help you grow spiritually. Look for a habit that has been neglected in your life recently and commit to making small improvements every day. **Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now?** Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.

## **GROW**

How have you made it a habit to spend time with God? What are things you're currently doing to invest in your relationships? When was the last time you intentionally shared your faith story? If you want to see students developing and growing, make it a habit to worship with your life! So what's your next step? **Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.**

## WEEK 1 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to spend time with God.

### THE BIBLE

Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2;  
Psalm 51:10-12

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### QUESTION | “What are atoms?”

- Welcome to our first week of *Atomic!* **Has anyone studied atoms in school? What are they?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- Atoms are the smallest unit of matter and they make up everything we see around us. So they're both super important and super tiny.

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Tag

- If you had a microscope powerful enough to see atoms, you'd see that atoms are pretty tightly packed together. So let's play a game — “atom” style.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *All you'll need for this game is either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds of tag with either with your entire group or just a handful of students — but make it “atomic” by playing inside a very small playing area. If you're a science nerd, make this game extra interesting by playing inside three concentric circles, each one symbolizing different states of matter. “Solid” would be the center ring, where atoms (your players) are most tightly packed. “Water” would be the center ring, and “gas” would be the outer ring where atoms are most loosely packed. While you play, randomly shout out different states of matter to change the boundary lines. Give [Atomic Fireballs](#) to your winners.*

## OBJECT LESSON | Your Morning Routine

- Atoms are super important because they make up everything in our universe. Every single thing that exists is made of atoms, even though we never see or notice them at all. Kind of like atoms, your life is made up of lots of things you never see or notice — like your habits.
- You don't always notice when it's happening, but you probably have a habit of . . .
  - Breathing.
  - Getting hungry every few hours (or minutes).
  - Checking your phone as soon as you wake up.
  - Throwing your stuff in the same spot every time you walk into your house.
  - Sitting in the same seat you usually do, even when you don't have to.
  - Humming when you're thinking.
- You probably even routines you fall into every day, even when you don't mean to.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time time, fill a box with things like a [pillow](#), blanket, toothbrush, pair of clean socks, bowl, spoon, box of cereal, or [hairbrush](#). Invite a student to the front to walk through their typical morning routine, starting with when their alarm goes off and ending when they leave for school. Have the other students play along, encouraging them to shout out their own preferences for what order they do things or maybe start a debate about whether you should brush your teeth before or after breakfast.*
- We all have habits we don't really think about. Some of those habits are helpful, some are harmful, and some are neutral.
  - Sometimes we don't realize we have certain habits until they cause trouble for us. Have you ever noticed a habit you didn't realize you had? What about a habit you wish you didn't have?
  - But instead of stressing so much about our bad habits, what if we focused more of our time on adding helpful habits to our lives?

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## QUESTION | “What are some things that are small but powerful?”

- Our habits are small but incredibly powerful, just like . . .
  - Atoms.
  - Dirty baby diapers. I mean they're small, but the smell is, uh, pretty powerful.
  - Coffee. It's just some thin, dark liquid, but it keeps you energized for hours.
  - **What else is small but powerful?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- In the same way, most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can powerfully impact your life — for good or bad.
  - So what about your spiritual habits?
  - What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance?
  - What small changes can you make now to get closer to God over time?

- And after you set some goals for getting closer to God, how can you actually meet them?
- For the next few weeks, we're going to talk about four different spiritual habits that can help you get closer to God over time. You may already have some habits that help you do this, but we're going to get really specific to see what other new habits we might be able to create in order to grow.

### SCRIPTURE | Matthew 17:1–8

- The problem is, how do you know which habits will actually help you get closer to God? "Growing spiritually" feels like such a mysterious process sometimes. What does it mean? How does it happen? How do you know when it's happening?
- To help us answer those questions, let me share with you a story written by a man named Matthew, who was one of Jesus's first followers. Not only was Matthew one of Jesus's first followers, he was a historian. He wanted people for generations to remember what God had done, so he wrote out in detail all of Jesus's important stories and encounters.
- Jesus had a habit of climbing mountains in order to spend some time with God. Over and over throughout the Bible, you see mentions of Jesus heading out on solo hikes in order to pray in solitude. But this time, He invited a few friends – and then something incredible happened.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 17:1-8.*

### VIDEO | A Clip of a Kid Being Surprisingly Good at Dancing

- If you're reading this and thinking, "Wait, what just happened?" then you know how Peter and the other disciples must have felt when they saw Jesus transform right before their eyes. They thought they knew everything there was to know about Jesus, but suddenly, it was like . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:15-0:45) of a kid who surprises his classmates with his dancing skills. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Okay, maybe Jesus' transformation was a little more awe-inducing than a dance battle, but you get the idea.
  - Jesus' transformation on that mountaintop is an important part of Jesus' story. Many religious leaders had expectations of who Jesus was supposed to be. Some believed he was the Son of God and some didn't. Even his followers struggled to believe who he was.
  - Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples, but he still questioned if Jesus really was God. But when Jesus' form changed right before his eyes, Peter's understanding of who Jesus was shifted too.
  - In time, this shift in Peter's perspective led to a significant shift in Peter's whole life. Although Peter's journey with Jesus was a little messy at times, he stuck close by Jesus' side and God used him to do incredible things.

- Just like Peter, we may have our own assumptions about Jesus, questions, and misunderstandings of Jesus. Maybe you think . . .
  - Jesus was a good teacher, but nothing more.
  - Jesus is just a crutch to lean on when life gets tough.
  - Jesus won't love or accept you until you get your life together.
  - Jesus is a good option, but not the only way to know God.
- Until we make it a habit to spend time with Jesus ourselves, we won't have a chance to see how amazing He truly is or have our misunderstandings about Him transformed. As we spend time with God, we'll be able to see more clearly who He truly is – just like Peter did that day on the mountaintop.

### SCRIPTURE | II Corinthians 3:18-4:2

- Paul is another early follower of Jesus, and he wrote a letter to a church in the city of Corinth. In it, he described how Jesus's followers can experience the glory of God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read II Corinthians 3:18-4:2.*
- It's not just Jesus who transformed. We can be transformed too, to be more like Jesus over time. That happens by the power of God's Spirit and our commitment to change our habits.
- When we make it a habit to spend time with God and turn away from the things that displease God, we . . .
  - Discover God's transforming power.
  - Better understand how great God really is.
  - Experience God for ourselves.
  - Are changed from the inside out.

### STORY | Talk about how spending time with God transformed your life.

- For as long as you live, you will continue to build habits. But the habit of spending time with God regularly is one habit that can transform your life in significant ways.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about how spending time with God transformed your life. Identify a specific thing God changed in your life or your heart and share the process of how that transformation happened. Be sure to also share what "spending time with God" looked like for you in detail. What specific habits did you practice that led to this transformation?*
- When we spend time with God, we become more like Jesus. We are transformed to reflect more of God's nature and character. So as we build habits that shape who we are, let's **make it a habit to spend time with God.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**DISCUSSION | “How are you supposed to spend time with God?”**

- But like we said before, spending time with God can be a habit that seems strange and mysterious. It’s not like Peter spending time with his friend Jesus — it’s us trying to spend time with our invisible Creator . . . which can be weird.
- Spending time with God might be easier to understand if we break it into these three words: **learn, pray, worship.**
  - **LEARN:** Thanks to the Bible, books about faith, or teaching like this message right now, we can spend time with God by learning more about who God is and what God says.
  - **PRAY:** We spend time with God every time we talk to God, and that’s all prayer is.
  - **WORSHIP:** We spend time with God when we worship on our own or with other Jesus-followers.
- So let’s get specific. How does this actually work? **How are you supposed to spend time with God?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lead this discussion by writing on a large chalkboard or whiteboard — embrace the science classroom aesthetic! Start by writing three words on the board: learn, pray, worship. As students give ideas, write them under each category. If they give you ideas that don’t fit in those categories, let them know you’ll talk about those habits in future weeks and redirect them to the specific habit of spending time with God in personal spiritual disciplines. When they share an idea, ask follow-up questions to get as specific as possible. For example, if they say “pray,” ask, “About what? When? Where? For how long?” Then write the results, such as, “Pray for two minutes while I brush my teeth,” or “Pray for strength when I’m tempted to be a jerk.”*

**IMAGE | Habit Stacking**

- When I look at that board we just made, do you know what I see? Habits! A ton of them! Now let’s see how we can stack those habits.
  - Habit stacking may sound like a game you download on your phone, but it’s actually a strategy for developing good habits that was popularized by a guy named James Clear.
  - Habit stacking might sound like a weird idea, but it’s really easy and effective! All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **“After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 1 folder.*
- Here’s the idea: you already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- So first, choose a habit you want to develop (maybe one from the board) and then try to attach it to a habit you already have.

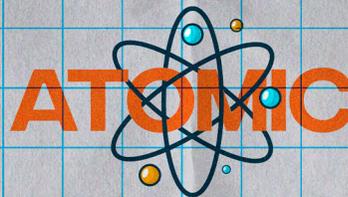
- After I eat dinner, I will write in a prayer journal.
- After I see a Bible App notification, I will read the passage that pops up.
- Before I get out of bed, I will read the Bible for at least two minutes.
- After I think about someone, I will pray for them.
- Before I walk outside, I will thank God for creation.

## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one spiritual habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word “transformation” on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with “transformation” on top), and share your own stack.
- If your first block is your current habit (like brushing your teeth), and your second block is your new spiritual habit (like following a reading plan on the Bible app), what do you think transformation could look like for you? What are some ways your life could change if you spent more time with God?
  - What kind of transformation you experience depends on what God needs to transform in your life, and it’s not always predictable. God likes to surprise us sometimes – just ask Peter.
  - But one thing is for sure: when you spend time with God consistently over time, you can’t help but be transformed. That’s what God’s Spirit does.
- So this week, give it a try – whether it’s through learning, prayer, worship, or all three, **make it a habit to spend time with God!**

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

Make it a habit to spend time with God.

#### **THE BIBLE**

Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2;  
Psalm 51:10-12

- **What's one weird habit you have that none of us probably have?**
- **Have you ever tried to develop a new habit or break an old one? How'd that go?**
- **What are some habits you've been told can help you grow spiritually?**
- **What are some habits you've tried to develop to help you grow spiritually? How'd that go?**
- **How do you think Jesus' transformation on the mountaintop changed His disciples' view of Him?**
- **Has your understanding of Jesus ever changed as a result of spending time with Him? If so, what happened? If not, why do you think that is?**
- **Read Psalm 51:10-12. How can spending time with God change our hearts?**
- **Has your heart ever changed as a result of spending time with God? If so, what happened? If not, why do you think that is?**
- **What's something about your heart that you want to see God transform?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you spend time with God? How will you do it?**

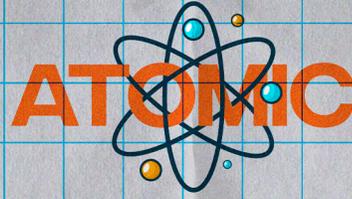
#### ACTIVITY

Share your habit stacks with each other! See if anyone has identified a habit stack that would be helpful to someone else in the group.

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

for middle schoolers



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to spend time with God.

#### THE BIBLE

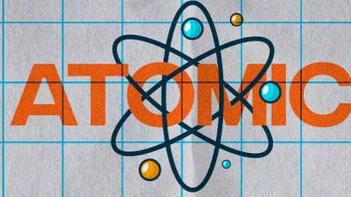
Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2;  
Psalm 51:10-12

- **What's one weird habit you have that none of us probably have?**
- **What are some habits you've been told can help you grow spiritually?**
- **What are some habits you've tried to develop to help you grow spiritually? How'd that go?**
- **Read Psalm 51:10-12. How can spending time with God change our hearts?**
- **What's something about your heart that you want to see God transform?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you spend time with God? How will you do it?**

#### ACTIVITY

Share your habit stacks with each other! See if anyone has identified a habit stack that would be helpful to someone else in the group.

