



A 4-WEEK
STUDY FROM
HEBREWS ON

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*



CATALYST



WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED WITH . . .

**MUNYOKI MULWA, CAITLYN SMELSER &
JOSH SAMARCO**

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CATALYST

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Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

WEEK 1

This week, we'll combine the definition of "faith" from the book of Hebrews with James' reminder that faith requires actions and not just belief.

- **BIG IDEA:** Faith is a catalyst for action.
- **BIBLE:** Hebrews 11:1-22; James 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:7

WEEK 2

This week, we'll see what the book of Hebrews says about how we can help each other grow in faith, using the story of Moses leading Israel out of Egypt as an example.

- **BIG IDEA:** The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.
- **BIBLE:** Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

WEEK 3

This week, we'll explore what the books of Hebrews and Matthew reveal about Jesus' role as our "great high priest."

- **BIG IDEA:** Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.
- **BIBLE:** Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 27:51; John 3:16-17

WEEK 4

This week, we'll be challenged by the author of Hebrews to put our faith into action by practicing compassion for others.

- **BIG IDEA:** We can be a catalyst for change.
- **BIBLE:** Hebrews 10:19-25, 12:1, 13:1-3; James 2:26

MEMORY VERSE: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."
– Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

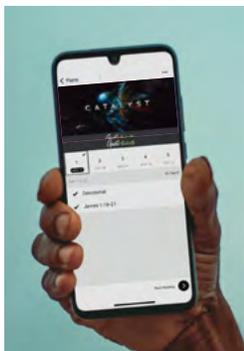
HOW TO DISCIPLE DURING THIS SERIES

We all know teenagers don't get disciplined just by sitting through a message every week. So here's what else we've provided to **help your students develop more consistent spiritual habits**.

THE 4 SPIRITUAL HABITS

We feature one of Grow's 4 Spiritual Habits every month with a unique activity or experience. But the 4 Spiritual Habits show up year-round! **Here are a few of the places you can spot them in this series:**

- **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** While this entire series is focused on a student's personal relationship with God, in Week 3, they'll specifically be challenged to evaluate their relationship with God, make a decision to follow Jesus, or recommit to following Jesus.
- **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** Week 2 is all about how others can help us grow, so students will be encouraged to learn from others' faith and maybe even invite someone to mentor them.
- **USE YOUR GIFTS:** Weeks 1 and 4 are all about turning our faith into action, and those actions include using our gifts to give back to God and serve others.
- **SHARE YOUR STORY:** Throughout this series, students will be encouraged to have conversations about how their faith stories are developing so far. In Week 4, they'll be challenged to share their faith by loving others well.

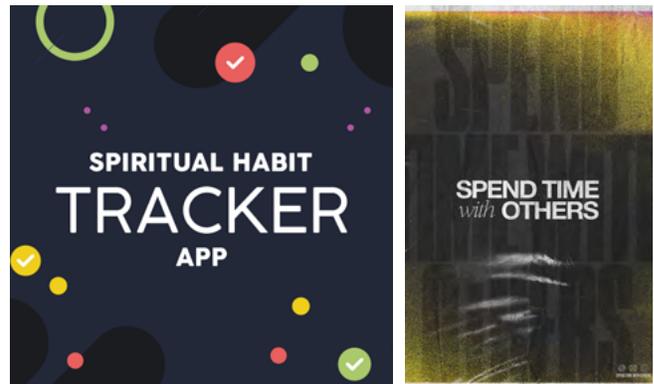


DEVOTIONALS

To help students regularly **spend time with God**, every series comes with daily readings and devotionals through The Bible App. You can access them on your browser or app [right here](#). And don't forget about your [Volunteer Devotional!](#)

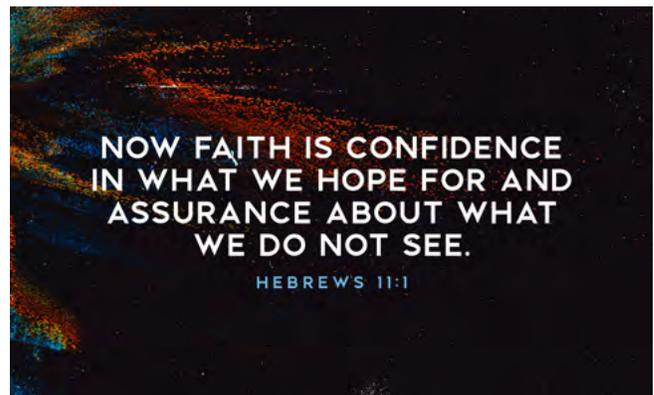
DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITY

If you're following along with our scope and sequence, our discipleship activity this quarter is **Spiritual Habit Tracker App**, an activity to help students **spend time with others**. We also made you some [posters and graphics](#) for this quarter's habit you can print, display, or share online.



MEMORY VERSE

Try challenging students to memorize a verse that corresponds with the Big Ideas or themes of this series. Here's the verse we chose — and [we made graphics](#) you can post, print, or show on screen too!



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

For this series, we're giving our rooms a science class theme! In the background, set up a large television (preferably on a classroom-style A/V cart like [this one](#) or [this one](#)) and play the bumper video we've provided for this series on a loop. You can find this in the Graphics & Videos folder in your downloads.

Next, you'll need a rectangular table filled with props you might find in a science class, like [lava lamps](#), [beakers](#), [test tubes](#), [goggles](#), [lab coats](#), and [microscopes](#). And if you want to take things to the next level, add dry ice to a beaker and let the fog from the ice dissipate from the beaker while you teach.

Lastly, you'll need a large chalk board or [white board](#) where you can display the Big Idea for each week. We suggest writing the Big Ideas on the board as you reveal them in your teaching time (like a teacher might), or writing them on the board in advance, but keeping them covered until it's time to reveal them.



GAMES

If you have a designated time for games before your worship and teaching time, we have a few suggestions for games you can play! Since this series talks a lot about science terms like "catalysts," the games for this series are all science-themed!

To get the instructions and graphics for each game, click the images to the right or visit the Games section of your Grow Students dashboard.

- [Periodic Table of Questions](#)
- [Catalytic Juicing](#)
- [Schrödinger's Box](#)
- [Historical Catalysts](#)

MUSIC

Here are a few on-theme worship songs you may want to feature throughout this series . . .

- **"All Things"** (ARISE Worship)
- **"Lost In Your Love"** (Brandon Lake)
- **"Yes He Can"** (Cain)
- **"So Will I** (100 Billion X)" (Cross Worship)
- **"Famous For** (I Believe)" (Jenn Johnson and Tauren Wells)
- **"When You Speak"** (Jeremy Camp)
- **"I Will Trust"** (Red Rocks Worship)
- **"This Is A Move"** (Tasha Cobbs Leonard)
- **"While I'm Waiting"** (Travis Greene)
- **"Look What You've Done"** (Tasha Layton)

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 . . .

- **"Into the Mystery"** (NEEDTOBREATHE)
- **"Save Me"** (Derek Minor)
- **"Be Alright"** (Danny Gokey, Evan Craft, and Redimi2)
- **"Come What May"** (We Are Messengers)
- **"Keep On Keeping On"** (Colony House)

We've added these songs to our [Grow Students \(Volume 6\) 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!](#)

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! Download it [here](#).

**DISTINCT STYLE
SANS BOLD**

And use these colors!

	HEX: #B1ADB0 CMYK: 30-26-25-00
	HEX: #46949D CMYK: 73-27-36-1
	HEX: #BC4F1C CMYK: 19-80-100-9
	HEX: #7E9DAC CMYK: 54-29-26-00

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS SERIES

SHOPPING LIST

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:

- [Eight-ounce water bottles](#)
- [Vegetable oil](#)
- [Food coloring](#)
- [Alka Seltzer tablet](#)
- [Buckets](#)
- Disposable cups
- The handouts provided in your Week 1 folder

WEEK 2:

- [Clear glass container](#)
- [Hydrogen peroxide](#)
- [Dish soap](#)
- [Food coloring](#)
- Either [yeast](#) or [potassium iodide](#)
- [Newton's Cradle](#)
- The handouts provided in your Week 2 folder

WEEK 3:

- [Tarp](#)
- Poncho
- Safety pin
- Fishing line
- [Regular mint Mentos](#)
- A short clip (1:00-2:30) from "[Jesus the Royal Priest](#)" by BibleProject
- An image [like this one](#)
- The handouts provided in your Week 3 folder

WEEK 4:

- [Empty plastic soda bottle](#)
- Three [pencils](#)
- A [cork](#)
- Some [duct tape](#)
- Toilet paper
- [Vinegar](#)
- [Baking soda](#)
- A short clip from a video like [this one](#) (0:00-1:02) of the world record for largest human mattress dominoes
- A person to interview
- The handouts provided in your Week 4 folder

PREP LIST

WEEK 1:

- Set up a space to create your **DIY Lava Lamps**. See your Week 1 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Set up a space to play **Catalyst Relay Challenge or Catalyst Challenge**. See your Week 1 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

WEEK 2:

- Set up a space to play and create **DIY Elephant Toothpaste**. See your Week 2 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Set up a space to play **Copy-Catalysts**. See your Week 2 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Collect images to display for **Your Personal Catalysts**.
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every two students. Cut each handout into halves.

WEEK 3:

- Set up a space to play **Diet Coke and Mentos Roulette**. See your Week 3 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Set up a space to play **Human Dominoes**. See your Week 3 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

WEEK 4:

- Set up a space to create your **Rocket Launch**. See your Week 4 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Prepare for your **Interview With a Catalyst**.
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

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](#).
- **DISCUSSIONS:** If you make any changes to your teaching, make sure your discussion questions reflect those changes. You can edit these using the Word documents provided.
- **GRAPHICS:** We've provided graphics in your [Graphics & Video](#) folder already, but we've also provided blank slides in case you need to make your own.
- **PRESENTATION:** Customize your weekly presentations in [SLIDR](#) and use it to show images and videos during your weekly program. Each week of Grow Curriculum comes pre-loaded with content to get you started.
- **EMAILS & HUBS:** Customize and send the [volunteer and parent emails](#) as well as the [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) content we've provided for this series to keep everyone's grown-ups in the loop.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your students, volunteers, and parents are in the loop, follow along with the Marketing Checklist we've provided for this series to make sure you've got everything covered, like . . .