## WEEK 1 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to spend time with God.

### THE BIBLE

Matthew 17:1-8; II Corinthians 3:18-4:2;  
Psalm 51:10-12

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

#### QUESTION | “What are atoms?”

- Welcome to our first week of *Atomic!* **Has anyone studied atoms in school? What are they?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- Atoms are the smallest unit of matter and they make up everything we see around us. So they're both super important and super tiny.

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Tag

- If you had a microscope powerful enough to see atoms, you'd see that atoms are pretty tightly packed together. So let's play a game — “atom” style.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** All you'll need for this game is either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds of tag with either with your entire group or just a handful of students — but make it “atomic” by playing inside a very small playing area. If you're a science nerd, make this game extra interesting by playing inside three concentric circles, each one symbolizing different states of matter. “Solid” would be the center ring, where atoms (your players) are most tightly packed. “Water” would be the center ring, and “gas” would be the outer ring where atoms are most loosely packed. While you play, randomly shout out different states of matter to change the boundary lines. Give [Atomic Fireballs](#) to your winners.

## OBJECT LESSON | Your Morning Routine

- Atoms are super important because they make up everything in our universe. Every single thing that exists is made of atoms, even though we never see or notice them at all. Kind of like atoms, your life is made up of lots of things you never see or notice – like your habits.
- You don't always notice when it's happening, but you probably have a habit of . . .
  - Breathing.
  - Getting hungry every few hours (or minutes).
  - Checking your phone as soon as you wake up.
  - Throwing your stuff in the same spot every time you walk into your house.
  - Sitting in the same seat you usually do, even when you don't have to.
  - Humming when you're thinking.
- You probably even routines you fall into every day, even when you don't mean to.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, fill a box with things like a [pillow](#), blanket, toothbrush, pair of clean socks, bowl, spoon, box of cereal, or [hairbrush](#). Invite a student to the front to walk through their typical morning routine, starting with when their alarm goes off and ending when they leave for school. Have the other students play along, encouraging them to shout out their own preferences for what order they do things or maybe start a debate about whether you should brush your teeth before or after breakfast.*
- We all have habits we don't really think about. Some of those habits are helpful, some are harmful, and some are neutral.
  - Sometimes we don't realize we have certain habits until they cause trouble for us. Have you ever noticed a habit you didn't realize you had? What about a habit you wish you didn't have?
  - But instead of stressing so much about our bad habits, what if we focused more of our time on adding helpful habits to our lives?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **What's one weird habit you have that none of us probably have?**
  - ★ **Have you ever tried to develop a new habit or break an old one? How'd that go?**

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## QUESTION | "What are some things that are small but powerful?"

- Our habits are small but incredibly powerful, just like . . .
  - Atoms.
  - Dirty baby diapers. I mean they're small, but the smell is, uh, pretty powerful.
  - Coffee. It's just some thin, dark liquid, but it keeps you energized for hours.
  - **What else is small but powerful?**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- In the same way, most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can powerfully impact your life — for good or bad.
  - So what about your spiritual habits?
  - What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance?
  - What small changes can you make now to get closer to God over time?
  - And after you set some goals for getting closer to God, how can you actually meet them?
- For the next few weeks, we’re going to talk about four different spiritual habits that can help you get closer to God over time. You may already have some habits that help you do this, but we’re going to get really specific to see what other new habits we might be able to create in order to grow.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What are some habits you’ve been told can help you grow spiritually?**
  - **What are some habits you’ve tried to develop to help you grow spiritually? How’d that go?**

## SCRIPTURE | Matthew 17:1–8

- The problem is, how do you know which habits will actually help you get closer to God? “Growing spiritually” feels like such a mysterious process sometimes. What does it mean? How does it happen? How do you know when it’s happening?
- To help us answer those questions, let me share with you a story written by a man named Matthew, who was one of Jesus’s first followers. Not only was Matthew one of Jesus’s first followers, he was a historian. He wanted people for generations to remember what God had done, so he wrote out in detail all of Jesus’s important stories and encounters.
- Jesus had a habit of climbing mountains in order to spend some time with God. Over and over throughout the Bible, you see mentions of Jesus heading out on solo hikes in order to pray in solitude. But this time, He invited a few friends — and then something incredible happened.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 17:1-8.

## VIDEO | A Clip of a Kid Being Surprisingly Good at Dancing

- If you’re reading this and thinking, “Wait, what just happened?” then you know how Peter and the other disciples must have felt when they saw Jesus transform right before their eyes. They thought they knew everything there was to know about Jesus, but suddenly, it was like . . .

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:15-0:45) of a kid who surprises his classmates with his dancing skills. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Okay, maybe Jesus' transformation was a little more awe-inducing than a dance battle, but you get the idea.
  - Jesus' transformation on that mountaintop is an important part of Jesus' story. Many religious leaders had expectations of who Jesus was supposed to be. Some believed he was the Son of God and some didn't. Even his followers struggled to believe who he was.
  - Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples, but he still questioned if Jesus really was God. But when Jesus' form changed right before his eyes, Peter's understanding of who Jesus was shifted too.
  - In time, this shift in Peter's perspective led to a significant shift in Peter's whole life. Although Peter's journey with Jesus was a little messy at times, he stuck close by Jesus' side and God used him to do incredible things.
- Just like Peter, we may have our own assumptions about Jesus, questions, and misunderstandings of Jesus. Maybe you think . . .
  - Jesus was a good teacher, but nothing more.
  - Jesus is just a crutch to lean on when life gets tough.
  - Jesus won't love or accept you until you get your life together.
  - Jesus is a good option, but not the only way to know God.
- Until we make it a habit to spend time with Jesus ourselves, we won't have a chance to see how amazing He truly is or have our misunderstandings about Him transformed. As we spend time with God, we'll be able to see more clearly who He truly is — just like Peter did that day on the mountaintop.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - ✦ **How do you think Jesus' transformation on the mountaintop changed His disciples' view of Him?**
  - ✦ **Has your understanding of Jesus ever changed as a result of spending time with Him? If so, what happened? If not, why do you think that is?**

## SCRIPTURE | II Corinthians 3:18-4:2

- Paul is another early follower of Jesus, and he wrote a letter to a church in the city of Corinth. In it, he described how Jesus's followers can experience the glory of God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read II Corinthians 3:18-4:2.
- It's not just Jesus who transformed. We can be transformed too, to be more like Jesus over time. That happens by the power of God's Spirit and our commitment to change our habits.

- When we make it a habit to spend time with God and turn away from the things that displease God, we . . .
  - Discover God’s transforming power.
  - Better understand how great God really is.
  - Experience God for ourselves.
  - Are changed from the inside out.

### STORY | Talk about how spending time with God transformed your life.

- For as long as you live, you will continue to build habits. But the habit of spending time with God regularly is one habit that can transform your life in significant ways.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about how spending time with God transformed your life. Identify a specific thing God changed in your life or your heart and share the process of how that transformation happened. Be sure to also share what “spending time with God” looked like for you in detail. What specific habits did you practice that led to this transformation?*
- When we spend time with God, we become more like Jesus. We are transformed to reflect more of God’s nature and character. So as we build habits that shape who we are, let’s **make it a habit to spend time with God.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Psalm 51:10-12. How can spending time with God change our hearts?**
  - ☆ **Has your heart ever changed as a result of spending time with God? If so, what happened? If not, why do you think that is?**
  - **What’s something about your heart that you want to see God transform?**

### DISCUSSION | “How are you supposed to spend time with God?”

- But like we said before, spending time with God can be a habit that seems strange and mysterious. It’s not like Peter spending time with his friend Jesus — it’s us trying to spend time with our invisible Creator . . . which can be weird.
- Spending time with God might be easier to understand if we break it into these three words: **learn, pray, worship.**
  - **LEARN:** Thanks to the Bible, books about faith, or teaching like this message right now, we can spend time with God by learning more about who God is and what God says.
  - **PRAY:** We spend time with God every time we talk to God, and that’s all prayer is.

- **WORSHIP:** We spend time with God when we worship on our own or with other Jesus-followers.
- So let's get specific. How does this actually work? **How are you supposed to spend time with God?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lead this discussion by writing on a large chalkboard or whiteboard – embrace the science classroom aesthetic! Start by writing three words on the board: learn, pray, worship. As students give ideas, write them under each category. If they give you ideas that don't fit in those categories, let them know you'll talk about those habits in future weeks and redirect them to the specific habit of spending time with God in personal spiritual disciplines. When they share an idea, ask follow-up questions to get as specific as possible. For example, if they say "pray," ask, "About what? When? Where? For how long?" Then write the results, such as, "Pray for two minutes while I brush my teeth," or "Pray for strength when I'm tempted to be a jerk."*

### IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- When I look at that board we just made, do you know what I see? Habits! A ton of them! Now let's see how we can stack those habits.
  - Habit stacking may sound like a game you download on your phone, but it's actually a strategy for developing good habits that was popularized by a guy named James Clear.
  - Habit stacking might sound like a weird idea, but it's really easy and effective! All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **"After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 1 folder.*
- Here's the idea: you already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- So first, choose a habit you want to develop (maybe one from the board) and then try to attach it to a habit you already have.
  - After I eat dinner, I will write in a prayer journal.
  - After I see a Bible App notification, I will read the passage that pops up.
  - Before I get out of bed, I will read the Bible for at least two minutes.
  - After I think about someone, I will pray for them.
  - Before I walk outside, I will thank God for creation.

### RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one spiritual habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.*
- If your first block is your current habit (like brushing your teeth), and your second block is your new spiritual habit (like following a reading plan on the Bible app), what do you think transformation could look like for you? What are some ways your life could change if you spent more time with God?

- What kind of transformation you experience depends on what God needs to transform in your life, and it's not always predictable. God likes to surprise us sometimes – just ask Peter.
- But one thing is for sure: when you spend time with God consistently over time, you can't help but be transformed. That's what God's Spirit does.
- So this week, give it a try – whether it's through learning, prayer, worship, or all three, **make it a habit to spend time with God!**

## DISCUSSION

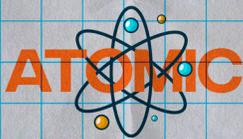
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you spend time with God? How will you do it?**

**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

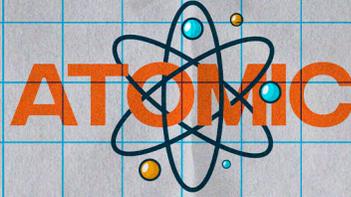
\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



## WEEK 2 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.

### THE BIBLE

John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12;  
Proverbs 27:17

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Dodgeball

- Welcome to Week 2 of *Atomic*, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but once again, we're going to increase the pressure by decreasing the size of our playing area.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a few [foam dodge balls](#) and either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds with as many students as you'd like and decrease the size of the playing area after each round to make it even more challenging.*

#### VIDEO | A Clip of Something Being Crushed

- Sorry if you felt a little crushed, but at least I didn't try to turn one of these things into a game . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip (around 30 seconds or less) from a video [like this one](#) of objects being crushed by hydraulic pressure. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- I don't know about you but sometimes I feel like one of those squished things in the video. Sometimes life comes with a lot of pressure, right? Over time, all that pressure can really drain you.

## OBJECT LESSON | Energy Count

- Every day, we wake up with a certain amount of energy. Once you actually wake up and start functioning like a real human, you've got a lot of energy to work with! But then the pressure begins. There's pressure to . . .
- Pick out your outfit.
  - Interact with your family without getting into a fight.
  - Get out the door on time.
  - Answer that text you've been putting off.
  - **What else drains your energy throughout the day?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Bring out two buckets — make sure at least one of them is clear and filled with [ping pong balls](#) (or whatever you'd like). Put the [clear bucket](#) on a table where everyone can see it and place the other on the ground. The visible bucket represents the amount of energy you have to give in a day, while the [hidden bucket](#) represents the energy you extend in the day. Work with your students to list some of the things that drain your energy during the day. As you list each one, remove some of the ping pong balls from the visible bucket and dump them in the hidden bucket.*
- By the end of the day, you've given so much of your time and energy that you're left with only a tiny bit to give. As the day goes on, it makes sense you'd be a bit snappy with other people.
- For most of us, we probably have some bad habits when it comes to the way we treat other people. Especially when we're under pressure, we . . .
  - Get short-tempered.
  - Ignore people.
  - Put ourselves first.
  - Invest less in our relationships.
- Our relationships have a big impact on our lives and faith. But when we fail to develop good habits when it comes to our relationships, we're missing out on a big opportunity to grow! So how can we develop better habits when it comes to our friends and family? That's what we're going to find out today.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## QUESTIONS | "What would you do?"

- Everyone has habits, even when you don't notice them. But sometimes when life hits us with a jolting experience, our habits are often revealed under pressure — especially the bad habits. Let's run through a few scenarios. For each one, answer this question: **what would you do?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *After each scenario, give a few students a chance to respond or have every student share their response with the person next to them.*
  - **You're running late somewhere and someone is texting you. You know they want a quick answer back, but you're busy. What would you do?**
  - **You're having a hard time. Do you ask someone for help or spend time alone?**
  - **Something really painful just happened. A family member asks how you're doing. How do you respond?**

- **A friend hurts or betrays you one day, but sends a friendly text the next day. What would you do?**

- High pressure situations can make or break our relationships. So what kinds of habits can we develop now so our relationships don't break when we're under pressure?

## SCRIPTURE | John 15:9-13

- There's a moment in Scripture when Jesus speaks to His friends. He's under a lot of pressure and He knows His disciples are about to be under a lot of pressure too.
  - This conversation is captured by one of His disciples, John.
  - Jesus has a lot to say to His friends in this passage because He knows the time is coming when He's going to die and His followers will face a huge crisis.
  - To help prepare them for what's coming, Jesus talks about their friendships with God and each other. He even gives them a strategy to help strengthen their relationships with each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 15:9-13.*
- I don't know if you've ever thought of someone that's important to you and thought, "I would die for them," but that's the kind of commitment Jesus is encouraging us to make to each other.
  - But massive, dramatic, over-the-top displays of love aren't exactly what Jesus is talking about here. That's one way to love someone, but you can't really "make it a habit" to die for someone. That's something you can only do once, max.
  - Instead, let's think about the little, almost invisible, "atomic" ways we can love each other. Because we can definitely make it a habit to love each other in small but powerful ways.
  - We don't have to literally die for someone in order to make sacrifices for them. We can love one another with simple, everyday sacrifices.

## VIDEO | A Clip from "A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise" (Soul Pancake)

- Here's a powerful act of love that started with a small act of kindness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip (1:00-2:15) from ["A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise" \(Soul Pancake\)](#), where a boy named Virgil rescues 17 people from a hurricane. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Virgil Smith became a hero because of his investments in others.
  - When Virgil woke up that morning, he probably never imagined he'd be rescuing a friend, and then another friend, and a neighbor, and even a dog. But he did! Because of his investments in others, 17 people were saved.
  - You might not end up doing something like Virgil did, but you have no idea the impact your investments in others now can impact their futures later.

## SCRIPTURE | Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- A long time before Jesus arrived on earth, the biblical book of Ecclesiastes was written by a guy named Solomon, one of the wisest men to ever live. Let's see what he says about friendship.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.*
- The idea that we need each other isn't new. God created us for relationships and the benefits are pretty amazing — and practical. When you've got a friend . . .
  - **You have support.** If you are alone and face a major challenge, defeat, or hurt, you're going to have a hard time handling it on your own. It might even be impossible. But when we're struggling to stand, the people we love can hold us up.
  - **You have defense.** We all need people in our corner — especially when life's pressures get the best of us.

## OBJECT LESSON | Tripod

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Bring a [camera tripod](#) up front. Display the instability of one and two legs, then the stability of three legs.*
- There's a reason this tripod has three legs.
  - If I only have one leg to the camera steady, it's going to fall over immediately.
  - How about two? A little better, but still unstable. I can push it over with no problem.
  - Now let's try three legs. Three legs hold the camera steady and provide a stronger defense against anyone trying to knock it over.
- We need relationships to keep us safe and supported when life gets difficult. But if we don't make investing in our relationships a habit, those relationships may not be there when we need them.
  - We all have relationships, but there are some relationships we need more than others — like your inner-circle people. The ones who'll always answer your "I-need-someone-to-talk-to" texts. The people who have the biggest impact on your life and faith because of how much they invest in you.
  - Scripture makes it clear we were created for relationships — with God and each other. In many ways, our relationships with others can have huge impacts on our relationships with God. Especially the relationships that are closest to us.
- So if you want to grow closer to God over time (and I hope you do), we need to take a look at the people we're growing closer to over time. If we want to be surrounded by people who support and defend us, in our lives and our faith, then let's **make it a habit to invest in our relationships.**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

## DISCUSSION | "How can you invest in others?"

- We really need each other! But remember our empty bucket at the beginning of this talk? If we're not careful, investing in our relationships can often come last.

- Investing in others might be easier to understand if we break it into these three words: **time, communication, work.**
  - **TIME:** You can invest in the people who matter to you by spending time with them — and not just when it’s convenient for you.
  - **COMMUNICATION:** You can invest in them by being open, honest, and clear with your words.
  - **WORK:** You can invest in them by being willing to put in effort when things get challenging or they need you to support or defend them.
- So let’s get specific. How does this actually work? **How are you supposed to invest in others?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lead this discussion by writing on a large chalkboard or whiteboard — embrace the science classroom aesthetic! Start by writing three words on the board: time, communication, and work. As students give ideas, write them under each category. If they give you ideas that don’t fit in those categories, make a new category! When they share an idea, ask follow-up questions to get as specific as possible. For example, if they say “talk,” ask, “About what? When? For how long?” Then write the result, like, “Ask someone how they’re doing” or “send an encouraging text.”*

### IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- When I look at that board we just made, do you know what I see? Habits! A ton of them! Now let’s see how we can stack those habits.
  - In case you missed it last week, habit stacking might sound like a weird idea, but it’s really easy and effective! All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **“After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”**
  - You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 2 folder.*

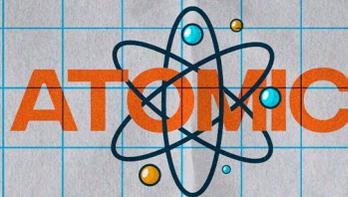
### RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- So first, choose a habit you want to develop (maybe one from the board) and then try to attach it to a habit you already have. Let’s think about those daily routines that would be great to start stacking from. Every day, maybe you . . .
  - Brush your teeth.
  - Charge your phone.
  - Take a shower — wait, do you all actually do that every day?
  - Feeding your pet.
  - Riding the bus to school.
  - Doing homework.
  - Opening TikTok.
  - Eating dinner.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word “transformation” on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with “transformation” on top), and share your own stack.
- If your first block is your current habit (like getting on TikTok), and your second block is your new habit (like asking a friend how they’re doing), what do you think the result might be?
  - What are some ways your relationships could be transformed if you invested in them more often? What kind of impact do you think you could make in someone’s life when all of your small investments begin to add up? Remember, laying down your life for someone doesn’t have to be a big grand gesture — small things are powerful too.
  - What are some ways you could personally be transformed if you made it a habit to invest in others? Do you think you might become a little more kinder? More selfless? More compassionate?
  - What are some ways your faith could be transformed if you invested in the right relationships? If you focused your investments on people who help you stick close with God, how might your relationship with God transform over time? Remember, Jesus said that when we obey His commands, we stay close to Him — and one of His commands is to love other people well.
- Last week, we saw that when you spend time with God consistently over time, you can’t help but be transformed. That’s what God’s Spirit does. This week, let’s think about how, when we invest in other people consistently over time, our relationships can’t help but be transformed. So this week, give it a try — no matter who you’ve decided to invest in or how, let’s **make it a habit to invest in our relationships.**

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact – habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshipping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.

#### THE BIBLE

John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12;  
Proverbs 27:17

- **What's a song that always makes you feel energized?**
- **What are some of the things that drain your energy throughout the day?**
- **When you're tired or in a bad mood, who are the easiest people for you to be impatient with? Why is that?**
- **When you're tired or in a bad mood, how do you tend to treat people?**
- **Who are some of the people who are investing in you? How are they doing that?**
- **Who are some of the people you're investing in? How are you doing that?**
- **What are some specific ways we can make investments in each other this week?**
- **Read Proverbs 27:17. What does this mean? What are some ways our group can do a better job of "sharpening" each other?**
- **In your opinion, what percentage of your relationships should be with people who share your beliefs? Why do you think so?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you invest in your relationships? How will you do it?**

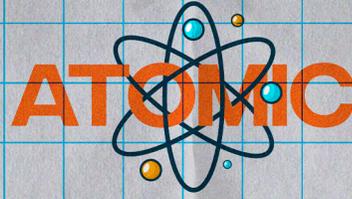
#### ACTIVITY

Bring Monopoly money to small group (or make your own with scrap paper) and give each person 10 bills. Together, brainstorm specific ways you can invest in your friends and family. Have students write one "investment strategy" on each bill. Then challenge them to "spend" that money on people they love this week.

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

for middle schoolers



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.

#### THE BIBLE

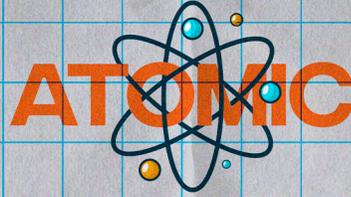
John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12;  
Proverbs 27:17

- **What's a song that always makes you feel energized?**
- **When you're tired or in a bad mood, who are the easiest people for you to be impatient with? Why is that?**
- **Who are some of the people who are investing in you? How are they doing that?**
- **What are some specific ways we can make investments in each other this week?**
- **Read Proverbs 27:17. What does this mean? What are some ways our group can do a better job of "sharpening" each other?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you invest in your relationships? How will you do it?**

#### ACTIVITY

Bring Monopoly money to small group (or make your own with scrap paper) and give each person 10 bills. Together, brainstorm specific ways you can invest in your friends and family. Have students write one "investment strategy" on each bill. Then challenge them to "spend" that money on people they love this week.

## WEEK 2 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to invest in your relationships.

### THE BIBLE

John 15:9-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12;  
Proverbs 27:17

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Dodgeball

- Welcome to Week 2 of *Atomic*, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but once again, we're going to increase the pressure by decreasing the size of our playing area.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a few [foam dodge balls](#) and either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds with as many students as you'd like and decrease the size of the playing area after each round to make it even more challenging.*

#### VIDEO | A Clip of Something Being Crushed

- Sorry if you felt a little crushed, but at least I didn't try to turn one of these things into a game . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip (around 30 seconds or less) from a video [like this one](#) of objects being crushed by hydraulic pressure. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- I don't know about you but sometimes I feel like one of those squished things in the video. Sometimes life comes with a lot of pressure, right? Over time, all that pressure can really drain you.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What's a song that always makes you feel energized?**
  - ★ **What are some of the things that drain your energy throughout the day?**

## OBJECT LESSON | Energy Count

- Every day, we wake up with a certain amount of energy. Once you actually wake up and start functioning like a real human, you've got a lot of energy to work with! But then the pressure begins. There's pressure to . . .
- Pick out your outfit.
  - Interact with your family without getting into a fight.
  - Get out the door on time.
  - Answer that text you've been putting off.
  - **What else drains your energy throughout the day?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Bring out two buckets — make sure at least one of them is clear and filled with [ping pong balls](#) (or whatever you'd like). Put the [clear bucket](#) on a table where everyone can see it and place the other on the ground. The visible bucket represents the amount of energy you have to give in a day, while the [hidden bucket](#) represents the energy you extend in the day. Work with your students to list some of the things that drain your energy during the day. As you list each one, remove some of the ping pong balls from the visible bucket and dump them in the hidden bucket.
- By the end of the day, you've given so much of your time and energy that you're left with only a tiny bit to give. As the day goes on, it makes sense you'd be a bit snappy with other people.
- For most of us, we probably have some bad habits when it comes to the way we treat other people. Especially when we're under pressure, we . . .
  - Get short-tempered.
  - Ignore people.
  - Put ourselves first.
  - Invest less in our relationships.
- Our relationships have a big impact on our lives and faith. But when we fail to develop good habits when it comes to our relationships, we're missing out on a big opportunity to grow! So how can we develop better habits when it comes to our friends and family? That's what we're going to find out today.

**SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.

- When you're tired or in a bad mood, who are the easiest people for you to be impatient with? Why is that?
- ★ When you're tired or in a bad mood, how do you tend to treat people?

### QUESTIONS | "What would you do?"

- Everyone has habits, even when you don't notice them. But sometimes when life hits us with a jolting experience, our habits are often revealed under pressure — especially the bad habits. Let's run through a few scenarios. For each one, answer this question: **what would you do?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *After each scenario, give a few students a chance to respond or have every student share their response with the person next to them.*
  - **You're running late somewhere and someone is texting you. You know they want a quick answer back, but you're busy. What would you do?**
  - **You're having a hard time. Do you ask someone for help or spend time alone?**
  - **Something really painful just happened. A family member asks how you're doing. How do you respond?**
  - **A friend hurts or betrays you one day, but sends a friendly text the next day. What would you do?**
- High pressure situations can make or break our relationships. So what kinds of habits can we develop now so our relationships don't break when we're under pressure?

### SCRIPTURE | John 15:9-13

- There's a moment in Scripture when Jesus speaks to His friends. He's under a lot of pressure and He knows His disciples are about to be under a lot of pressure too.
  - This conversation is captured by one of His disciples, John.
  - Jesus has a lot to say to His friends in this passage because He knows the time is coming when He's going to die and His followers will face a huge crisis.
  - To help prepare them for what's coming, Jesus talks about their friendships with God and each other. He even gives them a strategy to help strengthen their relationships with each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 15:9-13.*
- I don't know if you've ever thought of someone that's important to you and thought, "I would die for them," but that's the kind of commitment Jesus is encouraging us to make to each other.
  - But massive, dramatic, over-the-top displays of love aren't exactly what Jesus is talking about here. That's one way to love someone, but you can't really "make it a habit" to die for someone. That's something you can only do once, max.
  - Instead, let's think about the little, almost invisible, "atomic" ways we can love each other. Because we can definitely make it a habit to love each other in small but powerful ways.
  - We don't have to literally die for someone in order to make sacrifices for them. We can love one another with simple, everyday sacrifices.

## VIDEO | A Clip from “A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise” (Soul Pancake)

- Here’s a powerful act of love that started with a small act of kindness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip (1:00-2:15) from [“A Boy Who Saved 17 Lives Gets a Big Surprise” \(Soul Pancake\)](#), where a boy named Virgil rescues 17 people from a hurricane. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Virgil Smith became a hero because of his investments in others.
  - When Virgil woke up that morning, he probably never imagined he’d be rescuing a friend, and then another friend, and a neighbor, and even a dog. But he did! Because of his investments in others, 17 people were saved.
  - You might not end up doing something like Virgil did, but you have no idea the impact your investments in others now can impact their futures later.

## SCRIPTURE | Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- A long time before Jesus arrived on earth, the biblical book of Ecclesiastes was written by a guy named Solomon, one of the wisest men to ever live. Let’s see what he says about friendship.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*.
- The idea that we need each other isn’t new. God created us for relationships and the benefits are pretty amazing — and practical. When you’ve got a friend . . .
  - **You have support.** If you are alone and face a major challenge, defeat, or hurt, you’re going to have a hard time handling it on your own. It might even be impossible. But when we’re struggling to stand, the people we love can hold us up.
  - **You have defense.** We all need people in our corner — especially when life’s pressures get the best of us.

## OBJECT LESSON | Tripod

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Bring a [camera tripod](#) up front. Display the instability of one and two legs, then the stability of three legs.
- There’s a reason this tripod has three legs.
  - If I only have one leg to the camera steady, it’s going to fall over immediately.
  - How about two? A little better, but still unstable. I can push it over with no problem.
  - Now let’s try three legs. Three legs hold the camera steady and provide a stronger defense against anyone trying to knock it over.
- We need relationships to keep us safe and supported when life gets difficult. But if we don’t make investing in our relationships a habit, those relationships may not be there when we need them.
  - We all have relationships, but there are some relationships we need more than others — like your inner-circle people. The ones who’ll always answer your “I-need-someone-to-talk-to” texts. The people who have the biggest impact on your life and faith because of how much they invest in you.

- Scripture makes it clear we were created for relationships – with God and each other. In many ways, our relationships with others can have huge impacts on our relationships with God. Especially the relationships that are closest to us.
- So if you want to grow closer to God over time (and I hope you do), we need to take a look at the people we’re growing closer to over time. If we want to be surrounded by people who support and defend us, in our lives and our faith, then let’s **make it a habit to invest in our relationships.**

## NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
  - **Who are some of the people who are investing in you? How are they doing that?**
  - ★ **Who are some of the people you’re investing in? How are you doing that?**

### DISCUSSION | “How can you invest in others?”

- We really need each other! But remember our empty bucket at the beginning of this talk? If we’re not careful, investing in our relationships can often come last.
- Investing in others might be easier to understand if we break it into these three words: **time, communication, work.**
  - **TIME:** You can invest in the people who matter to you by spending time with them – and not just when it’s convenient for you.
  - **COMMUNICATION:** You can invest in them by being open, honest, and clear with your words.
  - **WORK:** You can invest in them by being willing to put in effort when things get challenging or they need you to support or defend them.
- So let’s get specific. How does this actually work? **How are you supposed to invest in others?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Lead this discussion by writing on a large chalkboard or whiteboard – embrace the science classroom aesthetic! Start by writing three words on the board: time, communication, and work. As students give ideas, write them under each category. If they give you ideas that don’t fit in those categories, make a new category! When they share an idea, ask follow-up questions to get as specific as possible. For example, if they say “talk,” ask, “About what? When? For how long?” Then write the result, like, “Ask someone how they’re doing” or “send an encouraging text.”

### IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- When I look at that board we just made, do you know what I see? Habits! A ton of them! Now let’s see how we can stack those habits.
  - In case you missed it last week, habit stacking might sound like a weird idea, but it’s really easy and effective! All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **“After/before I \_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_.”**

- You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the image provided in your Week 2 folder.

## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- So first, choose a habit you want to develop (maybe one from the board) and then try to attach it to a habit you already have. Let's think about those daily routines that would be great to start stacking from. Every day, maybe you . . .
  - Brush your teeth.
  - Charge your phone.
  - Take a shower — wait, do you all actually do that every day?
  - Feeding your pet.
  - Riding the bus to school.
  - Doing homework.
  - Opening TikTok.
  - Eating dinner.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.
- If your first block is your current habit (like getting on TikTok), and your second block is your new habit (like asking a friend how they're doing), what do you think the result might be?
  - What are some ways your relationships could be transformed if you invested in them more often? What kind of impact do you think you could make in someone's life when all of your small investments begin to add up? Remember, laying down your life for someone doesn't have to be a big grand gesture — small things are powerful too.
  - What are some ways you could personally be transformed if you made it a habit to invest in others? Do you think you might become a little more kinder? More selfless? More compassionate?
  - What are some ways your faith could be transformed if you invested in the right relationships? If you focused your investments on people who help you stick close with God, how might your relationship with God transform over time? Remember, Jesus said that when we obey His commands, we stay close to Him — and one of His commands is to love other people well.
- Last week, we saw that when you spend time with God consistently over time, you can't help but be transformed. That's what God's Spirit does. This week, let's think about how, when we invest in other people consistently over time, our relationships can't help but be transformed. So this week, give it a try — no matter who you've decided to invest in or how, let's **make it a habit to invest in our relationships.**

## DISCUSSION

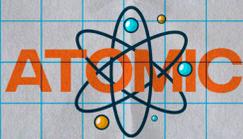
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Proverbs 27:17. What does this mean? What are some ways our group can do a better job of "sharpening" each other?**
  - ★ **In your opinion, what percentage of your relationships should be with people who share your beliefs? Why do you think so?**
  - **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you invest in your relationships? How will you do it?**

**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

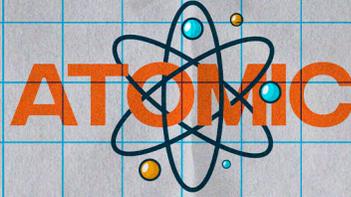
\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



## WEEK 3 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to share your faith stories.

### THE BIBLE

Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27;  
Romans 1:16

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Relays

- Welcome to Week 3 of *Atomic*, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but we're going to keep you on your toes by (once again) making this game miniature-sized.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Make a list of easy relays that can be accomplished in teams of four, like running backwards, crab walking, or carrying a [ping pong ball](#) on a spoon in their mouth. Make your playing area small enough that each relay will take only a few seconds and the game overall will be very fast-paced.*

#### STORY | Talk about a time your brain went on "autopilot."

- When you're engaged in some fast-paced, high-stakes activity (like that relay race) you've got to pay close attention to what's happening. But have you ever looked up and realized your brain had been on "autopilot?"
  - Maybe you go to the movies and after the employee rips your ticket and says, "Enjoy your movie!" you respond, "You too!" — and feel like an idiot.
  - Maybe you walk all the way upstairs and when you get there you think, "Wait . . . why did I come up here?"
  - That's what I mean about your brain being on "autopilot." Sometimes we have habits and routines that are so deeply ingrained that we forget to change them up.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when your brain went on autopilot out of habit. Maybe you were driving and ended up in the wrong location because you were lost in your thoughts, or accidentally poured orange juice in your cereal, or called your teacher “Mom.”
- **It’s easy for us to do things without thinking, isn’t it? Sometimes when we find ourselves on “autopilot” we discover some habits we didn’t even realize we had.**

### VIDEO | A Clip from De Lijn’s “It’s Smarter to Travel in Groups” Commercial

- For the last few weeks, we’ve been talking a lot about our habits. Sometimes we don’t notice how many tiny habits we already have, but even if we don’t notice them they’re still really powerful. Over time, our habits shape who we are.
  - When we don’t pay attention to the habits we have (and we don’t try to build new habits on purpose) we might look up someday, see the direction our lives have taken us, and think, “Wait . . . how did I get here?”
  - But when we’re intentional about our habits – even the small ones, all of those tiny habits we’ve built can come together to make a big impact.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip (0:37-1:00) from a video [like this one](#) of De Lijn’s “It’s Smarter to Travel in Groups” Commercial. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- In the last two weeks, we’ve already talked about two big habits that can change the course of our lives and faith: spending time with God and investing in our relationships. Today, we’re going to add a third habit to that list. As we do, keep those ants in mind, because when all of these habits are combined, they have the power to lead to some pretty big changes in your faith.

### SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

#### SCRIPTURE | Mark 16:9-15

- There’s a passage in Scripture where we find eleven of Jesus’s closest friends and followers in hiding.
  - It was only a few days after Jesus had been crucified, so Jesus’ followers were afraid the same people who killed Jesus might come for them next. That’s understandable.
  - Not only were they scared, but they were in mourning too. Their friend was dead and, for all they knew, was never coming back.
  - But as they were hiding, grieving, and trying to eat a meal together, here’s what happened . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Mark 16:9-15.

#### QUESTION | “What habit did Jesus challenge His disciples to develop?”

- There’s a lot going on in this handful of verses, but did you catch it? When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, **what habit did He challenge them to develop?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

- When Jesus returned, after telling them to have faith, His message to His disciples was this: go and preach the gospel.
- As soon as He returned to life, delivering the command to go share His story all over the world was at the top of Jesus's to-do list. Think about the emotional whiplash the disciples must have been experiencing.
  - Just a moment before, they were grieving their dead friend, doubting what Jesus had to say about Himself and God was even true, and fearing for their own lives.
  - Pivot to overwhelming joy and relief because, suddenly, Jesus was alive!
  - Pivot again to what was probably a little bit of awkwardness, shame, and some more fear, because Jesus had some things to say to them. He called them out for their lack of faith and then told them to do something terrifying – go into the world (the same world that had just killed Jesus) and share the gospel (the same message that had just gotten Him killed).