- **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 parents 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 parents online. And don't forget to update your [Parent Hub](#) with the information they need for this series!
- **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 and make sure they have their Discussion Guides in advance! And don't forget to update your [Volunteer Hub](#) with the information they need for this series!

And hey! When you post on social media, **don't forget to use the #growcurriculum hashtag and tag us @stuffyoucanuse** 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

REVISE

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

In Week 2, for the activity Copy-Catalysts, recruit your first "Catalyst" in advance.

Instead of asking for students to volunteer right when you need them, find one middle schooler in advance who wants to take the lead on this game. Since middle schoolers can sometimes be a little self-conscious, giving them a heads up will help them prepare, make the first round of the game go more smoothly, and give you a chance to brainstorm strategies and actions with them.

When you teach Week 2, explain the idea of a mentor.

In this week, you'll mention the idea of mentors as some of the people who influence our faith. But keep in mind, some of your middle schoolers may not be familiar with this, so you might want to take a few moments to explain and give some examples.

In Week 3, add some props to your Bible teaching.

When you're explaining the concept of a high priest, you may want to add some visuals to help your middle schoolers grasp this abstract concept. Images, physical objects, and hands-on demonstrations associated with the priesthood would all be great additions!

REPLACE

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

In Week 3 and 4, be prepared for some messy science experiments!

The experiments to open these two weeks can potentially cause a mess. Middle schoolers love a mess, but you know your students best — if you think a live demonstration of these experiments could make you lose their focus, replace these live experiments with videos! You could show YouTube videos as a replacement, but do you know what would be even better? If you filmed yourself doing the experiments ahead of time. But if YouTube is easier for you to pull off, for the Coke and Mentos experiment, you could use [this video](#) (1:15-1:40). For the Rocket Launch, you could use [this video](#) (1:15-1:40).

REMEMBER

Remember, as you teach about faith, your middle schoolers are still pretty new at figuring out what they believe and why (or if) it matters to them. Even if they've grown up in church, this is the age where they're just beginning to take ownership of their own faith. So be careful with your assumptions! Rather than assuming your middle schoolers are struggling with their faith, it might be safer to assume they're just getting curious about it for the first time.

HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

REVISE

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

In all four weeks, let high schoolers participate or compete in the opening science experiment activities. Because your high schoolers have more maturity than your middle schoolers (and may have even done some of these science experiments in school), try turning these experiments into small group competitions by having students compete to either complete the experiment the fastest or create the most impressive effect.

In Week 2, make the Newton's cradle object lesson life-sized – and get students involved.

While a normal-sized Newton's cradle will work great, if you have the space and the means, make a life-sized Newton's Cradle out of rope and exercise balls, and ask a few students to come to the front and demonstrate how it works. Depending on your available time and the size of your group, you might even build the Newton's cradle with your students, either in advance or on the spot. Since you're working with high schoolers, the extra responsibility and creativity might be welcome!

In Week 3, look for students who seem to resonate with not feeling close to God. When you share your story about not feeling close with God, remember the high school years are often the first time students begin to push back and ask hard questions about their faith. If this story seems to resonate with your students, be open to where the conversation might lead.

REPLACE

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

In all four weeks, consider swapping the science experiments for videos. If your high school ministry is on the larger size, or your high schoolers aren't typically interested in hands-on activities, try opting for a video or upfront demonstration of each experiment instead. If you'd like to add a little extra fun or humor, try having a high schooler demonstrate or film the experiment so students get a break from hearing you talk!

REMEMBER

Remember that, for many high school students, their relationships with God and others might be complicated or come with a lot of hurt. Especially in Weeks 2 and 4, as you talk about our relationships with God and others, keep some of those students' specific stories in mind to make sure what you're teaching will still resonate with those students specifically.

HACKS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

REVISE

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

Give extra examples and visuals to explain the concept of a catalyst. For some students with learning disabilities or cognitive impairments, they may need additional help understanding what a catalyst is or does. You might say, "If you were sledding and someone pushed you down the hill to get you started, they would be a catalyst. Or if you were already on the way down the hill and someone pushed you again to help you go faster, they would be a catalyst too." For even more concrete examples, check out some science textbooks or educational videos for kids about catalysts!

In Week 2, add a special role to Copy-Catalysts if you have a student who would not otherwise be able to participate. If one of your students might feel left out of this game because of their disabilities, give them a special role to help facilitate the game, like keeping track of the timer during each round.

REPLACE

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

Throughout the series, occasionally replace "catalyst" with other more concrete terms. While many students will be comfortable with these terms (especially once you define them), some students with learning disabilities or cognitive delays may need alternative explanations, terms, or examples to stay engaged. For example, instead of saying the word "catalyst" quite so often, you might try replacing it for the idea that term represents, like "a person who influences you" or "a person who changes the world."

REMEMBER

Whenever you provide handouts that require writing or reflection, remember that pairing an adult or buddy with some of your students can make a huge difference. That helper can help the student participate by writing for them, helping them draw pictures instead of writing, or encouraging them to engage using tools and methods that are more familiar to them.



WRITTEN & DEVELOPED WITH . . .

Munyoki Mulwa is the Associate Pastor at New Song Community Church in Oceanside California. He currently is on the teaching team for the church and oversees various ministries and departments, including leadership development, youth, missions, and communications. Munyoki and his wife, Charnel, can be caught eating out at unique restaurants, watching crime dramas, and training their one-year-old golden doodle, Xena.

Caitlyn Smelser has been in youth ministry for twelve years and has now joined the Stuff You Can Use team as Kenny's executive assistant in Charlotte, North Carolina. On any given day you'll find her out for a run, hiking with her dog, Gus, or paddleboarding on the lake. If you'd like to chat with Caitlyn about why teenagers are awesome in ministry, where to find the best hiking trails, or how to make a perfect french macaron, she'd love to connect with you!

Josh Samarco is an assistant pastor at City Life Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is fresh into the job there but has led in teens ministry for the last 10 years. When Josh isn't serving in the local church he is somewhere planning a trip with friends, exploring the world's best coffee, trying to master latte art, and spending time with his lovely bride Jasmine.

. . . AND THE REST OF THE TEAM!



SERIES DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Crystal Quintero, Stephen Switzer, Linda Moon, Josh Samarco, Matty McCage, Audrua Malvaez, Kellee Gentry

MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW: Robert Vore

STUDENT DEVOTIONALS: Carmen Sharda, Crystal Quintero

HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, AND SPECIAL NEEDS: Mia Harrington, Eddie Witkowski, Caleb Maple, Liliana Reza, Addison Roberts, Alyssa Roberts

GAMES: Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant

ONE-MINUTE SERMONS: Elle Campbell, Jose Rodriguez, Erica Rodriguez, Vanessa Serrano Cruz, Damean Easter, The Rescue a Generation Team, Jules Gray, Jeremiah Herring

GRAPHIC & LAYOUT DESIGN: Jules Gray, Elle Campbell, Josh Gosney, Phill Conchola

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Ali Gattison, Kellee Gentry, Madison Terry, Caitlyn Smelser, Jada Smith, Avery Cochran, Emily Acton, Jay Logan, Eddie Irvin

VOLUNTEER DEVOTIONAL

CATALYST

STUDY

You love to see change happening. It's probably one of the things you like most about being a youth leader — you get to see teenagers grow! Still, there are days when you feel like you aren't growing, or at least you aren't growing as much as you'd like to be. This month, you'll be guiding students through the faith stories found in the book of Hebrews. As you prepare, think about how effective faith was in the lives of the people you are learning about. Then, wonder about the areas where your faith or the faith of others could become a catalyst of change for you.

To get ready for this series, **spend a few minutes reading the stories we'll be teaching students this month.** As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) about worship through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

WEEK 1: Faith is a catalyst for action.

Hebrews 11:1-22; James 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:7

WEEK 2: The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey. Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

WEEK 3: Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God. Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 27:51; John 3:16-17

WEEK 4: We can be a catalyst for change. Hebrews 10:19-25, 12:1, 13:1-3; James 2:26

PRAY

What inspires you to live by faith? Gas prices might be a reminder to cling to God. But what else? What is it that inspires or fuels your faith? Is it something God is doing in your life? Or, is it something you've noticed happening in someone's life around you? Whatever your inspiration is, think about the catalyst for the relationship you have with God currently.

No matter where your faith began, Jesus was the one who made it possible. And now that you have a relationship with God, faith becomes the catalyst for change every time you use it. Think back to where your relationship with God began and spend some time thanking Jesus for being the one who activated faith in your life.

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

So what's your next step? Do you need to activate faith in an area of your life? Is there a way you could be growing more if you had the support of someone else who is living with faith? Is there someone who needs to hear about Jesus' ability to help them have a relationship with God? Is there something going on around you that could benefit from you exercising your faith?

Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.

WEEK 1 TEACHING GUIDE

CATALYST

BIG IDEA

Faith is a catalyst for action.

BIBLE

Hebrews 11:1-22; James 1:22; 2
Corinthians 5:7

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | DIY Lava Lamps

- Welcome to our new series, *Catalyst!*
 - You might've heard about a catalyst in science class, but don't worry – we aren't going to be taking any tests on molecules or chemical reactions.
 - But since some of us might need a little help understanding what a "catalyst" is, we're going to take a cue from our teachers and start with a science experiment.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can adjust this activity based on your group size and budget by either making one lava lamp in front of the group or having everyone make their own using [small eight-ounce water bottles](#). Either way, first, fill your bottle(s) two-thirds full of [vegetable oil](#). Fill the rest of the way with water, a few drops of [food coloring](#), and an [Alka Seltzer tablet](#). You can have your container(s) prepped ahead of time to save time or fill it in front of the group for dramatic effect. Here's a [video](#) to see how this works.*
- As you may have learned in science class, oil and water do not mix – they stay separated. However, when we add a *catalyst* to the mix (the Alka Seltzer tablet), something fun happens! The Alka Seltzer is our catalyst – something that creates a big change.