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 27:1-3

- The disciples knew Scripture pretty well, so they were probably familiar with Psalm 27, a song written written by David. When Jesus gave them this mission, I wonder if they quoted these passages to each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 27:1-3.*
- In the first few verses David describes God as his light. For David, God was his truth, goodness, joy, and happiness – everything positive in his life.
  - If you were staggering around in a dark room and someone turned on a light, that would be pretty good news, right? That's what the good news of Jesus' gospel does.
  - The psalmist in this passage is boldly declaring what God has done for him because God's salvation is good news to him.
  - In the same way, when Jesus told His disciples to go all over the world and preach the gospel, He wasn't telling them to write sermons and become professional speakers. He was telling them to go and share the good news of the light, hope, and joy they found through Jesus.
- If you were stuck in darkness, and someone turned on a light, I would hope you'd head toward that light to help guide you to safety. In the same way, if you're someone who has seen the "light" of God's salvation, you can turn on a light for others by sharing the good news of what you've found.

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 27:4-14

- David goes on to say how the constant presence of God calmed his fears.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 27:4-14.*
- Jesus' disciples were probably kind of terrified to follow Jesus' directions to tell the world about the salvation they found in Jesus. But ultimately they took Him up on that challenge. Why? Probably because they knew He would be with them, even when it was scary.
  - In this psalm, David described the way God was always with him, hearing his prayers, protecting him, and helping him because that's who God is.

- The disciples understood that no matter what danger they faced, they could find the courage to share the good news of Jesus with the world because God would never leave them alone.
- Jesus challenged His friends and followers to share their stories of faith wherever they went because the world needed to know about the light of God’s good news and salvation. Jesus is giving you and me to that same challenge.
  - You don’t have to be a professional speaker to preach the good news of Jesus. All you need to do is share what Jesus has done for you.
  - You don’t need a doctoral degree in the Bible or a lifetime of learning. All you need is your own story of faith and a desire to share the good news that has changed your life.
  - Even if you’re still deciding what you think about Jesus, that’s okay! You still have a story to share.
  - Just like the way our small habits can change our lives in unexpected ways, the tiny habit of sharing our faith can encourage and inspire someone to follow Jesus and change their life forever.
- The tiny habits we’re talking about in this series can impact our lives far beyond anything we thought possible. What do you think could happen to your faith, and to the people around you, if you **made it a habit to share your faith story?**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY**

- This habit might be the toughest to start because we get caught up worrying how we’ll be perceived by others. We start second-guessing ourselves.
  - Maybe we don’t see our own value and think, “Other people have better things to say than me, so I’ll just stay quiet.”
  - Maybe we feel like we can’t make difference and think no one will benefit from what we have to say.
  - Maybe we’re still trying to figure out what we think about Jesus and assume this habit is only for people who’ve got it figured out.
  - Maybe we feel unprepared to have the perfect story to tell so we hold off on letting people into our imperfect lives.
- But Jesus is inviting every one of us to make it a habit to share our faith stories. No matter where you’re at in your faith, you have a story to tell. You can always make it a habit to share where you’re at in your journey of getting to know Jesus.
  - Think about your friends, teammates, classmates, bandmates, or family members. We all need to hear other people’s faith stories because we all need to be pointed toward Jesus, the source of light, joy, and hope.
  - How amazing would it be to see one of your friends or family members started their journey of faith alongside you, in part, because you made it a habit to share your story?

## DISCUSSION | Short Stories

- Sharing your faith story doesn't have to take a long time or be a major ordeal. Your story can be shared in tiny moments over time! Sharing your story can be prompted by a simple question, like . . .
  - Who is Jesus to you?
  - Has God ever given you hope in a dark time?
  - How has your life changed since you heard about Jesus?
  - Has God ever helped you grow in patience, kindness, or courage?
  - What gifts has God given you?
  - What prayer has God answered?
  - What are you learning about God right now?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set a two-minute timer and have students turn to their neighbor and answer one of the questions you just listed in 60 seconds or less.
- See? Sharing your faith story doesn't have to be complicated and it doesn't have to be your entire life story. Sharing your faith story can be as simple as a 60-second story about something God has done, or is currently doing, in your life.
- Even if you just made a decision for Jesus yesterday or you're still deciding what you think about Jesus, this is something we can all do!

## IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- In case you missed it last week, habit stacking is a really easy and effective way to develop new habits. All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **"After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."**
- You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the image provided in your Week 3 folder.

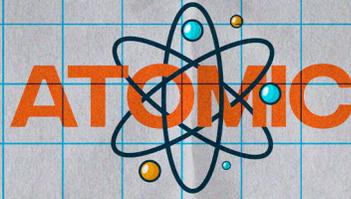
## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- So first, choose a habit you want to develop and then try to attach it to a habit you already have. Let's think about those daily routines that would be great to start stacking from, like putting your phone onto its charger or sitting down at your lunch table.
  - "Before I put my phone on the charger, I will message someone and ask how I can pray for them."
  - "After I get out of bed, I'll ask God to show me someone to share my faith story with today."
  - "Before I leave for church each week, I'll call a friend and ask if they want to come with me."
  - "After I notice God do something cool, I'll share it with three friends."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.

- If your first block is your current habit (like putting your phone on its charger), and your second block is your new habit (like asking a friend if you can pray for them), what kind of transformation do you think could take place?
  - You can't control how someone responds to your story of faith when you share it. The only thing you can do is share. But in the process, someone will always be transformed. Sometimes it will be them and sometimes it will be you.
  - When you share your story, it might encourage others to start their own journey with God, but it will definitely help you grow in your faith and get clearer about who God is to you.
- Your story matters because it is evidence of God's light and good news in your life. Even when our stories are imperfect and unfinished, our stories can help others discover the truth of God's love. So this week, let's **make it a habit to share our stories.**

# WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact – habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to share your faith stories.

#### THE BIBLE

Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27;  
Romans 1:16

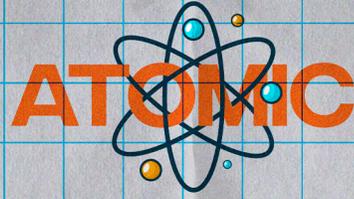
- **What's the most embarrassing thing you've done when you weren't thinking?**
- **How do you think a new habit becomes a habit we don't have to think about anymore?**
- **Do you usually make it a habit to talk about God with other people? How often do you do it?**
- **Have you ever talked about your faith with someone who didn't share your beliefs? What was that like?**
- **How would you define "the gospel"? Why is it good news?**
- **Read Romans 1:16. Have you ever felt ashamed to talk about God with someone? Why or why not?**
- **Do you think there's a wrong way to talk about your faith with someone? Why do you think so?**
- **How do you think we can start faith conversations that feel natural and authentic (not forced or uncomfortable)?**
- **What is your faith story so far?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you share your faith story? How will you do it?**

#### ACTIVITY

Work together to draft one-minute versions of your faith stories. That's about 150 words! Write them out and read them to each other, or work on it during the week and text them to each other.

# WEEK 3

SMALL GROUP GUIDE  
for middle schoolers



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to share your faith stories.

### THE BIBLE

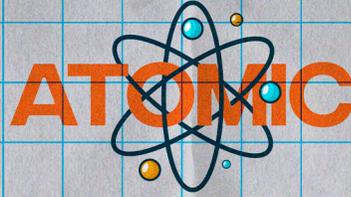
Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27;  
Romans 1:16

- **What's the most embarrassing thing you've done when you weren't thinking?**
- **How do you think a new habit becomes a habit we don't have to think about anymore?**
- **Do you usually make it a habit to talk about God with other people? How often do you do it?**
- **Have you ever talked about your faith with someone who didn't share your beliefs? What was that like?**
- **Read Romans 1:16. Have you ever felt ashamed to talk about God with someone? Why or why not?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you share your faith story? How will you do it?**

### ACTIVITY

Work together to draft one-minute versions of your faith stories. That's about 150 words! Write them out and read them to each other, or work on it during the week and text them to each other.

## WEEK 3 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to share your faith stories.

### THE BIBLE

Mark 16:9-15; Psalm 27;  
Romans 1:16

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Relays

- Welcome to Week 3 of *Atomic*, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but we're going to keep you on your toes by (once again) making this game miniature-sized.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Make a list of easy relays that can be accomplished in teams of four, like running backwards, crab walking, or carrying a [ping pong ball](#) on a spoon in their mouth. Make your playing area small enough that each relay will take only a few seconds and the game overall will be very fast-paced.*

#### STORY | Talk about a time your brain went on "autopilot."

- When you're engaged in some fast-paced, high-stakes activity (like that relay race) you've got to pay close attention to what's happening. But have you ever looked up and realized your brain had been on "autopilot?"
  - Maybe you go to the movies and after the employee rips your ticket and says, "Enjoy your movie!" you respond, "You too!" – and feel like an idiot.
  - Maybe you walk all the way upstairs and when you get there you think, "Wait . . . why did I come up here?"
  - That's what I mean about your brain being on "autopilot." Sometimes we have habits and routines that are so deeply ingrained that we forget to change them up.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when your brain went on autopilot out of habit. Maybe you were driving and ended up in the wrong location because you were lost in your thoughts, or accidentally poured orange juice in your cereal, or called your teacher “Mom.”
- **It’s easy for us to do things without thinking, isn’t it? Sometimes when we find ourselves on “autopilot” we discover some habits we didn’t even realize we had.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What’s the most embarrassing thing you’ve done when you weren’t thinking?**
  - **How do you think a new habit becomes a habit we don’t have to think about anymore?**

## VIDEO | A Clip from De Lijn’s “It’s Smarter to Travel in Groups” Commercial

- For the last few weeks, we’ve been talking a lot about our habits. Sometimes we don’t notice how many tiny habits we already have, but even if we don’t notice them they’re still really powerful. Over time, our habits shape who we are.
  - When we don’t pay attention to the habits we have (and we don’t try to build new habits on purpose) we might look up someday, see the direction our lives have taken us, and think, “Wait . . . how did I get here?”
  - But when we’re intentional about our habits – even the small ones, all of those tiny habits we’ve built can come together to make a big impact.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip (0:37-1:00) from a video [like this one](#) of De Lijn’s “It’s Smarter to Travel in Groups” Commercial. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- In the last two weeks, we’ve already talked about two big habits that can change the course of our lives and faith: spending time with God and investing in our relationships. Today, we’re going to add a third habit to that list. As we do, keep those ants in mind, because when all of these habits are combined, they have the power to lead to some pretty big changes in your faith.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

## SCRIPTURE | Mark 16:9-15

- There’s a passage in Scripture where we find eleven of Jesus’s closest friends and followers in hiding.
  - It was only a few days after Jesus had been crucified, so Jesus’ followers were afraid the same people who killed Jesus might come for them next. That’s understandable.
  - Not only were they scared, but they were in mourning too. Their friend was dead and, for all they knew, was never coming back.

- But as they were hiding, grieving, and trying to eat a meal together, here's what happened . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 16:9-15.*

### QUESTION | "What habit did Jesus challenge His disciples to develop?"

- There's a lot going on in this handful of verses, but did you catch it? When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, **what habit did He challenge them to develop?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- When Jesus returned, after telling them to have faith, His message to His disciples was this: go and preach the gospel.
- As soon as He returned to life, delivering the command to go share His story all over the world was at the top of Jesus's to-do list. Think about the emotional whiplash the disciples must have been experiencing.
  - Just a moment before, they were grieving their dead friend, doubting what Jesus had to say about Himself and God was even true, and fearing for their own lives.
  - Pivot to overwhelming joy and relief because, suddenly, Jesus was alive!
  - Pivot again to what was probably a little bit of awkwardness, shame, and some more fear, because Jesus had some things to say to them. He called them out for their lack of faith and then told them to do something terrifying – go into the world (the same world that had just killed Jesus) and share the gospel (the same message that had just gotten Him killed).

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Do you usually make it a habit to talk about God with other people? How often do you do it?**
  - **Have you ever talked about your faith with someone who didn't share your beliefs? What was that like?**
  - ★ **How would you define "the gospel"? Why is it good news?**

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 27:1-3

- The disciples knew Scripture pretty well, so they were probably familiar with Psalm 27, a song written written by David. When Jesus gave them this mission, I wonder if they quoted these passages to each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 27:1-3.*
- In the first few verses David describes God as his light. For David, God was his truth, goodness, joy, and happiness – everything positive in his life.
  - If you were staggering around in a dark room and someone turned on a light, that would be pretty good news, right? That's what the good news of Jesus' gospel does.

- The psalmist in this passage is boldly declaring what God has done for him because God's salvation is good news to him.
- In the same way, when Jesus told His disciples to go all over the world and preach the gospel, He wasn't telling them to write sermons and become professional speakers. He was telling them to go and share the good news of the light, hope, and joy they found through Jesus.
- If you were stuck in darkness, and someone turned on a light, I would hope you'd head toward that light to help guide you to safety. In the same way, if you're someone who has seen the "light" of God's salvation, you can turn on a light for others by sharing the good news of what you've found.

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 27:4-14

- David goes on to say how the constant presence of God calmed his fears.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 27:4-14.*
- Jesus' disciples were probably kind of terrified to follow Jesus' directions to tell the world about the salvation they found in Jesus. But ultimately they took Him up on that challenge. Why? Probably because they knew He would be with them, even when it was scary.
  - In this psalm, David described the way God was always with him, hearing his prayers, protecting him, and helping him because that's who God is.
  - The disciples understood that no matter what danger they faced, they could find the courage to share the good news of Jesus with the world because God would never leave them alone.
- Jesus challenged His friends and followers to share their stories of faith wherever they went because the world needed to know about the light of God's good news and salvation. Jesus is giving you and me to that same challenge.
  - You don't have to be a professional speaker to preach the good news of Jesus. All you need to do is share what Jesus has done for you.
  - You don't need a doctoral degree in the Bible or a lifetime of learning. All you need is your own story of faith and a desire to share the good news that has changed your life.
  - Even if you're still deciding what you think about Jesus, that's okay! You still have a story to share.
  - Just like the way our small habits can change our lives in unexpected ways, the tiny habit of sharing our faith can encourage and inspire someone to follow Jesus and change their life forever.
- The tiny habits we're talking about in this series can impact our lives far beyond anything we thought possible. What do you think could happen to your faith, and to the people around you, if you **made it a habit to share your faith story?**

## NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Romans 1:16. Have you ever felt ashamed to talk about God with someone? Why or why not?**
  - ★ **Do you think there's a wrong way to talk about your faith with someone? Why do you think so?**

### HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY

- This habit might be the toughest to start because we get caught up worrying how we'll be perceived by others. We start second-guessing ourselves.
  - Maybe we don't see our own value and think, "Other people have better things to say than me, so I'll just stay quiet."
  - Maybe we feel like we can't make difference and think no one will benefit from what we have to say.
  - Maybe we're still trying to figure out what we think about Jesus and assume this habit is only for people who've got it figured out.
  - Maybe we feel unprepared to have the perfect story to tell so we hold off on letting people into our imperfect lives.
- But Jesus is inviting every one of us to make it a habit to share our faith stories. No matter where you're at in your faith, you have a story to tell. You can always make it a habit to share where you're at in your journey of getting to know Jesus.
  - Think about your friends, teammates, classmates, bandmates, or family members. We all need to hear other people's faith stories because we all need to be pointed toward Jesus, the source of light, joy, and hope.
  - How amazing would it be to see one of your friends or family members started their journey of faith alongside you, in part, because you made it a habit to share your story?

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ★ **How do you think we can start faith conversations that feel natural and authentic (not forced or uncomfortable)?**
  - ★ **What is your faith story so far?**

## DISCUSSION | Short Stories

- Sharing your faith story doesn't have to take a long time or be a major ordeal. Your story can be shared in tiny moments over time! Sharing your story can be prompted by a simple question, like . . .
  - Who is Jesus to you?
  - Has God ever given you hope in a dark time?
  - How has your life changed since you heard about Jesus?
  - Has God ever helped you grow in patience, kindness, or courage?
  - What gifts has God given you?
  - What prayer has God answered?
  - What are you learning about God right now?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set a two-minute timer and have students turn to their neighbor and answer one of the questions you just listed in 60 seconds or less.
- See? Sharing your faith story doesn't have to be complicated and it doesn't have to be your entire life story. Sharing your faith story can be as simple as a 60-second story about something God has done, or is currently doing, in your life.
- Even if you just made a decision for Jesus yesterday or you're still deciding what you think about Jesus, this is something we can all do!

## IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- In case you missed it last week, habit stacking is a really easy and effective way to develop new habits. All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **"After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."**
- You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the image provided in your Week 3 folder.

## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- So first, choose a habit you want to develop and then try to attach it to a habit you already have. Let's think about those daily routines that would be great to start stacking from, like putting your phone onto its charger or sitting down at your lunch table.
  - "Before I put my phone on the charger, I will message someone and ask how I can pray for them."
  - "After I get out of bed, I'll ask God to show me someone to share my faith story with today."
  - "Before I leave for church each week, I'll call a friend and ask if they want to come with me."
  - "After I notice God do something cool, I'll share it with three friends."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.

- If your first block is your current habit (like putting your phone on its charger), and your second block is your new habit (like asking a friend if you can pray for them), what kind of transformation do you think could take place?
  - You can't control how someone responds to your story of faith when you share it. The only thing you can do is share. But in the process, someone will always be transformed. Sometimes it will be them and sometimes it will be you.
  - When you share your story, it might encourage others to start their own journey with God, but it will definitely help you grow in your faith and get clearer about who God is to you.
- Your story matters because it is evidence of God's light and good news in your life. Even when our stories are imperfect and unfinished, our stories can help others discover the truth of God's love. So this week, let's **make it a habit to share our stories.**

## DISCUSSION

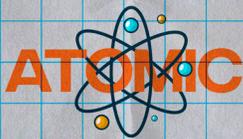
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you share your faith story? How will you do it?**

**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_

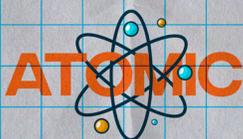


**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

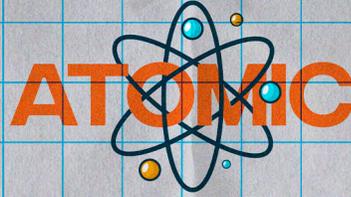
\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



## WEEK 4 SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to worship with your life.

### THE BIBLE

Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63;  
James 2:14-17

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Frisbee

- Welcome to our final week of Atomic, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but we're going to raise the stakes by (once again) making this game miniature-sized.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a [frisbee](#) and either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds of ultimate frisbee with as many students as you'd like but make your playing area small enough that the frisbee cannot be thrown very far and the game overall is fast-paced.*

#### ACTIVITY | Passion Charades

- Wow, some of you are pretty passionate about ultimate frisbee . . . and some of you couldn't care less. But that's okay! We're passionate about something, right? Maybe it's . . .
  - A sport.
  - An instrument you play.
  - Creating new things, like inventions or art or funny videos.
  - A subject like math or writing.
  - A book series you've read a hundred times.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite a few students to the front to act out one of their passions (like a type of music, or hobbies, or interests) while the other students try to guess what they're doing. Just make sure to ask what they're going to act out before they start so you can make sure it's appropriate.*

## VIDEO | A Clip of Beatlemania

- We're all passionate about something, but sometimes we're *really* passionate. There was a craze that swept the entire world in the 1960s. Let's see if you can guess what it was.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (1:20-1:49) of a crowd screaming and chasing The Beatles. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- **Does anyone know what all of these people were so passionate about?** The Beatles! These days, it might be common to see people get totally obsessed with certain celebrities or musicians, but this was the first time the world had seen anything like this on this scale.

## STORY | Talk about something you're obsessed with.

- It's cool to be passionate about something, but sometimes the things we love can actually become objects of worship.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about sometime you maybe got a little bit obsessed with, like your Buffalo Bills hat collection, reality shows, or reading fan theories about your favorite movie franchise.*
- Okay, that example was actually pretty harmless, but there are things we can get pretty obsessed with that become more harmful. Sometimes we develop habits that lead to spending our time thinking about, looking at, and spending our time and energy on things that aren't exactly the best things.
  - Over the last couple of weeks, we've been talking our habits — some good, some bad, and some neutral.
  - We've also talked about the habits we can add to our lives that will help us grow in our relationship with God: spending time with God, investing in our relationships, and sharing our faith stories.
  - Today we're going to finish our series by talking about the things we worship. We all worship something, but based on your habits, what is it that you worship?

## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

## QUESTION | How do you know if you worship something?

- Whether it's God, BTS, sports, or your girlfriend, **how do you know if you worship something?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- **When you worship something, you can usually tell through your actions. You might . . .**
  - Hang pictures of it in your locker.
  - Talk about it a lot.
  - Give it a lot of your time, energy, and attention.
  - Make sacrifices for it.
- God cares about what we worship! It's probably no surprise that I'm going to suggest worshipping God is a good idea, but does that mean we can't spend time and energy on anything else? Do we have to give up any hobby we get a little bit obsessed with? Of course not! But we can develop habits that help us give God our worship — and not just when we're at church.

## SCRIPTURE | Colossians 3:12-17

- There's a passage in the book of Colossians (written by the apostle Paul) that can help us figure out what this word "worship" really means — and how we can make it a habit.
  - Paul was an early follower of Jesus. He traveled all over the world sharing the good news and story of Jesus through sermons and letters.
  - All of these letters guided believers to understand how God wanted them to live, how to treat one another, and how to follow God. Some of them even ended up in the Bible.
  - One of those letters was written to a church in Colossae. In it, Paul advised those believers on how to live out their faith.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Colossians 3:12-17.*
- Everything described in this passage is worship to God. Maybe when you think of worship, you think of singing or praying or reading the Bible. But in this passage, Paul said that worship can be so much more than that! Worship can be . . .
  - Showing compassion.
  - Being kind.
  - Being humble.
  - Being gentle.
  - Being patient.
  - Forgiving someone who's hurt you.
  - And yes, worship can be done by singing songs too.
- This is a pretty big list! But in everything he listed here, Paul had two very important focuses — love for others and thankfulness to God.
  - **We can worship God by loving others.** When we're compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, and forgiving with each other, it can actually be an act of worship to God. That means worship isn't just something that happens privately between you and God. Worship requires you to love others.
  - **We can worship God by being thankful.** Singing worship songs isn't the only way to tell God "thank you." Everything we do and say, Paul says, can be done with a spirit of thankfulness for what God has done for us through Jesus.
- The reason Paul said to never forget about love is because love is the power and energy behind all of our worship. When we live a life of worship, we pull the thread of God's love through every part of our lives.

## SCRIPTURE | Psalm 63

- If we ever want to understand worship better, the book of Psalms is always a great place to go. King David is said to have written many of the songs and poems contained in the book of Psalms, and they're all songs of worship.
  - The passage we're about to read was written by David while he was in the desert of Judah. It's a song of worship that expresses his commitment to God and celebrates God's character.

- Even though David wrote many poems and songs about God, there are few that describe how committed David was to God than this one.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read some or all of Psalm 63.*
- David said God was his desire above everything else in his life! Do you hear how confident and sure David was of that? But how could he be so sure? What reason did David give for all of this? Look at what he said in verse three: “Because God’s love is better than life.”
- Wow! That’s saying a lot. Whether or not you believe in Jesus or have started following him, think about this for a second. David says God’s love is better than anything else.
  - Your favorite sport? God’s love is better.
  - Your favorite music? God’s love is better.
  - The person you can’t stop thinking about all day? God’s love is better.
- No matter what else competes for your love and attention, God’s love is better. It’s better, it’s better, it’s better!