ACTIVITY | Catalyst Relay Challenge

- A catalyst can also *speed up* a change that was already happening. For example, if I needed to transfer the water in this bucket across the room without moving the bucket, it would probably take me a long time because I'm just one person. If I wanted to speed up the process, I would need a catalyst to help make that happen.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, you'll be racing to transfer water from one end of the room to the other. To play, create two teams with an even amount of players for each team. For each team, place two buckets on opposite end of the room – one empty and one filled with water. Have the players stand behind the [buckets](#) filled with water and give every player their own cup. When you say "go," have your players fill their cups with water, run to the other end of the room, and dump the water into the empty bucket until all the water is transferred. The first team to do this wins!*
- In this case, our catalyst was you! When you got involved, it sped up the process of moving the water across the room by . . . well, a lot.

- So that's what a catalyst is. It's something that creates change, or speeds up a change that's already happening.
- For the next few weeks, we're going to talk about what catalysts have to do with our faith — and what "faith" even means to begin with.
 - When we're not sure what we think about God, what are the catalysts that can help us find answers or maybe even change our perspectives?
 - When we're not sure whether or not we're really growing in our faith, what are the catalysts that could restart or speed up our spiritual growth?
 - And how can we be catalysts that help other people's faith grow too?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What's a catalyst that changed your day today (for better or worse)?**
 - **What are some examples of catalysts that could change someone's faith (for better or worse)?**
 - **How would you define "faith?"**

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

QUESTION | "What is faith?"

- We're going to be talking a lot about "faith" in this series, so before we go any further, we should probably talk about what faith actually is. **What do you think? What is faith?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- When we use the word "faith," we could be talking about a lot of things.
 - "Faith" could mean the set of religious beliefs we follow. You might say, "My faith is Christianity."
 - "Faith" could mean our ongoing relationship with Jesus. You might say, "I want to grow in my faith."
 - And "faith" could mean our choice to trust God in a specific circumstance. You might say, "I have faith God will work this out."

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:1-3

- In the Bible, there's a book called Hebrews. It's a letter to the Hebrew people that's all about "faith" — in every definition of the word.
 - Hebrews tells us clearly who Jesus is so we can better understand the "faith" Jesus-followers share.
 - For those of us who follow Jesus already, Hebrews shows us how we can keep growing in our faith.
 - And Hebrews challenges us to have "faith" in specific circumstances too!
- You could say the book of Hebrews is meant to be a catalyst for the faith of anyone who reads it — both for people today and for people long ago, when it was first written. Let's see how the author defines "faith."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 11:1-3.*
- According to Hebrews, "faith" isn't supposed to be a set of beliefs we say we agree with but never do anything about. Faith is active! It's a confident believing in something — even if we can't see the thing we believe in.
 - But how can you be confident in something you can't see? Is that even a smart to do? Well, we can't "see" God, of course. But that doesn't mean we can't "see" the evidence of God all around us.

- The author of Hebrews gives all of creation as an example. We weren't around when God spoke the universe into existence, but it exists! We can see it! We may not know all the details of how it was formed or have video evidence of it being made, but we see the evidence of our Creator by looking at creation.
- So when we talk about having faith, we're not talking about making wild guesses or believing in made-up stories about God for no reason. We're talking about trusting God based on the evidence around us.
- Maybe sometimes we'll wish we had more evidence that God exists or that Jesus is who he says he is — but we do have evidence. And the evidence we've been given is enough to let us know God is worth trusting.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✪ **Do you ever wish you had more evidence that God exists and can be trusted? If so, what evidence do you wish you had?**
 - ✪ **What evidence do you think we already have that God exists and can be trusted?**

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:4-22

- The author of Hebrews goes on to give us even more evidence that God is worthy of our trust. The evidence we're given isn't a scientific formula or mathematical proof — it's a long line of people who had faith in God and saw God come through.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or summarize Hebrews 11:4-22.*
- Maybe you're familiar with some of these names and maybe you're not, but the people who this letter was written for definitely knew who these people were!
 - Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph — all of these people confidently put their faith in God, even when they weren't sure of the future. They may not have had all the evidence they wished they could have had to trust God, but they had enough.
 - There are more people in the rest of this list we'll look at next week, but for now, I want to point out something else that's interesting about this passage.
 - Remember when we said faith isn't just about believing — it's about action? That's what this passage is really all about.
- The same thing can be said of everyone in this list: they didn't just have faith in God. They demonstrated their faith by actively following God with their lives.
 - They worshiped God.
 - They made sacrifices for God.
 - They obeyed God, even when they weren't sure it made sense.
 - They took risks when God asked them to.
 - They walked away from their old lives in order to follow God into new ones.
 - They stuck close to God for their entire lives.
- The book of Hebrews celebrates the lives and faith of these people, not because they were perfect, or believed all the right things, or could get an A+ on a Bible quiz, but because they did something about what they believed about God. They turned their faith into action.
 - They confidently put their trust in God, based on the evidence they had available to them.
 - But their trust in God wasn't passive. They didn't just trust God in their heads — they proved they trusted God with their lives.

SCRIPTURE | James 1:22

- I think we're getting a little bit closer to the real definition of "faith" now, don't you? But to make things extra clear, let's take a look at another book in the Bible called James.
 - So far, we've talked about a lot of people who existed before Jesus ever showed up on earth, but this book was recorded by none other than Jesus' own brother.
 - Not only did James grow up with Jesus, but he also followed him and learned from him while Jesus was alive. Then, after Jesus died, rose again, and left earth, James became one of the leaders of the early church who helped Jesus-followers figure out to best follow him.
- Like the author of Hebrews, James seemed to be on a mission to help Jesus' followers see that their faith wasn't just something that could live in their heads. It needed to be something that showed up in their actions.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read James 1:22.*
- James gets straight to the point, right? He says, "It's fine if you want to *hear* what God has to say. But that's not the end. To follow Jesus, you have to actually *do* what God's words say." That's what faith really looks like.
 - Faith might start in your heart or your head. It might start as a belief, or a feeling, or a decision you make. But that can't be the end of it.
 - If your beliefs about God haven't yet turned into a life actively following God, your science experiment isn't yet complete. If you want to have the kind of faith described in the book of Hebrews, action is required. Because **faith is a catalyst for action.**

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

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **Why do you think the authors of Hebrews and James put so much emphasis on turning our beliefs into actions?**
 - If we never act on what we say we believe, what do you think would happen to our faith?
 - Read 2 Corinthians 5:7. Have you ever struggled to trust God when it was difficult? If so, tell us about it.

STORY | Share about a time you took a leap of faith.

- I don't know if Abel, Enoch, Abraham, or Sarah's stories are familiar to you, but I know hearing stories of other people's faith can give us more evidence that God can be trusted. That's why the author of Hebrews told so many of them.
- I doubt I have a faith story compelling enough to end up in the book of Hebrews, but let me share just a little piece of it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a personal story about a time in your life when you took a leap of faith by trusting God and then acting on it. As you tell the story, be sure to explain what evidence convinced you God could be trusted, what action you took to follow God, and what the outcome was. This could be a story of a risk you took while following Jesus, or it could be the story of the time you chose to follow Jesus for the first time.*

REFLECTION | Faith In Action

- So if faith is the catalyst for action, what action do you think God might be inviting you to take?

- Maybe you're new here, and you're still figuring out what you believe about Jesus.
- Maybe you've gone to church forever, but so far, your beliefs haven't really made that much of a difference in your life.
- Or maybe you're all in on following Jesus and are looking for the next step you can take in your relationship with him.
- No matter where you're at, there are a few steps you can take:
 - **COLLECT THE EVIDENCE:** Remember, you may not always have all the answers or evidence you wish you had for trusting God, but what evidence do you already have that God can be trusted? Maybe you just need to be reminded of why you trusted God in the first place, or maybe you need to uncover the evidence that will help you trust God for the first time. You might look:
 - To the pages of Scripture.
 - To your own experiences with God.
 - To the stories, writings, or teachings of other people who follow (or have followed) Jesus.
 - **HEAR WHAT GOD SAYS:** When you believe God can be trusted, following God's lead becomes a lot easier. But do you know what God is actually asking you to do? If you're not reading or hearing God's words through Scripture, you probably don't — but today's a great day to start listening!
 - **DO WHAT GOD SAYS:** Like James said, it's not enough to just hear what God says — you have to actually do something about it. So what would it look like for you to turn your faith into action this week?
 - Do you need to make a decision to follow Jesus for the first time?
 - Do you need to grow your trust by spending more time with God on your own?
 - Do you need to take God's words more seriously by loving someone who's difficult to love?
 - Do you need to do something God wants you to do, even though it's difficult or uncomfortable?
- James 1:22 is our reminder that faith requires action. So today, what action are you going to take to help you grow in your faith?
 - Write it down.
 - Then do it.
 - Then tomorrow, do it again.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 1 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen, and encourage students to write down their one action step for the day. Encourage students to set an alarm on their phone for 1:22 PM every day this week. Each time it goes off, encourage them to make a plan to turn their faith into action that day.*
- No matter where you are in your relationship with God today, I hope you know that growing in your faith is just one action step away. It doesn't have to be a big step — most of the time, it will probably be just a small one.
- The point is that your faith can't end with what's in your head. There's so much more God wants to do in you and through you! So this week, don't just hear what God says. Go do something about it. Because **faith is the catalyst for action.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✪ **What's something you know God wants you to do, but you haven't done it yet? What's holding you back?**
 - **This week, what's one thing you're going to do in order to turn your beliefs into actions?**

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Faith is a catalyst for action.

BIBLE

Hebrews 11:1-22; James 1:22; 2
Corinthians 5:7

- What's a catalyst that changed your day today (for better or worse)?
- What are some examples of catalysts that could change someone's faith (for better or worse)?
- How would you define "faith?"
- Do you ever wish you had more evidence that God exists and can be trusted? If so, what evidence do you wish you had?
- What evidence do you think we already have that God exists and can be trusted?
- Why do you think the authors of Hebrews and James put so much emphasis on turning our beliefs into actions?
- If we never act on what we say we believe, what do you think would happen to our faith?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:7. Have you ever struggled to trust God when it was difficult? If so, tell us about it.
- What's something you know God wants you to do, but you haven't done it yet? What's holding you back?
- This week, what's one thing you're going to do in order to turn your beliefs into actions?

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Faith is a catalyst for action.

BIBLE

Hebrews 11:1-22; James 1:22; 2
Corinthians 5:7

- **What's a catalyst that changed your day today (for better or worse)?**
- **What are some examples of catalysts that could change someone's faith (for better or worse)?**
- **How would you define "faith?"**
- **If we never act on what we say we believe, what do you think would happen to our faith?**
- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:7. Have you ever struggled to trust God when it was difficult? If so, tell us about it.**
- **This week, what's one thing you're going to do in order to turn your beliefs into actions?**

**TODAY,
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WEEK 2 TEACHING GUIDE

CATALYST

BIG IDEA

The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.

BIBLE

Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | DIY Elephant Toothpaste

- Welcome back to *Catalyst*, where we're talking about the things that transform our faith, because transformation is exactly what catalysts do.
 - If you were here last week, you'll remember we said a catalyst is something that either creates a big change or speeds up a change that was already happening.
 - But first we have to make sure we all know what a catalyst is. And what better way to explain than with another science experiment?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can do this experiment in person, or if you don't have the bravery to deal with the mess, try showing a video like this [one](#). Here's [a demonstration](#) of making Elephant Toothpaste – you'll need a [clear glass container](#), [hydrogen peroxide](#), [dish soap](#), [food coloring](#), and either [yeast](#) or [potassium iodide](#), depending on the level of reaction you'd like. Combine a little bit of hydrogen peroxide with a few drops of dish soap and food coloring in your container. If you're using yeast, combine it with hot water in another container. To create the final reaction, add the yeast-and-water mixture or potassium iodide into your hydrogen peroxide mixture and watch the magic happen! Oh, and wear gloves to be safe.*
- When you add that last ingredient, it becomes pretty clear what the catalyst was, right? The transformation happened in real-time, making the mixture suddenly explosive!
- So what's a catalyst? It's anything that causes a big change to happen or speed up. And it's not just something that happens in science class.

ACTIVITY | Copy-Catalysts

- You could say there are catalysts all around us . . . we just don't always see them. A lot of the time, catalysts can be people.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask everyone to stand and arrange the group into a circle, facing inwards. If you have a larger group, you can split into multiple groups for this game. Ask one person to leave the room – this person will be the Guesser for the round. While they are gone, the group decides who should be the Catalyst for that round. The Catalyst will be the person who sets the movements for that round (sneezing, jumping, scratching their nose, etc.) that everyone else will need to repeat. When the Catalyst performs a movement, everyone else*

must repeat their movement until they perform a new one. When the Catalyst is chosen, invite the Guesser to come back. The Guesser stands in the very center of the circle and is allowed to make up to three guesses about who the Catalyst is. If they guess incorrectly, the round continues. If they guess correctly, the Catalyst becomes the new Guesser for the next round.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What's a word or phrase you recently started saying? Where do you first hear it?**
 - **Name three people who influence you on a daily basis and tell us how.**

QUESTION | "Who has influenced you?"

- Have you ever found yourself picking up a new habit, quirk, or interest because someone you like or admire influenced you in some way? Maybe it was . . .
 - Finally watching that show your friend wouldn't stop talking about.
 - Trying a weird new fashion trend after someone at school tried it first.
 - Picking up a new phrase you learned from TikTok.
- **What about you? Who's someone who has influenced you and how?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond or have everyone share with a partner next to them.*
- Naturally, the people around us influence what we do — and even what we say. If that has ever happened to you, congratulations! You know what a catalyst is. It's the person who influenced you to make a change (even if it was a pretty small change).

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

STORY | Tell a story about a time someone influenced you in a big way.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story from your own life (or ask a student or volunteer to share a story) about a time someone influenced you in a big way. Maybe they influenced you to pursue a new interest, explore your current career, kick a bad habit, or change the course of your life in some way. Share why that person had such an impact on you and how your life changed as a result.*
- The people who end up being the biggest catalysts in our lives are usually the people we:
 - Look up to the most.
 - Spend the most time learning from.
 - Spend the most time with.
- These catalysts influence us in big ways, even when we aren't aware of it, which is why it's so important to pay close attention to who these people are in our lives.
- You can't avoid being influenced by other people, but you can be wiser about the people you allow to influence you — especially when it comes to the people who influence your faith.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **Who are a few people you really respect? Why do you look up to them?**
 - Who is one person who was a significant catalyst for your faith, and how?

SCRIPTURE | A Brief Hebrews Recap

- Last week, we started talking about a book in the Bible called Hebrews. You could say the book of Hebrews is meant to be a catalyst for the faith of anyone who reads it.
 - Last time, we started reading a really long list of people who were known for their faith in God.
 - These were people who didn't just believe in God in theory – they proved they trusted God with their actions.
- We'll get back to the book of Hebrews in just a second, but first I want to give you a little background on someone who Hebrews talks about a lot. His name is Moses.

SCRIPTURE | Exodus 3:10-12

- The full story of Moses can be found in the book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible.
- If you want a fun animated version of the story I guess you could try watching *The Prince of Egypt*, but if you want the whole story, I definitely recommend reading it. Here's the summary.
 - Before Moses was ever born, God's people (the nation of Israel) was taken captive and enslaved by the nation of Egypt.
 - After a bunch of generations in Egypt, the enslaved Israelites had grown into such a large group of people that Pharaoh (the ruler of Egypt) feared they would rebel against him.
 - To protect his power and keep the Israelites oppressed, Pharaoh ordered all of the firstborn boys of Israel to be drowned in the Nile River. One of those firstborn boys was a baby named Moses.
 - To save her son, Moses' mother put Moses in a basket and placed him in the Nile River, trusting God to rescue him. From the river, Moses was picked up by none other than Pharaoh's own daughter, who raised him as her own.
 - But when Moses grew up, he wasn't okay with the way Pharaoh was enslaving Moses' people. Even though Moses had all the power and privileges that came with being a member of the royal family, he threw it all away to protect an enslaved man who was being beaten by one of Pharaoh's soldiers.
 - Moses fled Egypt to avoid being killed, and it's then he met God in a pretty incredible way. Have you ever heard the term "burning bush"? That's where it comes from. God showed up in the form of a bush that was literally on fire and spoke to Moses from the flames. Here's what God said . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Exodus 3:10-12.*
- You might think, after God miraculously protected Moses as a baby, that Moses would be ready to trust God with anything, but it took Moses a minute to find his faith.
 - Moses struggled with a lot of doubt, thinking he wasn't good or talented enough for God to use.
 - To help Moses find the faith he needed, God promised to be with him through it all – but God also gave Moses some help by sending Moses' brother Aaron along with him.
- So in Moses' life, who were the catalysts for his faith? You might say:
 - His mother was a catalyst by showing Moses what it looked like to trust God, even when things seemed impossible.
 - The enslaved man Moses protected was a catalyst by showing him see other people are worth fighting for.
 - His brother Aaron was a catalyst by partnering with Moses to help him carry out God's mission.
 - Even Pharaoh and his soldiers were catalysts on Moses' journey by showing him there was evil and injustice in the world.
- As a result, Moses took God up on the invitation to help rescue Israel from Egypt. Under Moses' leadership, a whole nation of people saw God do something miraculous. To them, Moses became a catalyst for their faith too.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✪ **Who are some more people who have been catalysts for your faith? How have they helped you grow in smaller (but still important) ways?**
 - ✪ **Can you think of a time when a hurtful or negative experience with another person helped you grow in your faith? If so, tell us how.**

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:23-29

- Now that we know Moses' story, let's fast-forward to the book of Hebrews to see how his story is remembered.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 11:23-29.*
- Moses' story of faith wasn't just a catalyst for the faith of the people he helped rescue from Egypt. Moses' faith was a catalyst for aith of the earliest followers of Jesus, and continues to be a catalyst for our faith today.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:30 –12:2

- Watch how this legacy of faith continues to spread from person to person (or catalyst to catalyst) throughout history.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or summarize Hebrews 11:30–12:2.*
- The author of Hebrews says those of us reading this letter are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses" — the people who went before us and showed us what faith can look like.
- Scripture is full of the stories like these, but Scripture isn't the only place we can find catalysts like these. They're around us even now, if we know where to look! Because **the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journeys.**

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

IMAGES | Your Personal Catalysts

- So who are your catalysts? To get you thinking, let me share a few of mine.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, collect a handful of photos of people who have been catalysts on your faith journey. Show them on screen and talk about them one at a time, sharing how they impacted your faith in both big and small ways. Include examples of different kinds of people, like:*
 - *Friends.*
 - *Family.*
 - *Mentors.*
 - *Writers, musicians, artists, or other public figures.*
- These catalysts are part of my "great cloud of witnesses." Because they've helped me see what it looks like to follow Jesus, I hope to do the same for others.

OBJECT LESSON | Newton's Cradle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As you talk, start a chain reaction with a [Newton's Cradle](#).*
- The author of Hebrews wrote that our faith journeys are like a race. We want to run our races with endurance, but in order to do that, we need other people to help keep us going.
 - It's similar to this Newton's Cradle. When you set off a ball on one end of the device, the transferred energy flows through every single ball, until it causes the ball on the opposite end to move.

- That's kind of how someone else's faith can impact ours. Sometimes a person's impact on our faith will be obvious and immediate. Sometimes it will be more subtle. But when we're in community with other people, we're all impacting each other somehow.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Read Hebrews 10:24. What are some specific ways the catalysts in your life spur you on like this?**
 - ★ **When do you most need other people to step in and spur you on in your faith?**

REFLECTION | Find Your Catalysts

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to write down names of their "catalysts" as you teach, in their small groups, or on their own at home.*
- So as we're running this race we call our faith journeys, how can we make sure we're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help our faith grow?
 - **FIND YOUR CATALYSTS:** This week, what if you tried to find a few different kinds of people and asked them what they're learning?
 - Someone whose faith journey is new.
 - Someone whose faith journey is similar to yours.
 - Someone who's further ahead of you in their life or on their faith journey.
 - Someone who's faith journey you could be catalyst for.
 - **KEEP YOUR FOCUS:** Your faith journey is like a marathon. We all get tired, frustrated, and discouraged sometimes. But all good runners know that, if you want to finish strong, you have to stay focused — and we can help each other do that.
 - This week, what if you and a friend set a goal to learn and grow together somehow?
 - What if you picked a devotional or reading plan on the Bible App and decided to read it together?
 - What if you set reminders to encourage, pray for, and reach out to each other as you do?
 - **KEEP GOING:** Yes, your faith is like a marathon, but you're not competing with the people next to you. You're not behind. You're not losing. There's no one you need to beat. You can go at your own pace — just keep going.
- Maybe it's easy for you to identify people who are positive influences on your faith journey, or maybe not. If you're struggling to figure out who can be a catalyst to help you grow, reach out to one of the adults here today. We'd love to help you figure that out!
 - Moses' faith was catalyzed, in part, by the faith of his mother, the faith of his brother, and the faith of his people.
 - The people of Israel's faith was catalyzed, in part, by the faith of Moses.
 - And our faith today can be catalyzed by the people around us. They don't have to be perfect to have a faith that impacts ours. We're already surrounded by people who can become everyday catalysts for our faith.
- The race we're running can be tiring at times, but it can be pretty exciting when we realize we get to run it

with other people! Because it's true — **the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What are some ways our faith can grow from people:**
 - **Whose faith journey is new?**
 - **Whose faith journey is like ours?**
 - **Who are further ahead of us on our faith journeys?**
 - **This week, what are you going to do to make sure you're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help your faith grow?**

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.

BIBLE

Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

- **What's a word or phrase you recently started saying? Where do you first hear it?**
- **Name three people who influence you on a daily basis and tell us how.**
- **Who are a few people you really respect? Why do you look up to them?**
- **Who is one person who was a significant catalyst for your faith, and how?**
- **Who are some more people who have been catalysts for your faith? How have they helped you grow in smaller (but still important) ways?**
- **Can you think of a time when a hurtful or negative experience with another person helped you grow in your faith? If so, tell us how.**
- **Read Hebrews 10:24. What are some specific ways the catalysts in your life spur you on like this?**
- **When do you most need other people to step in and spur you on in your faith?**
- **What are some ways our faith can grow from people:**
 - **Whose faith journey is new?**
 - **Whose faith journey is like ours?**
 - **Who are further ahead of us on our faith journeys?**
- **This week, what are you going to do to make sure you're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help your faith grow?**

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.

BIBLE

Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

- **What's a word or phrase you recently started saying? Where do you first hear it?**
- **Name three people who influence you on a daily basis and tell us how.**
- **Who is one person who was a significant catalyst for your faith, and how?**
- **Read Hebrews 10:24. What are some specific ways the catalysts in your life spur you on like this?**
- **What are some ways our faith can grow from people:**
 - **Whose faith journey is new?**
 - **Whose faith journey is like ours?**
 - **Who are further ahead of us on our faith journeys?**
- **This week, what are you going to do to make sure you're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help your faith grow?**

CATALYSTS ON MY JOURNEY.

1

THEIR FAITH
JOURNEY IS NEW.

2

THEIR FAITH
JOURNEY IS LIKE MINE.

3

THEY'RE AHEAD OF ME
ON THEIR FAITH JOURNEY.

4

THEIR FAITH
JOURNEY IS LIKE MINE.

5

THEY'RE AHEAD OF ME
ON THEIR FAITH JOURNEY.

CATALYST

CATALYSTS ON MY JOURNEY.

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THEIR FAITH
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CATALYST

WEEK 3 TEACHING GUIDE

CATALYST

BIG IDEA

Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.

BIBLE

Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 27:51;
John 3:16-17

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Diet Coke and Mentos Roulette

- Welcome back to *Catalyst*, where we're talking about things that transform our faith, because transformation is exactly what catalysts do.
- But let's remind ourselves what a catalyst is — and yes, we'll be doing another science experiment. Sort of. Are you familiar with what happens when you mix Diet Coke and Mentos?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, recruit a few adult volunteers to participate (unless you want to see what happens when teenagers are given bottles of exploding soda). We suggest doing this outside, but it can be done inside with a [tarp](#) and some ponchos. To play, you'll need at least three bottles of Diet Coke (but you can use as many as you'd like), a package of [mint Mentos](#), clear fishing line, a safety pin, and scissors. Unscrew the caps of all of the bottles. Replace some of the caps, but leave at least one of the caps off — this will be the bottle that explodes when a mint is added. Watch [this video](#) for a demonstration of how to booby trap your exploding bottle. First, poke a hole through the center of the mint with the pin, thread fishing line through the hole, and tie it tight. Hold the mint inside the neck of the bottle (without touching the soda) with the fishing line hanging outside of the bottle. Loosely replace the cap, pull the fishing line tight until the mint touches the cap, and then close the cap tightly. Cut any string still hanging out of the bottle. When the activity begins, have your volunteers take turns opening their bottles until one of them releases the mint and it explodes. Watch [this video](#) to get an idea of what this activity looks like.*
- What was once just a simple bottle of Diet Coke erupted into chaos when it was introduced to a seemingly harmless candy.
 - So what's a catalyst? In this case, it was the Mentos. A catalyst is anything that causes a big change to happen.
 - Before the Mentos, we just had a boring soda. After the Mentos, we got a whole party!

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **Who's one of your favorite fictional characters who experienced a dramatic transformation?**
 - **What's an example of a dramatic transformation someone might experience in real life?**

POLL | "Do you know anyone whose life was changed dramatically by Jesus?"

- There are a lot of catalysts (like this mint) that create pretty distinct "before and after" scenarios. We've seen a few of them already throughout this series. When some catalysts are introduced, it changes things instantly and dramatically.
- If you've been here for a few weeks, you know we've been talking a lot about faith — like how faith changes things and what kinds of things have the power to change our faith.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For each of the following questions, ask students to respond by raising their hands, standing up, or saying "yes." After each question, ask a few students to explain their responses or share more.*
 - **Have you ever heard the phrase "faith story"?**
 - **Have you ever heard someone share their faith story?**
 - **Have you ever heard a story where someone's life was immediately and dramatically changed by Jesus?**
 - **Do you know anyone personally whose life was immediately and dramatically changed by Jesus?**
- When we talk about God's power to transform us, the picture we sometimes paint is a little bit like that bottle of Diet Coke. We make it seem as though the moment you meet Jesus, your whole life is going to explode and nothing will ever be the same.
- And sure, sometimes that's exactly what happens. But can I be honest? Sometimes that stresses me out.
 - What if my faith story isn't all that dramatic?
 - What if following Jesus hasn't made me feel as close to God as I thought it would?
 - What if, since meeting Jesus, my life seems to be changing kind of slowly rather than instantly?
- Sometimes faith feels a little bit like a game of Mentos Roulette, doesn't it? For some people, dropping Jesus into their life seems like it results in an obvious and immediate change. But for some of us, when we don't see Jesus change our lives in the ways we thought he would, or in the time frame we thought he would, we worry something is wrong.

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

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Have you ever heard a story where someone's life was immediately and dramatically changed by Jesus? How did that story impact you?**
 - ★ **If you know Jesus, have you ever worried your story of faith isn't dramatic enough? If so, why?**
 - ★ **If someone decides to follow Jesus but their life doesn't immediately change that dramatically, what are some possible reasons for that?**

STORY | Talk about a time you didn't feel close with God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Talk about a time in your own life (or ask a student or volunteer to talk about a time) you didn't feel close with God. Maybe you didn't feel emotionally connected, or didn't feel like God was hearing your prayers, or weren't seeing a specific change in your life you expected to see. Don't share how you got over this — instead, simply share what you were feeling and wondering during that time.*
- I don't know what your faith is like right now.
 - Maybe you've heard people talk about having a relationship with God, but you're still trying to figure out what that means.

- Maybe you have a relationship with God and it's going great!
- Or maybe you have a relationship with God, but it's not going as well as you wanted it to.
- If you've ever wondered what it means to have a relationship with God, or how we can really know God is real, or what to do when God feels far away, you're not alone.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 4:14

- Because the idea of faith can be pretty confusing sometimes, we've been trying to figure out what Scripture says about it by looking at the book of Hebrews — a book that has a lot to say about faith.
- And because holding onto our faith can feel pretty difficult when we feel far from God, I want to show you a passage in Hebrews that has something to say about holding on.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 4:14.*
- Okay, so maybe you got the message that we're supposed to hold tightly to our faith . . . but, uh, what's that about a great high priest?

VIDEO | A Clip from "Jesus the Royal Priest" by BibleProject

- Remember, the book of Hebrews was written to a very specific group of people — the people of Israel, God's chosen people. The whole Old Testament is their story.
- Because this book was written to them, it makes sense for the author to use terms and ideas that they would understand, even if it means you and I need a little extra explaining to understand it.
 - Throughout much of Israel's history, God communicated with humanity in a very specific way — through priests.
 - All of Israel's priests communicated with God on their people's behalf. But in order to have this role, the priests had to practice a very high standard of holiness and purity by following specific religious customs.
 - Although Israel had many priests, the high priest was the only priest who had the privilege of getting closest to God — literally. The high priest was the only person allowed in the Most Holy Place, the location where God's presence was closest and most obvious.
 - When the high priest was in the Most Holy Place, he would perform rituals and make sacrifices to God to help keep the relationship between God and Israel close.
 - So why is Hebrews calling Jesus a "great high priest"? To answer that, let's back up and see what was going on with the high priests when Jesus was around.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip (1:00-2:30) from "[Jesus the Royal Priest](#)" by BibleProject. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 27:51

- So the author of Hebrews didn't invent this idea of Jesus being like a priest! In fact, you know that curtain that separated everyone except the high priest from where God was, in the Most Holy Place?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 27:51.*
- When Jesus gave his life sacrificially for us, that whole curtain was ripped in two, showing us there is nothing left to separate us from God.
- Jesus' death was the catalyst that tore the curtain in half. Because of him, we can all finally be close to God.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 4:14-16

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 4:14-16.*
- So is this making a little more sense now?
 - Because he's our great high priest, Jesus made it possible for us to get close to God.

- Because he has experienced all the temptations we experience, Jesus understands what we're going through.
- Because Jesus changed our relationship with God forever, we don't have to be shy about asking for help.
- I know sometimes God feels far away. I know sometimes it seems like our lives aren't changing as immediately or dramatically as we thought they would. But no matter how things seem, can you see what's true?
 - Jesus changed our relationship with God forever. He did that through his life, death, and resurrection. It's already done!
 - Before Jesus, our relationship with God had never been so personal, but Jesus brought God closer by giving everyone access to love and grace.
- So if you ever doubt God's ability to change things, remember what Jesus has already changed. **Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.** Because of him, God is already close.

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

IMAGE | No Wait Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As you teach, show an image of people waiting in line for a roller coaster, [like this one](#).*
- Have you ever waited for hours for a ride at an amusement park? Sometimes the wait can take forever. Sometimes you're waiting and it starts to rain. Sometimes you finally get to the front and the ride breaks down or you realize you're not tall enough to ride. Sometimes the waiting is so daunting that you eventually just give up.
- But with God, we don't have to do that. It's like Jesus gives us a "fast pass" that never expires. He invites to connect with God differently, personally, and easily.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **Have you ever felt really close to God? What was that experience like and why do you think God felt so close?**
 - **Read John 3:16-17. When God doesn't feel close, what can this passage teach us about what God is like?**
 - **When God doesn't feel close, what do you think we should do?**

STORY | **Talk about a time your relationship with God changed in a small but important way.**

- Okay, but maybe you're still frustrated because, even though you believe in Jesus and have a relationship with God, God still seems far away, or your life before Jesus doesn't seem all that different from your life after Jesus.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to share a story) about a time your relationship with God changed in a small but important way. Maybe God changed your perspective about something, or revealed something to you through Scripture, or began to transform a specific part of your life. Share what changed and how.*
- When we say Jesus is the catalyst for our new relationship with God, we mean two things:
 - Jesus permanently changed humanity's relationship with God, once and for all.

- But on top of that, Jesus is still changing us and our relationship with God all the time, as often as we let him. Sometimes he transforms our lives in big, obvious, Mentos-and-Coke kind of ways. But most of the time, Jesus is transforming us in ways that are a little less noticeable.

REFLECTION | Jesus Is Our Catalyst

- So what do you need Jesus to change about your relationship with God right now?
 - **Do you need Jesus to change your relationship with God for the first time?** Is the good news of Jesus brand new to you? If so, today could be the start of a whole new relationship with God.
 - **Do you need Jesus to change something in your life?** Have you been feeling disconnected because you've been making unwise choices, getting stuck in bad habits, or spending time with people who pull you away from God? Have you said you believe in Jesus but been hesitant to really let him transform you? Jesus has the power to transform you from the inside out, but he's not going to force you to make a change you don't want to make.
 - **Do you need Jesus to help you get close to God again?** Have you been following Jesus for a while, but haven't made time for God like you used to, or you have questions you're not sure you're allowed to ask, or you just don't think you're as passionate about God as you used to? Remember, God hasn't gone anywhere. Because of Jesus, God is always close by and ready to help. All you have to do is reach out.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to fill it out and share it with a friend, mentor, or their small group.*
- No matter which option you chose (or if you chose none at all), if you want to experience a new relationship with God:
 - **TAKE THE FIRST STEP:** Jesus is our catalyst, but he can't transform us if we don't give him the invitation and opportunity.
 - **PRACTICE SPIRITUAL HABITS:** If we want to get and stay close to God, we can do our part by practicing the habits that keep us close:
 - **Spend time with God** on your own, through prayer, worship, and Scripture.
 - **Spend time with others** who can help you grow, through healthy relationships and conversations.
 - **Use your gifts** to give back to God and serve others.
 - **Share your story** of faith with others, even when your story feels imperfect or incomplete.
 - **SEE WHAT HAS CHANGED:** While you wait to see how Jesus will change you next, take a step back and see how you've changed already. Change isn't always obvious while it's happening, but there's a really good chance Jesus has already changed you in some big ways since you first met him.
- Because of Jesus, we can *get* close to God and then *stay* close to God. The closer we stay, the more we'll change, because that's how catalysts work. And **Jesus is our catalyst for a new relationship with God.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **If you know Jesus, when did you first believe God loved you and wanted to be close to you?**
 - **This week, what's one step you want to take to get closer to God through Jesus?**

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.

BIBLE

Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 27:51;
John 3:16-17

- **Who's one of your favorite fictional characters who experienced a dramatic transformation?**
- **What's an example of a dramatic transformation someone might experience in real life?**
- **Have you ever heard a story where someone's life was immediately and dramatically changed by Jesus? How did that story impact you?**
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- **When God doesn't feel close, what do you think we should do?**
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WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*

CATALYST

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THIS WEEK

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BIBLE

Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 27:51;
John 3:16-17

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**BECAUSE JESUS IS MY CATALYST FOR
A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD . . .**

- I WANT TO FOLLOW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- I NEED HIS HELP MAKING A CHANGE.
- I NEED HIS HELP GETTING CLOSE TO GOD AGAIN.

CATALYST

**BECAUSE JESUS IS MY CATALYST FOR
A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD . . .**

- I WANT TO FOLLOW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
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CATALYST

**BECAUSE JESUS IS MY CATALYST FOR
A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD . . .**

- I WANT TO FOLLOW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- I NEED HIS HELP MAKING A CHANGE.
- I NEED HIS HELP GETTING CLOSE TO GOD AGAIN.

CATALYST

WEEK 4 TEACHING GUIDE

CATALYST

BIG IDEA

We can be a catalyst for change.

BIBLE

Hebrews 10:19-25, 12:1, 13:1-3;
James 2:26

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Rocket Launch

- Welcome back! It's our final week of *Catalyst*, where we're talking about the things that transform our faith, because transformation is exactly what catalysts do. And of course, we've done some science experiments along the way – let's wrap up our series with one more.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this experiment, you'll be creating a rocket launch with baking soda and vinegar. You will need an outdoor space or a room with a high ceiling, an [empty plastic soda bottle](#), three [pencils](#), a [cork](#), some [duct tape](#), a few squares of toilet paper, [vinegar](#), and [baking soda](#). First, secure the pencils to the plastic bottle using duct tape – you want them to extend past the opening of the bottle, allowing the bottle to balance on the ground with the opening pointing down. Place one scoop of baking soda in the middle of the toilet paper and roll it into a ball. When you're ready for the experiment, pour vinegar into the bottle until it is about halfway full. Place your baking soda ball into the bottle and secure it with the cork. Give the bottle a quick shake, place it on the ground with the cork pointing down, and step out of the way! You can watch this [video](#) for instructions – and make sure you test it first!*
- Like we've said every week, a catalyst is something that either creates a big change or speeds up a change that was already happening.
- In this case, the catalyst was the addition of that baking soda ball into the vinegar. When that catalyst was added, our rocket finally took off!

POLL | "Have you ever . . . ?"

- But catalysts, of course, don't just happen in science class. They happen in our lives, our relationships, and our faith all time! In our everyday lives, a catalyst could be anything (an event, a person, or a change of circumstance) that changed our lives.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For each of the following questions, ask students to respond by raising their hands, standing up, or saying "yes." After each question, ask a few students to explain their responses or share more.*
 - **Have you ever had to move to a new town or switch schools?**
 - **Have you ever had an allergic reaction to something?**
 - **Have you ever seen a new trend or obsession take over your friend group?**

- All of these things we just mentioned were catalysts because they caused a significant change in your life. Some of those experiences might have been uncomfortable or unpleasant, but they still created the opportunity for change to happen!

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **Have you ever started a trend (or totally failed at starting a trend)? Tell us about it!**
 - **On a scale of 1-5, how much influence do you think you have on other people?**

REFLECTION | When Were You a Catalyst?

- For the last few weeks, we've talked a lot about catalysts that change us. We've even talked about other people being catalysts for us — people who changed our circumstances, our lives, or our faith.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pause and encourage students to reflect on the following questions silently.*
- But what about you?
 - Do you think you've ever been a catalyst in someone else's life?
 - Whose life is different because they met you, maybe just in a small way?
 - Whose life is different because they met you, but in a really big way?
 - Is the impact you're making on others positive, negative, or a little bit of both?
- As we wrap up this series today, we're not going to talk the catalysts you need to grow in your faith. We've already talked about three of those! If you want to grow in your faith:
 - You have to act on what you believe, because faith is the catalyst for action.
 - You need other people, because the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.
 - You need to stick close to Jesus, because Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.
- But you're not the only one whose faith has room to grow. Whether you've been following Jesus for five minutes or a lifetime, you have the opportunity to be a catalyst that helps someone else's faith grow too.

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

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What are some small but important ways we can help each other's faith grow?**

STORY | Tell a story about a time you were a catalyst for someone else.

- There are so many people who have been catalysts in my story of faith — I introduced you to some of them a couple of weeks ago. Some of those people changed me in big and obvious ways, while some of them caused me to change in smaller (but still really important) ways.
- Because people like that have been catalysts for me, it makes it easier for me to believe I can be a catalyst for someone else — even if it's just in a small way.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were part of making a small positive change in someone's life. You might talk about a time you spoke with someone about Jesus, encouraged someone who was discouraged, stood up for someone who was being teased, or helped someone in need. It's important this story does not come off like a humble brag, so here are a few tips:*
 - *Try to find an example where you were "paying it forward" — maybe you decided to encourage that person because someone had recently encouraged you and it had made a big difference.*
 - *Focus on a small, everyday interaction — not a big sacrifice or grand gesture you made.*

- Share how that interaction changed both of you – not just how you helped the other person.
- Don't exaggerate the impact that interaction made – it's actually great if the outcome was small!
- Sometimes when we think about making a difference in others' lives, we think we need to do something big and profound. But the truth is, it's often small, everyday moments that create the biggest change.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 10:19-25

- With that in mind, let's head back to the book of Hebrews to see what the author has to say about this. Remember, the book of Hebrews has a lot to say about faith.
 - Hebrews tells us what "faith" is.
 - It gives us a long record of people throughout history who lived by faith.
 - It explains how Jesus came to redefine our faith and give us access to God.
 - And it encourages us to keep persevering in our faith.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 10:19-25.*
- Remember, when the author of Hebrews writes about sacrifices, curtains, and the Most Holy Place, we're talking about this idea that Jesus tore down the walls that separated us from God.
 - Because of Jesus, we can be confident God loves us, hears us, and is close to us.
 - Because of this new relationship we have with God, we can have hope!
 - And because we have hope, we can share that hope with each other too.
- Do you see what the author did at the end of this passage? We're not just talking about our relationship with God anymore. We're also talking about our relationships with each other.
- The author of Hebrews challenges us to . . .
 - Help each other grow.
 - Help each other do what's loving and good.
 - Spend time together.
 - Encourage each other.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ☆ **Why do you think the author of Hebrews put so much emphasis on Jesus-followers encouraging each other?**
 - ☆ **How easy or challenging is it for you to build strong relationships at church? Why do you think that is?**

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 12:1

- This idea of needing each other on our journeys of faith isn't new to the book of Hebrews. We've talked about it already!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 12:1.*
- We've already talked about how the examples of the people before us, and the support of the people around us, help us keep growing.
- The faith of others can be a catalyst on our own faith journeys. But now you get to be a catalyst for others too.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 13:1-3

- Have you ever heard this idea that the last thing you say is the thing people will remember most? In the last chapter of Hebrews, the author gives a few final instructions, offering everyone a chance to be a catalyst for change.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 13:1-3.*
- So how can we be catalysts for each other's faith?
 - Keep loving and taking care of one another — even strangers.
 - Remember the people everyone else seems to have forgotten or overlooked.
 - Care about people who are sometimes hard to care about.
 - Protect people who are hurting and being taken advantage of.
- Your faith can be a catalyst when it is lived out through your actions, especially in your actions toward other people. This truth is all over Scripture — we can love God by loving others.
 - When our heads and hearts collide, that's when incredible change can happen.
 - Our love for God is what catalyzes our love for others. And when we choose to love others with both our words and actions, **we can be a catalyst for change.**

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

VIDEO | A Clip of the Largest Human Mattress Dominoes

- Maybe the idea of you changing the world sounds intimidating or unreasonable to you. But none of us are meant to do this alone. Together, God is inviting us to be catalysts in the world around us.
- Being a catalyst isn't a solo endeavor. It's more of a chain reaction, like this . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video like [this one](#) (0:00-1:02) of the world record for largest human mattress dominoes. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*

STORY | Interview With a Catalyst

- Maybe you're excited about the idea of making a difference and being a catalyst for change, but you're not sure how to get started or what God might be inviting you to do. If you can relate, I want to introduce you to a catalyst who might be able to help.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, identify someone who is making a difference by loving others in a unique or compelling way (like working with incarcerated youth, mentoring kids, or providing humanitarian aid). This could be someone in your community who joins you for a brief conversation or it could be someone globally who joins your for a Zoom call. Whoever you choose, ask them to share their story and briefly explain what they do. Ask follow-up questions like:*
 - *What was the catalyst that made you want to do the work you're doing?*
 - *Who are some of the other people who make this work possible?*
 - *How has doing this work changed you and your faith?*
 - *What would you say to teenagers who want to be catalysts for change?*
- If we take the time to look around, it's not difficult to see that, in our world, community, schools, and relationships:
 - Change is needed.
 - People need to be loved.
 - There are opportunities for us to be catalysts.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*

- Have you ever had the chance to help or stand up for someone who was in need? What was that experience like?
- ⊕ If you could do anything to change the world through your faith, what kind of an impact would you want to make?
- ⊕ Do you think it's okay that we all have different ideas about how we might want to change the world? What was different (and what was similar) about our responses?

REFLECTION | Becoming Catalysts

- Loving others sometimes happens in big or profound ways, but it more often happens in small ways. But it always requires action.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 4 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. As you teach, encourage students to write down the people or needs they are thinking about.
- So who are you going to choose to love? Or what problem do you want to help solve? How can you be a catalyst for change by choosing to love others like God loves you?
 - **BE A CATALYST IN YOUR FAMILY:** Is there a change you hope to see in your family? Maybe it has to do with the way you treat each other or talk about each other. Maybe there's a broken relationship. Or maybe you want to see a loved one come to know Jesus the way you know him. How can you be a catalyst for those kinds of changes? Maybe by . . .
 - Being the first to choose patience, kindness, encouragement, or peace.
 - Going out of your way to help or pitch in, even when you weren't asked.
 - Sharing what Jesus means to you.
 - **BE A CATALYST IN YOUR COMMUNITY:** Is there a change that needs to be made in your school or community? You won't know how you can love others better though until you notice the needs. How can you share God's love by loving . . .
 - The kids who are being bullied, ignored, or not included?
 - The neighborhood kid who just lost a parent?
 - The friend whose loved one is incarcerated?
 - The classmate who's struggling with school and doesn't seem to be getting the help they need?
 - The family who's dealing with severe illness, medical bills, and an uncertain future?
 - **BE A CATALYST IN THE WORLD:** When you start noticing the needs close to you, it's easier to notice the bigger needs all around you. When your eyes get opened to the needs of others (like sickness, poverty, food insecurity, and injustice), you might start to wonder how you can be part of solving such big problems in the world. But remember, you're not alone! Ask . . .
 - Who is already trying to solve that problem in the world?
 - How can I get involved?
 - Who else can get involved with me?
- By now, hopefully you've written down at least one person you want to love, or at least one problem you want to help solve in the world.
 - Take that card with you and place it somewhere as a daily reminder of the change you hope to help make in the world.
 - Each time you see it, ask God to help you be a catalyst by loving others with the love of Jesus.
 - After a few days, you might start to notice God continuing to draw your attention to one particular person or problem. If that happens, listen for how God might be guiding you toward action.
- You really can be a catalyst for change, but it all starts here:

- Your faith is a catalyst for action.
- The faith of others can be a catalyst on your journey.
- Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.
- And when we let that new relationship transform us from the inside out, **we can be a catalyst for change.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **Read James 2:26. What do you think are some of the risks of never turning our faith into action?**
 - **This week, what's one step you're going to take to be a catalyst for change?**

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CATALYST

Sometimes the idea of "faith" can feel a little mysterious and hard to grasp. After all, what is it? And how do you get it – or get more of it? Well, just like science can explain so many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things in the world around us, there are answers for many of the mysterious and hard-to-grasp things about faith, too. You'll learn in science class that "catalysts" are interactions that create big changes and transformations. In the same way, Scripture shows us certain change-making "catalysts" are necessary for the transformation of our faith and the faith of others. In this four-week series from Hebrews, we'll discover that **faith is a catalyst for action, the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey, Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God, and we can be a catalyst for change.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can be a catalyst for change.

BIBLE

Hebrews 10:19-25, 12:1, 13:1-3;
James 2:26

- **Have you ever started a trend (or totally failed at starting a trend)? Tell us about it!**
- **On a scale of 1-5, how much influence do you think you have on other people?**
- **What are some small but important ways we can help each other's faith grow?**
- **Why do you think the author of Hebrews put so much emphasis on Jesus-followers encouraging each other?**
- **How easy or challenging is it for you to build strong relationships at church? Why do you think that is?**
- **Have you ever had the chance to help or stand up for someone who was in need? What was that experience like?**
- **If you could do anything to change the world through your faith, what kind of an impact would you want to make?**
- **Do you think it's okay that we all have different ideas about how we might want to change the world? What was different (and what was similar) about our responses?**
- **Read James 2:26. What do you think are some of the risks of never turning our faith into action?**
- **This week, what's one step you're going to take to be a catalyst for change?**

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*

CATALYST

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THIS WEEK

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- **This week, what's one step you're going to take to be a catalyst for change?**

I CAN BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.



CATALYST

I CAN BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.



CATALYST

I CAN BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.



CATALYST

I CAN BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.



CATALYST

ONE-MINUTE SERMON SCRIPTS

CATALYST

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

You may have heard the word "catalyst" in science class, but don't worry – we aren't going to be taking any tests on chemical reactions. A catalyst is just something that creates change, or speeds up a change that's already happening. And when it comes to growing in our faith, we sometimes wonder how we can get that process to go faster. We wish we could find a catalyst capable of speeding things up. Well, in the Bible, the book of Hebrews has something to say about this. It gives us this really long list of people who "lived by faith" – heroes of the faith like Abraham, Sarah, Noah, Joseph, and more. All of these people confidently put their faith in God, even when they weren't sure of the future. But they didn't just have faith in God. They *demonstrated* their faith by actively following God with their lives. And that's the point. Faith isn't just what we believe. It's also what we do. **Faith is a catalyst for action.**

WEEK 2

Have you ever found yourself changing because of how someone you like or admire influenced you? Maybe it was finally watching that show your friend wouldn't stop talking about or trying a weird new fashion trend after someone at school tried it first. The people around us influence what we do. If that has ever happened to you, congratulations! You know what a catalyst is. It's the person who influenced you to make a change. These kinds of catalysts exist when it comes to our faith too. In the book of Hebrews, we get a long, long list of people who are heroes of faith. They're the people who went before us and showed us what faith can look like. Scripture is full of the stories like theirs, but Scripture isn't the only place we can find catalysts like these people. They're around us even now, if we know where to look! Because **the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journeys.**

WEEK 3

Have you ever seen what happens when you drop Mentos into a Diet Coke? Google it. The transformation is pretty immediate – and pretty explosive. That’s the kind of change a lot of us expect to see the moment we start following Jesus. Sure, sometimes that happens, but then we get worried when God feels far away, or it seems like our lives aren’t changing as immediately or dramatically as we thought they would. But no matter how things seem, do you know what’s true? Jesus changed our relationship with God forever through his life, death, and resurrection. It’s already done! Before Jesus, our relationship with God had never been so personal, but Jesus brought God closer by giving everyone immediate access to God’s love and grace. So if you ever doubt God’s ability to change things, remember what Jesus has already changed. Because of him, your relationship with God has already changed – and there’s more to come. **Jesus is the catalyst for a new relationship with God.**

WEEK 4

We’ve been talking a lot about catalysts that change us. We’ve even talked about other people being catalysts for us – people who changed our circumstances, our lives, or our faith. But what about you? Do you think you’ve ever been a catalyst in someone else’s life or faith? Do you think you could be? Well, the author of Hebrews definitely thinks you could. In Hebrews 10, the author tells us that, because Jesus has totally transformed our relationship with God, our next step is to share his love with the people around us – both with our words and with our actions. Hebrews tells us to help each other grow, spend time together, encourage each other, take care of the people everyone else seems to have forgotten or overlooked, and protect people who are hurting and being taken advantage of. Our love for God is what catalyzes our love for others. And when we choose to love others like that, **we can be a catalyst for change.**

MARKETING CHECKLIST

CATALYST

BEFORE THE SERIES

✓ TO DO

	Print your Series Promo Poster and Series Promo Cards and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your Volunteer Hub and Parent Hub web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the Parent Email for this series.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the suggested Social Media Posts and Captions for this series.
	Post the Bumper Video on social media with this caption: We're starting a new series on faith this week called Catalyst! Get ready, because there will be science experiments involved.

AFTER WEEK 1

✓ TO DO

	Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 1 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Catalyst, we talked about how faith is more than just what we believe, it should be a catalyst for action. Here's a recap!
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption: No matter where you are in your relationship with God today, I hope you know that growing in your faith is just one action step away. It doesn't have to be a big step — most of the time, it will probably be just a small one.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 2 of Catalyst, we talked about how the faith of others can inspire us on our own journeys of faith. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Your faith journey is like a marathon. We all get tired, frustrated, and discouraged sometimes. But all good runners know that, if you want to finish strong, you have to stay focused – and we can help each other do that.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 3 of Catalyst, we talked about how Jesus made it possible for us to get close to God. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Jesus permanently changed humanity's relationship with God, once and for all. But on top of that, Jesus is still changing us and our relationship with God all the time, as often as we let him.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 4

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, in Week 4 of Catalyst, we talked about how our faith can change the world when it's shared in love for others. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>If we take the time to look around, it's not difficult to see that, in our world, community, schools, and relationships: change is needed, people need to be loved, and there are opportunities for us to be catalysts.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS

CATALYST

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

We're starting a new series on faith this week called Catalyst! Get ready, because there will be science experiments involved.

AFTER WEEK 1



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 1)

In case you missed it, in Week 1 of Catalyst, we talked about how faith is more than just what we believe, it should be a catalyst for action. Here's a recap!

AFTER WEEK 2



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 2)

In case you missed it, in Week 2 of Catalyst, we talked about how the faith of others can inspire us on our own journeys of faith. Here's a recap!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)

No matter where you are in your relationship with God today, I hope you know that growing in your faith is just one action step away. It doesn't have to be a big step — most of the time, it will probably be just a small one.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)

Your faith journey is like a marathon. We all get tired, frustrated, and discouraged sometimes. But all good runners know that, if you want to finish strong, you have to stay focused — and we can help each other do that.

AFTER WEEK 3



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 3)

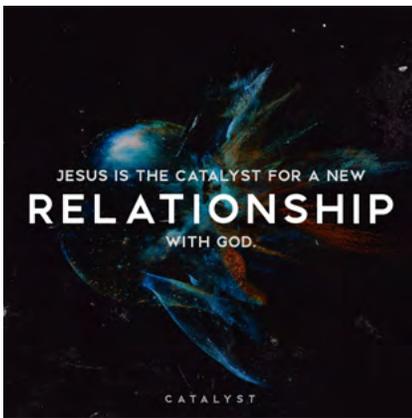
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AFTER WEEK 4



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 4)

In case you missed it, in Week 4 of Catalyst, we talked about how our faith can change the world when it's shared in love for others. Here's a recap!



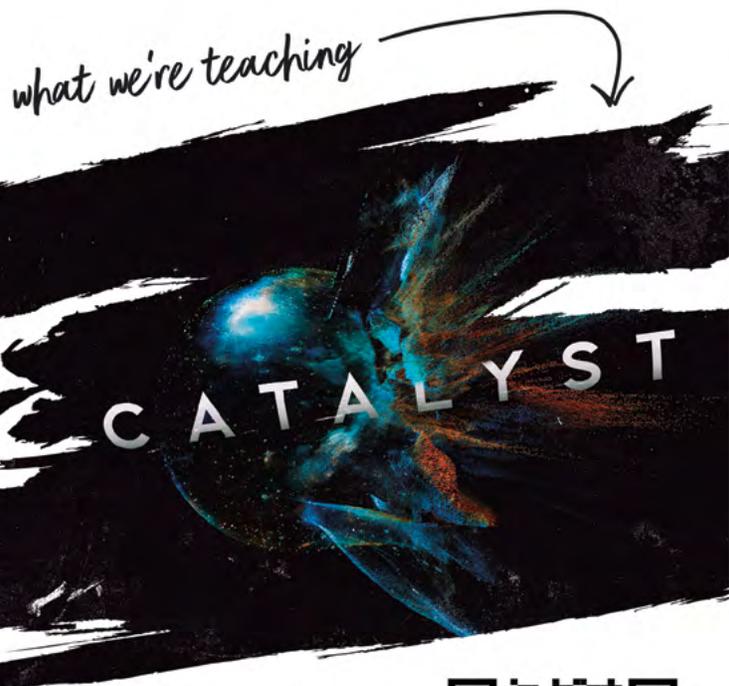
BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)

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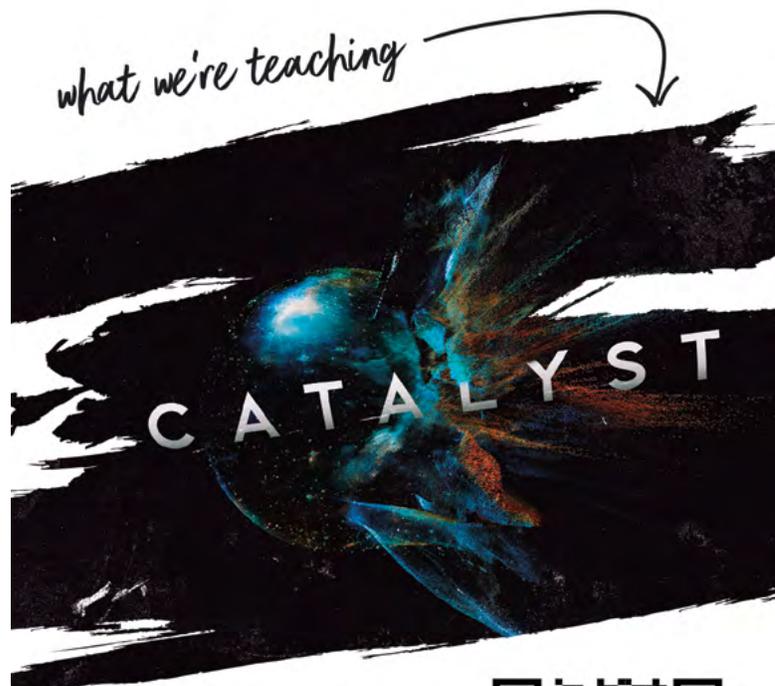


BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)

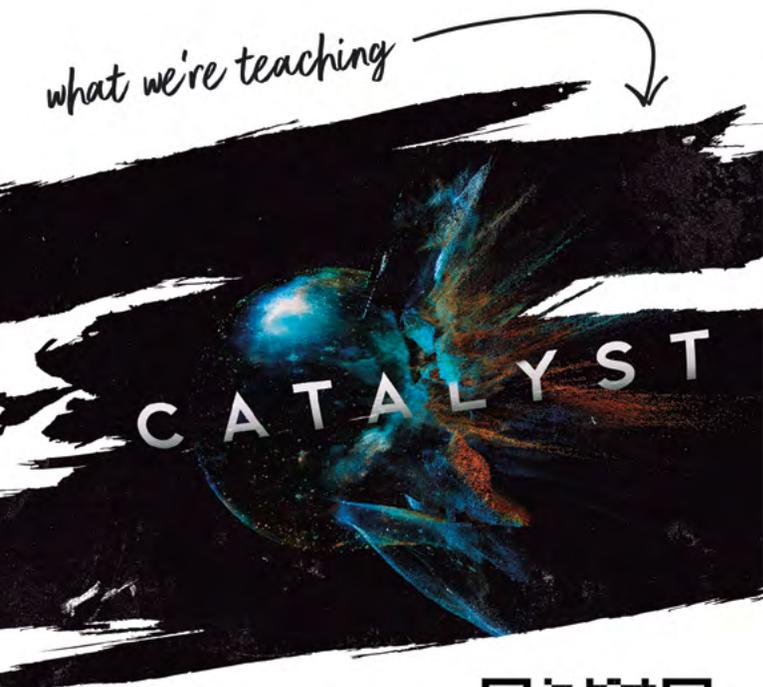
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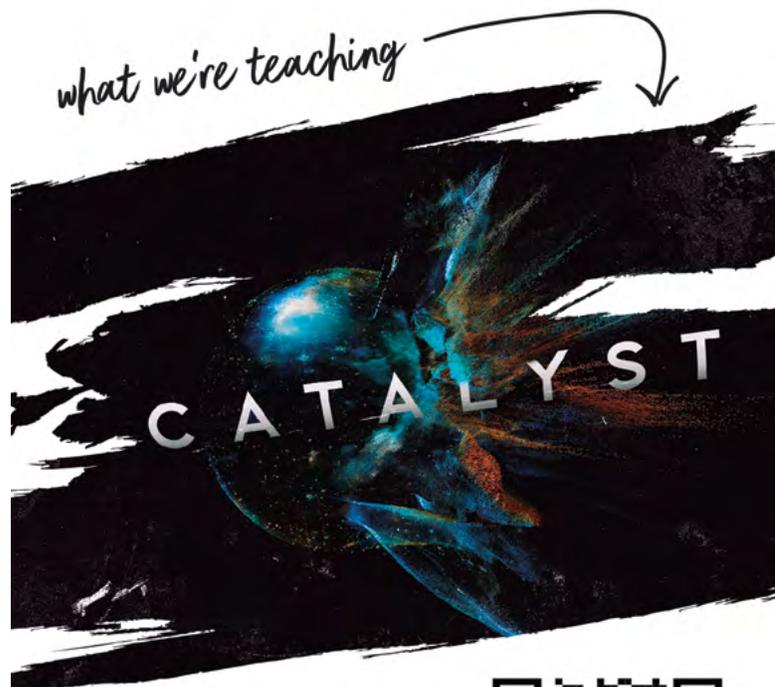
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