### STORY | Talk about a time you were given an amazing gift.

- If you’re wondering what David meant when he said his lips would “glorify” God, let me see if I can explain. “Glorify” might seem like a confusing word, but let me explain it with a story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story about a time you were given an amazing gift and wanted to tell everyone about it. Say something like, “I couldn’t help but tell everyone how great this gift was,” or, “I wanted everyone to know about the person who gave me this gift.”*
- That’s what it means to glorify something – to think and talk about how amazing something (or someone) is. That is also what it looks like to glorify (or worship) the God we love and are so thankful for.
- So worship is about loving God and loving others. When we allow love to be a part of everything we do, we are worshiping God. Our worship then becomes something that not only changes our life but the lives of everyone around us.
  - When we show love to others, it has the potential to transform our lives and theirs too. Some people don’t believe they are worthy of that kind of love because they have never been shown it before. You can worship God by loving others.
  - When we show love to God by being thankful and giving God glory, it’s not just out of obligation. When we go to God in worship, God transforms us from the inside out.
- The tiny habits we’re talking about in this series can impact our lives far beyond anything we thought possible. So what do you think could happen to your faith, and to the people you choose to love, if you **made it a habit to worship God with your life?**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

### QUESTION | “How can you worship God in two minutes or less?”

- Now I want to turn it to you. Let’s get creative about how you could make it a habit to worship God, but let’s think of examples we could do quickly, because that might help us turn our worship into a habit. **How can you worship God in two minutes or less?**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give students time to respond. Encourage examples like . . .
  - Pray for two minutes as soon as your alarm goes off.
  - Send a text to a friend who needs encouragement.
  - Sing your favorite worship song as you get ready for bed.
  - Send a message to someone at church and ask if there's anywhere you can serve.
  - Pray for your school as you walk between classes.
  - Start a conversation with someone who seems like they need a friend.

## IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- In case you missed it last week, habit stacking is a really easy and effective way to develop new habits. All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **"After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."**
- You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the image provided in your Week 4 folder.
- If you've been here for the last few weeks, you know we've already done a bunch of habit-stacking with three (and now four) spiritual habits.
  - The first habit we wanted to add to our daily routine was spending more time with God, because the more time we spend with God, the more we can be transformed into the image of Jesus.
  - The second habit we wanted to add to our routines was to invest in our relationships, because our relationships have a big impact on us, and we can have a big impact on others through our relationships.
  - The third habit we wanted to add to our routines was to share our faith stories more often, because sharing our stories helps us (and others) grow – even when we're not sure what to say or if we're qualified to talk about Jesus yet.
- Now this week, let's see if we can add this final habit into our daily routines, because this habit of worshipping with our whole lives brings everything else together.

## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.
- If this first block is your natural habit (like walking to class), and your second block is your new habit (like asking God to show you who needs love and encouragement that day) what kind of transformation do you think could take place in your life and faith?
  - Remember how, at the beginning of our time together, some of you stood up here and acted out some of your passions?
  - If I were to ask you to act out your daily habits in front of everyone, what would they guess you are most passionate about?

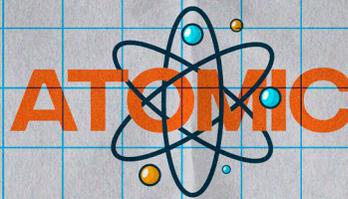
- If your current habits don't currently reflect a life of worship to God, it's never too late to start developing a new habit.
- Whether you're at church, at school, walking, eating, shopping, playing football, doing homework, or hanging with friends, you always have opportunities to honor and connect with God through worship. So this week, how will you **make it a habit to worship with your life?**

### MUSIC | "Graves Into Gardens" (Elevation Worship)

- As we close this series in a song, pay attention to the line, "Nothing is better than You." Let that be the song of worship you sing all week long – not just with your lips, but with your life.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play the song "Graves Into Gardens" (Elevation Worship), but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a link to preview the song for your personal use.*

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

### THIS WEEK

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

Make it a habit to worship with your life.

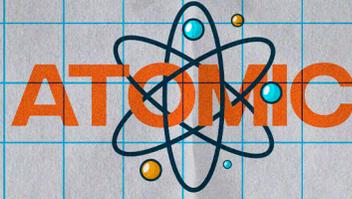
#### **THE BIBLE**

Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63;  
James 2:14-17

- **What's something unique that you're really passionate about?**
- **What do you think the difference is between being passionate about something and worshiping something?**
- **What do you think it means to worship something (or someone)?**
- **What are some specific ways we can worship God on our own? With others?**
- **Have you ever had a meaningful worship experience with God? What happened and why was it meaningful?**
- **What misconceptions do you think people sometimes have about worship?**
- **What are some specific ways we can worship God by loving other people?**
- **Why do you think loving others counts as an act of worship to God?**
- **Read James 2:14-17. Do you agree with James? Why or why not?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you worship with your life? How will you do it?**

# WEEK 4

SMALL GROUP GUIDE  
for middle schoolers



Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life, for good or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? In this 4-week series, we'll discover some principles from Scripture that have the power to help you develop tiny habits that can make a big impact — habits like **spending time with God, investing in your relationships, sharing your faith story, and worshiping with your life.**

## THIS WEEK

### **THE BIG IDEA**

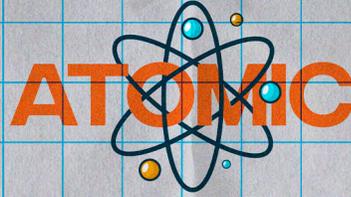
Make it a habit to worship with your life.

### **THE BIBLE**

Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63;  
James 2:14-17

- **What's something unique that you're really passionate about?**
- **What do you think the difference is between being passionate about something and worshiping something?**
- **What are some specific ways we can worship God on our own? With others?**
- **What are some specific ways we can worship God by loving other people?**
- **Read James 2:14-17. Do you agree with James? Why or why not?**
- **This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you worship with your life? How will you do it?**

## WEEK 4 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

Make it a habit to worship with your life.

### THE BIBLE

Colossians 3:14-17; Psalm 63;  
James 2:14-17

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Atomic Frisbee

- Welcome to our final week of Atomic, where we're talking about how tiny things can make a huge difference. Let's play a quick game, but we're going to raise the stakes by (once again) making this game miniature-sized.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game you'll need a [frisbee](#) and either a bunch of [cones](#), [rope](#), or [masking tape](#) to mark your boundaries. Play a few rounds of ultimate frisbee with as many students as you'd like but make your playing area small enough that the frisbee cannot be thrown very far and the game overall is fast-paced.*

#### ACTIVITY | Passion Charades

- Wow, some of you are pretty passionate about ultimate frisbee . . . and some of you couldn't care less. But that's okay! We're are passionate about something, right? Maybe it's . . .
  - A sport.
  - An instrument you play.
  - Creating new things, like inventions or art or funny videos.
  - A subject like math or writing.
  - A book series you've read a hundred times.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite a few students to the front to act out one of their passions (like a type of music, or hobbies, or interests) while the other students try to guess what they're doing. Just make sure to ask what they're going to act out before they start so you can make sure it's appropriate.*

## VIDEO | A Clip of Beatlemania

- We're all passionate about something, but sometimes we're *really* passionate. There was a craze that swept the entire world in the 1960s. Let's see if you can guess what it was.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (1:20-1:49) of a crowd screaming and chasing The Beatles. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- **Does anyone know what all of these people were so passionate about?** The Beatles! These days, it might be common to see people get totally obsessed with certain celebrities or musicians, but this was the first time the world had seen anything like this on this scale.

## STORY | Talk about something you're obsessed with.

- It's cool to be passionate about something, but sometimes the things we love can actually become objects of worship.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about sometime you maybe got a little bit obsessed with, like your Buffalo Bills hat collection, reality shows, or reading fan theories about your favorite movie franchise.*
- Okay, that example was actually pretty harmless, but there are things we can get pretty obsessed with that become more harmful. Sometimes we develop habits that lead to spending our time thinking about, looking at, and spending our time and energy on things that aren't exactly the best things.
  - Over the last couple of weeks, we've been talking our habits — some good, some bad, and some neutral.
  - We've also talked about the habits we can add to our lives that will help us grow in our relationship with God: spending time with God, investing in our relationships, and sharing our faith stories.
  - Today we're going to finish our series by talking about the things we worship. We all worship something, but based on your habits, what is it that you worship?

## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **What's something unique that you're really passionate about?**
  - **What do you think the difference is between being passionate about something and worshiping something?**
  - ★ **What do you think it means to worship something (or someone)?**

## QUESTION | How do you know if you worship something?

- Whether it's God, BTS, sports, or your girlfriend, **how do you know if you worship something?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- **When you worship something, you can usually tell through your actions. You might . . .**
  - Hang pictures of it in your locker.
  - Talk about it a lot.
  - Give it a lot of your time, energy, and attention.
  - Make sacrifices for it.
- God cares about what we worship! It's probably no surprise that I'm going to suggest worshipping God is a good idea, but does that mean we can't spend time and energy on anything else? Do we have to give up any hobby we get a little bit obsessed with? Of course not! But we can develop habits that help us give God our worship — and not just when we're at church.

## SCRIPTURE | Colossians 3:12-17

- There's a passage in the book of Colossians (written by the apostle Paul) that can help us figure out what this word "worship" really means — and how we can make it a habit.
  - Paul was an early follower of Jesus. He traveled all over the world sharing the good news and story of Jesus through sermons and letters.
  - All of these letters guided believers to understand how God wanted them to live, how to treat one another, and how to follow God. Some of them even ended up in the Bible.
  - One of those letters was written to a church in Colossae. In it, Paul advised those believers on how to live out their faith.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Colossians 3:12-17.
- Everything described in this passage is worship to God. Maybe when you think of worship, you think of singing or praying or reading the Bible. But in this passage, Paul said that worship can be so much more than that! Worship can be . . .
  - Showing compassion.
  - Being kind.
  - Being humble.
  - Being gentle.
  - Being patient.
  - Forgiving someone who's hurt you.
  - And yes, worship can be done by singing songs too.
- This is a pretty big list! But in everything he listed here, Paul had two very important focuses — love for others and thankfulness to God.
  - **We can worship God by loving others.** When we're compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, and forgiving with each other, it can actually be an act of worship to God. That means worship isn't just something that happens privately between you and God. Worship requires you to love others.

- **We can worship God by being thankful.** Singing worship songs isn't the only way to tell God "thank you." Everything we do and say, Paul says, can be done with a spirit of thankfulness for what God has done for us through Jesus.
- The reason Paul said to never forget about love is because love is the power and energy behind all of our worship. When we live a life of worship, we pull the thread of God's love through every part of our lives.

## SCRIPTURE | Psalm 63

- If we ever want to understand worship better, the book of Psalms is always a great place to go. King David is said to have written many of the songs and poems contained in the book of Psalms, and they're all songs of worship.
  - The passage we're about to read was written by David while he was in the desert of Judah. It's a song of worship that expresses his commitment to God and celebrates God's character.
  - Even though David wrote many poems and songs about God, there are few that describe how committed David was to God than this one.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read some or all of Psalm 63.*
- David said God was his desire above everything else in his life! Do you hear how confident and sure David was of that? But how could he be so sure? What reason did David give for all of this? Look at what he said in verse three: "Because God's love is better than life."
- Wow! That's saying a lot. Whether or not you believe in Jesus or have started following him, think about this for a second. David says God's love is better than anything else.
  - Your favorite sport? God's love is better.
  - Your favorite music? God's love is better.
  - The person you can't stop thinking about all day? God's love is better.
- No matter what else competes for your love and attention, God's love is better. It's better, it's better, it's better!

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **What are some specific ways we can worship God on our own? With others?**
  - ★ **Have you ever had a meaningful worship experience with God? What happened and why was it meaningful?**

## STORY | Talk about a time you were given an amazing gift.

- If you're wondering what David meant when he said his lips would "glorify" God, let me see if I can explain. "Glorify" might seem like a confusing word, but let me explain it with a story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story about a time you were given an amazing gift and wanted to tell everyone about it. Say something like, "I couldn't help but tell everyone how great this gift was," or, "I wanted everyone to know about the person who gave me this gift."*

- That's what it means to glorify something – to think and talk about how amazing something (or someone) is. That is also what it looks like to glorify (or worship) the God we love and are so thankful for.
- So worship is about loving God and loving others. When we allow love to be a part of everything we do, we are worshipping God. Our worship then becomes something that not only changes our life but the lives of everyone around us.
  - When we show love to others, it has the potential to transform our lives and theirs too. Some people don't believe they are worthy of that kind of love because they have never been shown it before. You can worship God by loving others.
  - When we show love to God by being thankful and giving God glory, it's not just out of obligation. When we go to God in worship, God transforms us from the inside out.
- The tiny habits we're talking about in this series can impact our lives far beyond anything we thought possible. So what do you think could happen to your faith, and to the people you choose to love, if you **made it a habit to worship God with your life?**

### NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

#### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **What misconceptions do you think people sometimes have about worship?**
  - **What are some specific ways we can worship God by loving other people?**
  - ☆ **Why do you think loving others counts as an act of worship to God?**

#### QUESTION | "How can you worship God in two minutes or less?"

- Now I want to turn it to you. Let's get creative about how you could make it a habit to worship God, but let's think of examples we could do quickly, because that might help us turn our worship into a habit. **How can you worship God in two minutes or less?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give students time to respond. Encourage examples like . . .*
  - *Pray for two minutes as soon as your alarm goes off.*
  - *Send a text to a friend who needs encouragement.*
  - *Sing your favorite worship song as you get ready for bed.*
  - *Send a message to someone at church and ask if there's anywhere you can serve.*
  - *Pray for your school as you walk between classes.*
  - *Start a conversation with someone who seems like they need a friend.*

#### IMAGE | Habit Stacking

- In case you missed it last week, habit stacking is a really easy and effective way to develop new habits. All we need to do is follow a simple formula: **"After/before I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."**

- You already have a ton of habits that you do every day. If you want to add a new habit to your routine, an easy way to do it is to attach it to a habit you already do.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 4 folder.*
- If you've been here for the last few weeks, you know we've already done a bunch of habit-stacking with three (and now four) spiritual habits.
  - The first habit we wanted to add to our daily routine was spending more time with God, because the more time we spend with God, the more we can be transformed into the image of Jesus.
  - The second habit we wanted to add to our routines was to invest in our relationships, because our relationships have a big impact on us, and we can have a big impact on others through our relationships.
  - The third habit we wanted to add to our routines was to share our faith stories more often, because sharing our stories helps us (and others) grow — even when we're not sure what to say or if we're qualified to talk about Jesus yet.
- Now this week, let's see if we can add this final habit into our daily routines, because this habit of worshiping with our whole lives brings everything else together.

## RESPONSE | Habit Stacking Blocks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give every student three small connectable building blocks like [these](#) or [these](#), along with a permanent marker. Invite them to write one habit they want to develop on one block, a habit they already have on the second block, and the word "transformation" on the third block. Do the same from the front with three [jumbo building blocks](#), connect them in a sequence (with "transformation" on top), and share your own stack.*
- If this first block is your natural habit (like walking to class), and your second block is your new habit (like asking God to show you who needs love and encouragement that day) what kind of transformation do you think could take place in your life and faith?
  - Remember how, at the beginning of our time together, some of you stood up here and acted out some of your passions?
  - If I were to ask you to act out your daily habits in front of everyone, what would they guess you are most passionate about?
  - If your current habits don't currently reflect a life of worship to God, it's never too late to start developing a new habit.
- Whether you're at church, at school, walking, eating, shopping, playing football, doing homework, or hanging with friends, you always have opportunities to honor and connect with God through worship. So this week, how will you **make it a habit to worship with your life?**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read James 2:14-17. Do you agree with James? Why or why not?**

- This week, what's one habit you want to develop to help you worship with your life? How will you do it?

### MUSIC | "Graves Into Gardens" (Elevation Worship)

- As we close this series in a song, pay attention to the line, "Nothing is better than You." Let that be the song of worship you sing all week long – not just with your lips, but with your life.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play the song "Graves Into Gardens" (Elevation Worship), but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a link to preview the song for your personal use.*

**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**AFTER/BEFORE I**

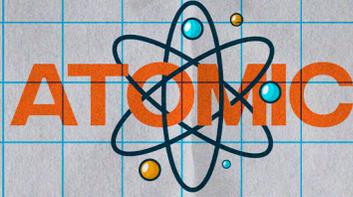
\_\_\_\_\_ ,

**I WILL**

\_\_\_\_\_



**ONE-MINUTE**  
SERMON SCRIPTS



## ONE-MINUTE SERMONS

After you teach each week, we recommend **filming a video of yourself re-teaching your message in one minute or less**. Then post it on social media! We've written the beginnings of a script for you each week, and we've also filmed complete [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) for you too, in partnership with [Rescue a Generation](#). Make your own or post ours — whatever you want!

### WEEK 1

Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them. Whether you've got good habits (like getting enough sleep or remembering to floss) or bad habits (like biting your nails or checking your phone too often), most of your habits are probably small, tiny, hardly noticeable habits. But over time, those tiny habits can really impact your life — for good, or bad. So what about your spiritual habits? What are the small things you do every day that either draw you closer to God or keep you at a distance? To answer that, let's take a look at Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples. Peter was definitely not a perfect Jesus-follower, but he made it a habit to be close to Jesus. In fact, he spent so much time with Jesus that God eventually used him to do some pretty big things in the world. Which makes you think, "What could Jesus do in my life if I **made it a habit to spend time with God?**"

### WEEK 2

Let's talk relationships. Family, friends, mentors, coaches — you get the idea. There are a lot of people in your life, but not every relationship is equal. Like, there are some people you only know from the hallways or social media, and people who you like but don't often see, and people you laugh and have fun with but don't usually have very deep conversations with. And then there are your inner-circle people. The ones who'll always answer your "I-need-someone-to-talk-to" texts. The people who have the biggest impact on your life and faith because of how much they invest in you. Scripture makes it clear that we were created for relationships — with God and each other. In many ways, our relationships with others can have huge impacts on our relationships with God. Especially the relationships that are closest to us. Which makes you think, "How could my faith grow if I **made it a habit to invest in my relationships?**"

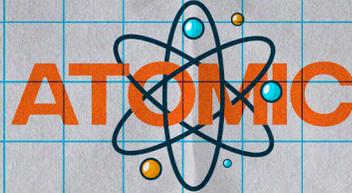
## WEEK 3

Everyone loves a good story. Whether it's an epic quest, a romantic love story, or the classic good-guy-defeating-the-bad-guy thing, we love to hear good stories because we can see our own stories reflected in them. And yes, you have a story too! Your story is a combination of all of your good times and bad times, your wins, your losses, and everything in between. Your story may not seem particularly interesting or special to you right now, but your story could actually change someone's life. Seriously. Especially when Jesus is part of your story. In the Bible, you see Jesus inviting the people He met to share their stories of faith with others. Even when their stories were imperfect and unfinished, their stories helped others discover the truth of God's love. Which should make you wonder, "Who could I impact if I **made it a habit to share my faith story?**"

## WEEK 4

To some people, "worship" is just a genre of music or that thing you do on Sundays before the sermon. It's something that happens inside the walls of a church, or when there is music involved, or when your eyes are closed and hands are raised. Yes, all of this is worship, but it's not all that worship is. In fact, you can worship God while doing all sorts of things, as long as what you're doing is meant to bring God glory. That's how the apostle Paul describes it. He wrote most of the New Testament of the Bible, and he once said that whatever we do or say, we can do it for God's glory. So whether we're at church, at school, walking, eating, shopping, playing football, doing homework, or hanging with friends, we always have opportunities to honor and connect with God through worship. Which should hopefully make you wonder, "In what ways can I **make it a habit to worship with my life?**"

## MARKETING CHECKLIST



### BEFORE THE SERIES

#### ✓ TO DO

	Print your <b>Series Promo Poster</b> and <b>Series Promo Cards</b> and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your <b>Volunteer Hub</b> and <b>Parent Hub</b> web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the <b>Parent Email</b> for this series.
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the <b>suggested Social Media Posts and Captions</b> for this series.
	Post the <b>Bumper Video</b> on social media with this caption:  Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them in our new series called Atomic!

### AFTER WEEK 1

#### ✓ TO DO

	Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 1 on social media with this caption:  In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Atomic we talked about how to make spending time with God a habit. Here's a recap.
	Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption:  Remember, whether it's through learning, prayer, worship, or all three, make it a habit to spend time with God this week!
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 2 of Atomic we talked about how we can make investing in other people a habit. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, if we want to grow closer to God over time, we need to take a look at the people we're growing closer to over time.</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 3 of Atomic we talked about how we can make sharing our faith stories a habit. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, our faith stories can help others discover the truth of God's love. So start sharing!</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

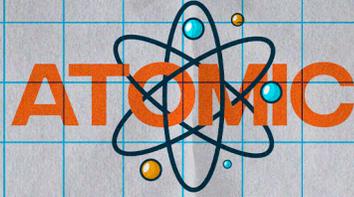
AFTER WEEK 4

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Atomic we talked about how we can make worshiping with our lives a habit. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, no matter what you're doing, you always have opportunities to honor and connect with God through worship. This week, how will you do that?</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

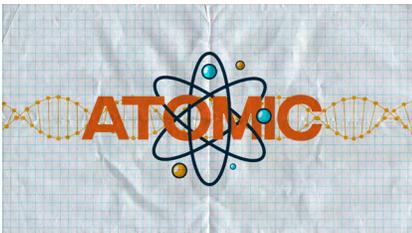
# Grow students

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS



Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

### BEFORE THE SERIES



#### BUMPER VIDEO

Habits! We all have them, so let's talk about them in our new series called Atomic!

### AFTER WEEK 1



#### 1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 1)

In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Atomic we talked about how to make spending time with God a habit. Here's a recap.

### AFTER WEEK 2



#### 1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 2)

In case you missed it, in Week 2 of Atomic we talked about how we can make investing in other people a habit. Here's a recap.



#### BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)

Remember, whether it's through learning, prayer, worship, or all three, make it a habit to spend time with God this week!



#### BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)

Remember, if we want to grow closer to God over time, we need to take a look at the people we're growing closer to over time.

AFTER WEEK 3



**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 3)**

In case you missed it, in Week 3 of Atomic we talked about how we can make sharing our faith stories a habit. Here's a recap.

AFTER WEEK 4



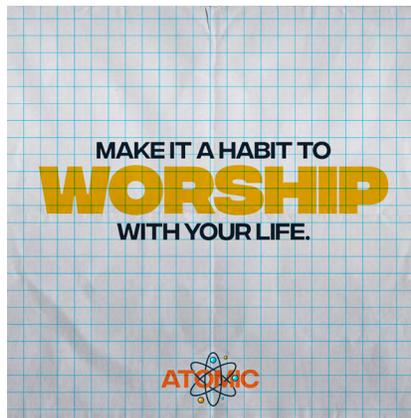
**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 4)**

In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Atomic we talked about how we can make worshipping with our lives a habit. Here's a recap.



**BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)**

Remember, our faith stories can help others discover the truth of God's love. So start sharing!

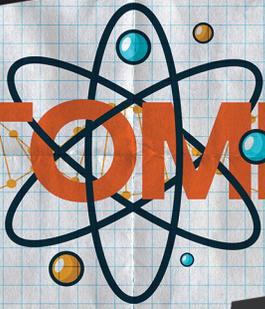


**BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)**

Remember, no matter what you're doing, you always have opportunities to honor and connect with God through worship. This week, how will you do that?

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

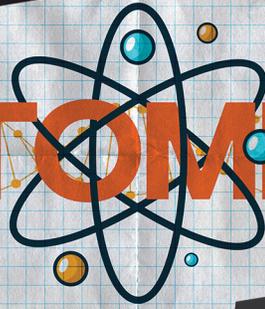
ATOMIC



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

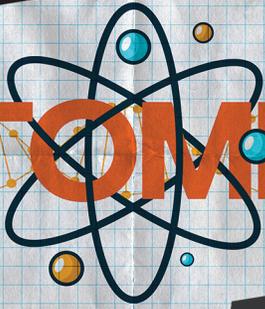
ATOMIC



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

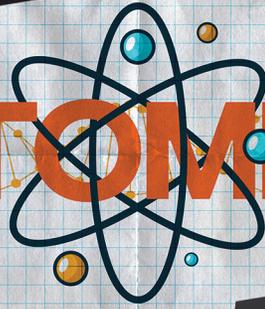
ATOMIC



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

ATOMIC



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE