



A 4-WEEK
STUDY FROM
2 TIMOTHY ON

WISDOM

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*



WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED WITH . . .

APRIL WAHL & MUNYOKI MULWA

OVERVIEW

THE EXCHANGE

STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

TEACHING

- ▶ [Series Overview](#)
- ▶ [Shopping List](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Middle Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for High Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Students with Special Needs](#)
- ▶ [SLIDR Presentation Software](#)

PROGRAMMING

- ▶ [Room Design](#)
- ▶ [Music, Games & Style Guide](#)
- ▶ [Graphics & Videos](#)

DISCIPLESHIP

- ▶ [Discipleship Guide](#)
- ▶ [Devotional for Volunteers](#)
- ▶ [Devotionals for Students](#)

COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts & Captions](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Scripts](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#)
- ▶ [Series Promo Cards & Posters](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Emails](#)
- ▶ [Volunteer & Parent Hubs](#)

STUFF FOR EACH WEEK

WEEK 1

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide for Middle Schoolers](#)

WEEK 2

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide for Middle Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

WEEK 3

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide for Middle Schoolers](#)

WEEK 4

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide for Middle Schoolers](#)

SERIES OVERVIEW

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

WEEK 1

This week, we'll see how Paul and Peter used their wisdom to help other people discover their gifts.

- **BIG IDEA:** We can help each other discover our gifts.
- **BIBLE:** 2 Timothy 1:1-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:6

WEEK 2

This week, we'll combine the wisdom that Paul shares with Timothy and the wisdom from Proverbs to help each other navigate life together.

- **BIG IDEA:** We can help each other develop discernment.
- **BIBLE:** 2 Timothy 2:7-15; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 4:6-7

WEEK 3

This week, we'll see what Paul and a chapter from the book of Psalms say about how the Bible can be a source of wisdom to help equip each other.

- **BIG IDEA:** We can help each other get equipped.
- **BIBLE:** 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:97-105; Hebrews 4:12

WEEK 4

This week, we'll discover how Paul and the writer of Psalm 121 used the wisdom and strength they received from God to help other people find strength.

- **BIG IDEA:** We can help each other find strength.
- **BIBLE:** 2 Timothy 4:6-18; Psalm 121; 2 Corinthians 12:9

MEMORY VERSE: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." – 1 Peter 4:10 (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:** Week 3 is all about spending time in Scripture, including reading it, memorizing it, and talking about it together. Week 4 encourages students to talk to God with and for each other.
- **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** This whole series is about developing relationships with others that help us grow, like relationships with older mentors and peers. Every week, students will be asked what they can do to help others grow.
- **USE YOUR GIFTS:** Week 1 is all about knowing and using your gifts, since it's about helping each other identify the ways we're gifted.
- **SHARE YOUR STORY:** Because this series is all about exchanging wisdom with others through their words and actions, sharing their stories of faith will naturally be part of the conversation each week.

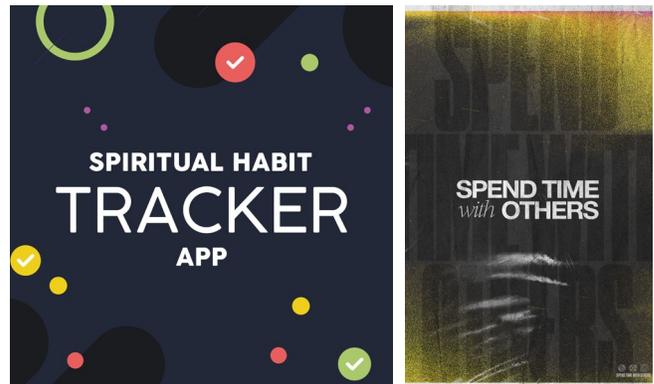
DEVOTIONALS



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!](#)

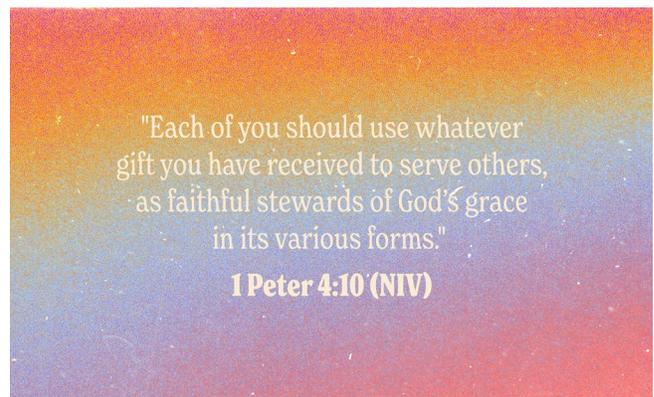
DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITY

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**.



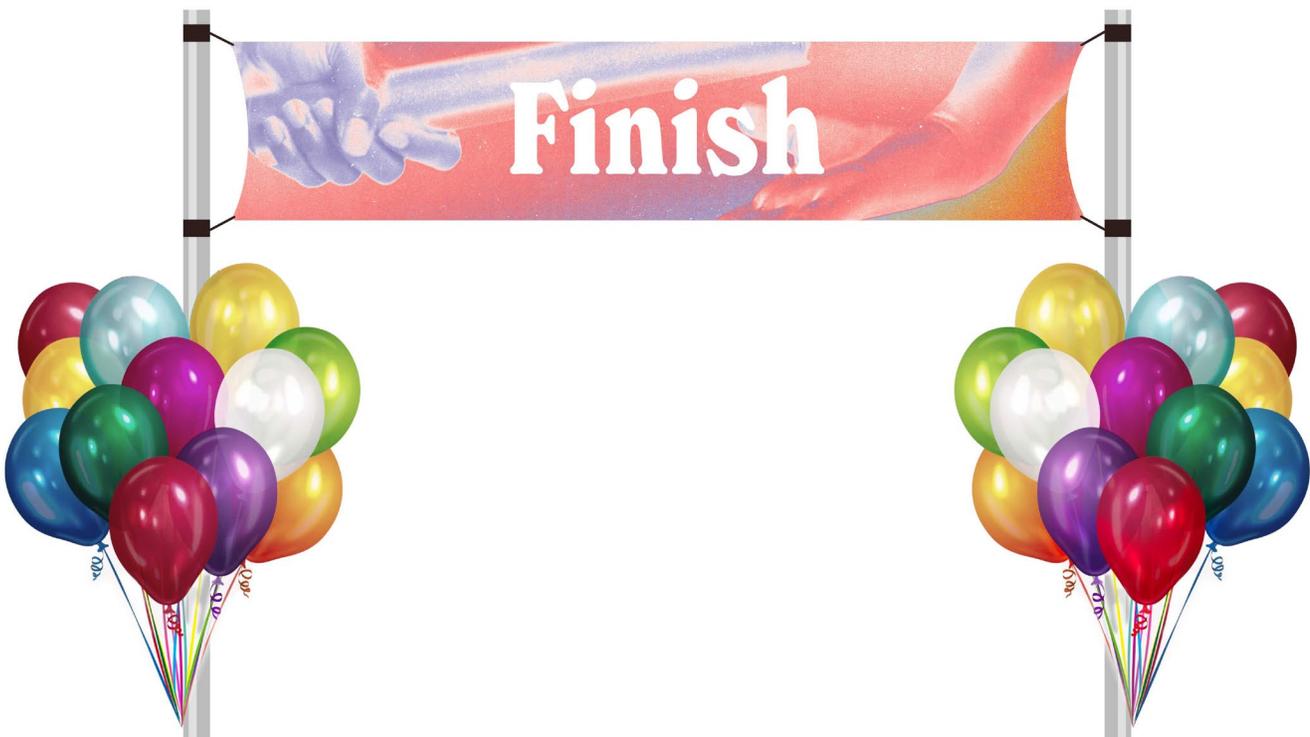
ROOM DESIGN

Because this series will use a lot of relay race metaphors (and because the Scripture in Week 4 is about "running the race"), give your room a race day vibe for this series!

First, create a finish line. You'll need two poles (maybe the poles of a volleyball net, pipes from a pipe and drape set, or flag poles). Set them up and if you'd like to change the color to make it match with the series graphics, wrap the poles in streamers or paper. You may even want to write "The Exchange" on the poles to reinforce the series title.

Next, hang a banner from the top of the poles that says "Finish." You could either make this banner yourself with a large roll of paper or have something professionally printed using elements from the graphics provided in your downloads.

Lastly, add some color and fun to your room design by inflating balloons and placing them on either side of your finish line.



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 exchanging wisdom, the games for this series have a "swapping" component. 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.

- [The Money Exchange](#)
- [The Exchange](#)
- [The Wall Exchange](#)
- [The Blind Art Exchange](#)

MUSIC

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

- **"Sparrows"** (Cory Asbury)
- **"Better Now"** (C3 NYC)
- **"Be Thou My Vision"** (Hymn)
- **"God Really Loves Us"** (David Crowder)
- **"God I Look To You"** (Tasha Cobbs Leonard)
- **"Even At My Worst"** (Blanca)
- **"Your Word"** (Hillsong Worship)
- **"Everything"** (Lauren Daigle)
- **"Whole Heart"** (Brandon Heath)
- **"Shadow Step"** (Hillsong UNITED)

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 . . .

- **"Like You"** (Aaron Cole feat. Tauren Wells & TobyMac)
- **"Fullness of God"** (JUDAH.)
- **"Can't Tell It All"** (Hulvey)
- **"Falls"** (ODESZA feat. Sasha Alex Sloan)
- **"Knowledge"** (Jacob Lee)

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](#).

New Spirit Condensed Regular

And use these colors!

-  HEX: #FAECD5
CMYK: 2-6-16-00
-  HEX: #C37A21
CMYK: 21-56-100-3
-  HEX: #7E8FB7
CMYK: 54-40-15-00
-  HEX: #B7493C
CMYK: 22-99-100-9

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 . . .

ALL 4 WEEKS:

- [Plastic batons](#)
- Paper towel tubes
- Streamers
- [Pom poms](#)

WEEK 1:

- [Puzzles](#)
- Index cards
- Pens
- A short clip [like this one](#) (0:00-2:04) from [Up](#)
- Five nesting boxes
- Wrapping paper

WEEK 2:

- Trivia questions from a trivia game or this [random trivia generator](#)
- A short clip [like this one](#) (0:44-1:38) from [Moana](#)
- The handouts provided in your Week 2 folder
- Pens

WEEK 3:

- A [landline telephone](#)
- A bag or suitcase
- Miscellaneous supplies
- A short clip [like this one](#) (0:00-1:40) from [Mulan](#)
- The Spiritual Habit Tracker App discipleship activity from your Discipleship resources

WEEK 4:

- Large pool floats
- A short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:00-0:59) of a runner finishing a race with help
- A short clip [like this one](#) (1:13-3:26) from [Onward](#)
- A photo booth or backdrop

PREP LIST

WEEK 1:

- Set up a space to play **Stop, Collaborate, and Learn, The Great Exchange, and The Gift Goes On**. See your Week 1 Teaching Guide for details!

WEEK 2:

- Set up a space to play **Fact or Fiction? and Wisdom Relay**. See your Week 2 Teaching Guide for details!
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every two students. Cut each handout into halves.

WEEK 3:

- Set up a space to play **Ready, Set, Exchange!** See your Week 3 Teaching Guide for details!

WEEK 4:

- Set up a space to play **Stronger Together (Mattress Race)**. See your Week 4 Teaching Guide for details!

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 [JUMP]** 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, give specific examples of times they'll need discernment. Middle schoolers often need a little more hand-holding than our high schoolers do, so make sure you're giving them concrete examples of times when they might need to practice discernment. What situations are they going through that they need help navigating? If you're not sure, ask a few students you see often or ask a few parents you trust.

In Week 3, keep The Great Scavenger Exchange under control. If you're concerned about where your middle schoolers might roam to get their photos (as you should be!) make sure you put tight restrictions on where they can and can't go, and have volunteers stand nearby to make sure they don't forget their boundaries.

REPLACE

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

In Week 4, replace Exchangeable Inflatables with The Chair Support Challenge. If you're worried a large scale game like this might be too much fun for your middle schoolers to recover from, try the chair support challenge instead. No preparation is required and it's a little more low-key! Check [this video](#) out for the instructions.

REMEMBER

As you teach this series, **remember peer-to-peer middle school relationships might not be the best place to gain wisdom.** There are times in this series when we encourage students to share wisdom with each other. While that's still applicable for middle schoolers, if you have a middle-school-only audience, spend more time encouraging middle schoolers to find older people they can trust and look up to.

HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

REVISE

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

In all four weeks of this series, invite high schoolers to share their stories instead of you sharing yours. Since this series is all about exchanging wisdom with each other, a great way to empower your high schoolers to share their wisdom is to invite them to share their stories using the prompts included in the Teaching Guides. Be sure to work with any students you ask to contribute a story and practice with them in advance. You might ask them to write a draft of their story or send a video of them telling it. Then work with them to tell their stories well.

In Week 1, challenge students to find a mentor. Remember, many of your high school students may not have any "formal" mentors in their lives. This series could be a great opportunity to help students recognize they might want a mentor, or they might already have one and not have known it! Help them see their teachers, coaches, youth leader, small group leaders, older relatives, and trusted family friends all have the ability to be mentors in different ways – and there's no rule that says you can only have one mentor!

REPLACE

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

In Week 4, replace the personal story about finding strength with a video montage. While the story of one person finding strength from someone else can be powerful, try creating a video of multiple students sharing how your church has been a place for them to find strength. You'll need to plan at least a week in advance to make this happen, so think ahead! You might a few students to share their stories in front of a camera after youth group, or ask them to send you videos they recorded themselves. Edit their stories into one video that's no more than three minutes long and play it in place of the story module.

REMEMBER

As you teach this series, remember high schoolers are craving opportunities to do things that give them purpose and meaning, so it's a great opportunity to encourage them to volunteer with kids who are younger than them. As you talk about mentoring and exchanging wisdom with others, help your high schoolers see they have wisdom to share with people who are younger than them – and then provide opportunities for them to do that within your church.

HACKS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

REVISE

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

In Week 1, as you teach about gifts remember a special needs student might not feel gifted or easily recognize what gifts they have. If you don't know the student well, talk to their parent about what they are good at and be intentional about reinforcing this.

In Week 2, skip or adjust An Exchange of Facts (and Fictions). Students with certain cognitive impairments may struggle to understand the difference between truth and lies. Some may even become upset by the ambiguity. If you have any students in your ministry who you are concerned about, you may want to skip this activity or pair them with an adult who can try the activity with them on a one-on-one basis.

In Week 3, provide assistance for The Great Scavenger Exchange. Be sure at least some of your clues are discernible by all of your students – including any students with cognitive impairments. If any of your students with certain special needs want participate as a baton-holder, be sure they have another student or adult leader who can help them participate.

In Week 3, one of the application steps is to memorize Bible verses. If a student is unable to memorize because of cognitive impairment but can memorize songs or other things, be sure to help them see that this is just as valuable. Or find other ways to have the student memorize these verses, even if it's just knowing the book name and reference.

REPLACE

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

In all four weeks, remove any activities that might be overstimulating. Be aware of how much some of your students can handle as far as structural changes or high-energy activities in a given service. Allow them to sit out of some activities and have sensory breaks or bins readily available.

REMEMBER

Anytime you do a physical game (and this series contains several!) with your students, be aware of how students with physical disabilities or limitations might be impacted. This doesn't mean you can't play these games, but it does mean you should plan ahead to either make modifications to the game play for your students with physical disabilities or create new roles in the games just for them.



WRITTEN & DEVELOPED WITH . . .

April Wahl is a middle school minister at Century Baptist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota. April has a master’s degree in Bible and Theology and has served in middle school and high school ministry for over ten years. When she has a free minute, she’s either working on her long-boarding skills, writing, shopping for her next pair of Vans, or planning her next trip to Disney World.

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.

. . . AND THE REST OF THE TEAM!



SERIES DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Crystal Quintero, Stephen Switzer, Linda Moon, Munyoki Mulwa, Matty McCage, Erica Rodriguez, Josh Samarco

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

MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW: Anastasia Brokas

STUDENT DEVOTIONALS: Harman Sharda, Crystal Quintero

GAMES: Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant

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

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

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STUDY

Your role as a youth leader is invaluable. The exchanges that happen between you and the teenagers you spend time leading often create some pretty incredible (and often wildly interesting) discoveries. Have you thought about how the exchanges you're making in youth ministry and in other places impact your own life and spiritual growth?

Your students aren't just experts at the latest TikTok trends . . . they have so many valuable ideas to share with you! Mentoring moves in multiple directions and you have the opportunity to help and be helped simultaneously. The relationships you'll be reading about in 2 Timothy are a picture of a multi-directional exchange that can impact the lives of everyone involved.

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: We can help each other discover our gifts.

II Timothy 1:1-14; I Peter 4:10-11

WEEK 2: We can help each other develop discernment.

II Timothy 2:7-15; Proverbs 3:5-6

WEEK 3: We can help each other get equipped.

II Timothy 3:14-4:5; Psalm 119:97-105

WEEK 4: We can help each other find strength.

II Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Psalm 121

PRAY

It might not feel natural to think of someone younger when you're looking for wisdom in a mentoring relationship. But what if it could become more natural to expect help from people who are in different phases of life? As you're reading about the mentoring relationships in the book of 2 Timothy, ask yourself how open you are to receiving wisdom, discernment, resources, and strength from others . . . including those who may be in a different season of life than you. What kinds of exchanges are you hoping for? Tell God about some of the things you're hoping to receive as you share your life with others. Take time to consider the potential in yourself and those around you.

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? Is there someone in your life needing you to help them discover their gifts? Or, is there someone who can help you discover yours? Do you need to invite someone to help you develop deeper discernment or equip you to do something new? It could be time to reach out for help in a moment of weakness so you can exchange strength.

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

WEEK 1 TEACHING GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

BIG IDEA

We can help each other discover our gifts.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 1:1-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:6

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

OBJECT LESSON | The Exchange Baton

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Purchase or create at least one baton to use for the next four weeks. As you teach, hold the baton anytime you talk about an “exchange” of wisdom. In the opening activities, use the baton (or several batons like it) for your relay races. You can use [basic plastic batons](#) or you can make your own with paper towel tubes and decorate them with streamers and [pom poms](#).

ACTIVITY | The Great Puzzle Exchange

- Welcome to our new series, The Exchange! Let’s see how well you manage when making an “exchange” is vital to your success, and everyone else’s.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, purchase several small [puzzles](#) (50 pieces or fewer), each with a different image. You’ll need one puzzle for every 2-10 students, depending on how large you want your teams to be. Playing with two teams will be the easiest, but add more teams for more chaos! Before playing, remove around 25% of the pieces from each puzzle and place them randomly into other puzzle boxes so each puzzle only has 75% correct pieces and 25% incorrect pieces. When you’re ready to play, split your group into teams. Give each team a [baton](#) and a [puzzle](#). Have each team send one player at a time (holding their team’s baton) to the other teams’ tables to exchange puzzle pieces, while their teammates work on their puzzle. On each trip, the baton-holder can only get rid of one incorrect piece and can only pick up one correct piece. After each trip, they must pass the baton to someone else. The first team to complete their puzzle is the winner.
- This wouldn’t have been as fun, but in theory, the right exchanges could have resulted in everyone finishing their puzzles together, instead of fighting against each other.

ACTIVITY | The Gift-Less Gift Exchange

- Let’s see what happens if we try another type of exchange. This one’s a gift exchange — but I don’t mean presents. I mean “gifts” as in skills, talents, or expertise!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every student five index cards and a pen. Have them write on each card one gift they currently have (like being able to do a walking handstand, being awesome at Photoshop, or having six years of language learning in another country). Give everyone five minutes or less to exchange cards to try to create the most interesting and diverse set of gifts. At the end of the five minutes, ask:

- Which of your gifts was the easiest to give away and why?
- Which of your gifts did you want to hang onto the most and why?
- Do you have any really good gifts still in your hand that no one wanted? What's everyone missing out on?
- Whether we know it or not, we all possess things that are really valuable – either to us or to other people.
 - Sometimes the things we take for granted are things other people wish they could have.
 - Sometimes it's easier to see value in something that belongs to someone else than it is to see value in something that's already ours.
- For the next few weeks, we're going to be talking about some really valuable things we all have the chance to give and receive from each other. But I don't mean puzzle pieces or the ability to juggle. I'm talking about things much more important than that.

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!*
 - **Time to brag! What's one thing you're really, really good at? How did you discover you were good at it? How did you get better at it?**
 - **Who's someone older than you whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**
 - **Who's someone your age (or younger) whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**

STORY | **Talk about a time someone helped you discover one of your gifts.**

- I don't know about you, but there have been times in my life when it has been difficult for me to see value in my gifts.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a student or volunteer to tell a story) about a time someone (like a teacher, coach, parent, friend, or pastor) helped you discover or refine one of your gifts. Maybe they helped you see how good you were at a skill like writing, singing, or athletics, or maybe they helped you see or develop a key character trait, like compassion, resilience, loyalty, or honesty. Share how they helped you discover or refine that gift and how that experience felt.*
- Typically, when we think about "exchanges" like these, it's usually someone older sharing wisdom with someone younger. It's a gift to have someone older and wiser be part of your life, but that's not the only way wisdom is exchanged.

STORY | **Talk about a time someone your age or younger helped you discover one of your gifts.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a student or volunteer to tell a story) about a time someone your age or younger helped you discover one of your gifts. Share how that experience was different from the first experience you shared. In this experience, how was your relationship more mutual than one-sided?*

QUESTION | **"How would you define 'mentor'?"**

- **Have you ever heard the word "mentor"? How would you define it?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

- A lot of the time, the word “mentor” makes us think of an older, wiser person giving advice to someone younger.
 - Relationships like those are so important to have! But for the next few weeks, we’re going to talk about how there are a lot of people you can receive wisdom from — and there are a lot of people who can receive wisdom from you too.
 - It’s true! You have wisdom you can share with others. Our ability to learn life lessons and share them with others is not determined by our age, but by our lived experience.

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 1:1-14

- Throughout this series, we’re going to be looking at two guys who had this kind of relationship.
 - Paul was an older guy who had experienced a lot, made big mistakes, and learned some hard lessons. As a result, he had tons of wisdom to share. He was also a really important leader in the early church and was passionate about spreading the message of Jesus around the world.
 - Timothy was a younger guy Paul was mentoring. He sometimes traveled with Paul on his trips to share the message of Jesus in different cities. Other times, he and Paul went separate ways so Timothy could work in one city while Paul traveled to another.
 - Paul saw something valuable in Timothy, so he began mentoring him by exchanging letters (and wisdom) with him. We can find these letters in the Bible in the books 1 and 2 Timothy.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 2 Timothy 1:1-14.*
- Watch what Paul does in the opening of his letter to Timothy. Paul encourages Timothy by reminding him of the gifts he knows Timothy has, like . . .
 - **A legacy of faith.** Timothy’s grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice passed down their faith to Timothy and influenced him in important ways — that’s a gift!
 - **Gifts given to him by God.** Paul reminds Timothy that his gifts of sharing the good news of Jesus were given to him directly from God. Timothy could teach, preach, and lead people in unique ways and Paul didn’t want him to forget it.
 - **The gift of salvation.** Just like Paul’s life had been transformed by Jesus, Timothy’s life had too. It’s easy to forget sometimes what a gift that is.
 - **A mission that matters.** Paul and Timothy were on a mission to share the good news of Jesus all over the world. It’s the same mission you and I are invited to be a part of too. Having a purpose and a mission that matters is a gift too!
- Then Paul tells Timothy to . . .
 - **Keep developing his gifts.** Paul was committed to helping Timothy understand all the ways he was gifted so he could use those gifts for the mission God had given him to do. In verse 6, he reminds Timothy to let his gifts continue growing.
 - **Be bold.** In verse 7, Paul tells Timothy not to be timid with his gifts, but to use them to accomplish the things God had called him to do. With Jesus, Timothy had nothing to be ashamed of!
 - **Stay close to Jesus.** Paul knew the key to Timothy continuing to develop his gifts was to stay close to God. He knew the Holy Spirit would give Timothy the boldness, strength, love, and discipline to continue using these gifts to share the good news of Jesus.
- Paul may have been older than Timothy, but Paul was encouraging Timothy to lead and preach to people of all ages — including people who were older than Timothy. So it’s not only an older person mentoring a younger person we see in this passage. We see the reverse can be true too!

SCRIPTURE | 1 Peter 4:10-11

- At the same time Paul and Timothy were preaching and leading, another guy named Peter was doing similar work in different communities.
 - Like Paul and Timothy, Peter was trying to help people figure out what it meant to follow Jesus.
 - Because Peter had been one of Jesus' closest friends and disciples, he had gathered a ton of wisdom from Jesus himself. After Jesus left earth, Peter began exchanging Jesus' wisdom with others.
- In one of the letters Peter wrote to a local group of Jesus-followers, he says . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.*
- Whether your gifts include speaking, serving, running, singing, writing, speaking in five different languages, or knowing more about comic books than anyone you've ever met, remember — the important thing is how you use your gifts to serve God and others.
- Like we saw earlier today, we all have unique gifts that are valuable. Sometimes we just need a little help seeing how valuable they are.
 - Of course, think about your own gifts and how you can use them to serve others. But don't stop there!
 - Next, think about the people you know. Which gifts do they have? How might they use those gifts to serve? And how can you help them discover the answers to those questions?
 - We need people to do this for us, but we have the opportunity to do it for others too. Like Paul, Timothy, and Peter all demonstrated, **we can help each other discover our gifts.**

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.*
 - ✳ **Besides our talents or skills, what are some other things that could be considered our "gifts"?**
 - ✳ **Do you think there are any gifts that can't be used to serve others? Give some examples and let's test it!**
 - ✳ **When we use our gifts to serve God and others, what could we gain from that experience?**

VIDEO | A Clip from *Up* (Carl gives Russell a special badge)

- If you've ever seen the movie *Up*, you've seen an example of two people of very different ages helping each other discover their gifts. Carl and Russell are two pretty unlikely adventure partners, but together they travel to another continent (in a house held up by balloons).
 - Russell's goal? He's a kid just trying to finally earn his merit badge by helping an elderly person.
 - Carl's goal? He's an old, lonely, grumpy man who's ready to go on one last adventure, in memory of his wife.
- Going on this adventure wasn't the plan, but something happened along the way: Carl and Russell both realized they had something valuable to exchange with each other.
 - Carl eventually helped Russell get that merit badge, but what Russell helped Carl discover was even more important.
 - Because of Russell, Carl discovered the thing his life was missing wasn't this one specific adventure, but real relationships with real people. His life was changed because a young person used their gifts to serve him — and along the way, helped him rediscover some gifts of his own, like courage, compassion, and selflessness.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip [like this one](#) (0:00-2:04) from [Up](#), where Carl gives Russell a special badge. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this](#).

OBJECT LESSON | The Gift Goes On

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need five nesting gift boxes, wrapped like presents. As you teach, ask five volunteers to come forward. Line them up and give the gift to one person and ask them to unwrap the gift. After they've unwrapped their gift, have them pass it on to the next person.
- But this exchange doesn't have to stop with just two people! Helping each other discover our gifts can cause a chain reaction.
 - When we help someone discover their gifts, it can inspire them to do the same for others. And that's the goal!
 - Just like Paul did for Timothy, and Jesus did for Peter, and Timothy and Peter did for the people they were leading, this chain reaction can keep going on and on and on.
- So think about the people you know. How are they gifted? Are they . . .
 - Always encouraging others?
 - Great at giving advice?
 - Really kind and compassionate?
 - Super funny, organized, smart, honest, or welcoming?
 - Really good at remembering birthdays, solving problems, or making peace when people are fighting?
- You know how, sometimes, it's not always easy for you to see value in yourself or in the things you're good at? The same is true for them. But you can help by:
 - **PAYING ATTENTION:** I know it's easy to go through your day thinking mostly about yourself. But each day, what if you tried to spot just one thing you admire about someone in your life?
 - **SPEAKING UP:** Your words are powerful, so tell them what you see in them! Even if you think it's obvious, it's possible no one has ever told them how gifted they are. Or maybe they just need the encouragement to keep using and developing that gift you see in them.
 - **WORKING TOGETHER:** Remember, we're talking about an "exchange" here. As you help others discover their gifts, ask them to help you discover yours too. Then help each other develop, practice, and use those gifts to serve. That's how you'll make a difference — not just in your own life, but in the world around you too.
- No matter how old we are, this is just one way we can exchange wisdom with the people around us. **We can help each other discover our gifts**, and then use those gifts to serve God and others.

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 1 Corinthians 12:6. Name one gift you have and how you think God might be able to use your gift for a bigger purpose.**
 - **In a typical day, what are some ways we could help each other discover or develop our gifts?**
 - ☆ **What makes it difficult to discover our gifts or help others discover theirs?**
 - **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone discover one of their gifts?**
 - **Invite someone to help you develop one of your gifts?**

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other discover our gifts.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 1:1-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:6

- **Time to brag! What's one thing you're really, really good at? How did you discover you were good at it? How did you get better at it?**
- **Who's someone older than you whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**
- **Who's someone your age (or younger) whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**
- **Besides our talents or skills, what are some other things that could be considered our "gifts"?**
- **Do you think there are any gifts that can't be used to serve others? Give some examples and let's test it!**
- **When we use our gifts to serve God and others, what could we gain from that experience?**
- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:6. Name one gift you have and how you think God might be able to use your gift for a bigger purpose.**
- **In a typical day, what are some ways we could help each other discover or develop our gifts?**
- **What makes it difficult to discover our gifts or help others discover theirs?**
- **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone discover one of their gifts?**
 - **Invite someone to help you develop one of your gifts?**



Give everyone a pile of index cards and a pen. For each person in the group, name three gifts you think they have. When everyone's gifts have been named, imagine a way you could all use at least one of your gifts to serve God and others together.

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other discover our gifts.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 1:1-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:6

- **Time to brag! What's one thing you're really, really good at? How did you discover you were good at it? How did you get better at it?**
- **Who's someone older than you whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**
- **Who's someone your age (or younger) whose wisdom you've learned from? What have they taught you?**
- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:6. Name one gift you have and how you think God might be able to use your gift for a bigger purpose.**
- **In a typical day, what are some ways we could help each other discover or develop our gifts?**
- **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone discover one of their gifts?**
 - **Invite someone to help you develop one of your gifts?**



Give everyone a pile of index cards and a pen. For each person in the group, name three gifts you think they have. When everyone's gifts have been named, imagine a way you could all use at least one of your gifts to serve God and others together.

WEEK 2 TEACHING GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

BIG IDEA

We can help each other develop discernment.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 2:7-15; Proverbs 3:5-6;
Proverbs 4:6-7

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

OBJECT LESSON | The Baton Exchange

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Purchase or create at least one baton to use for the next four weeks. As you teach, hold the baton anytime you talk about an “exchange” of wisdom. In the opening activities, use the baton (or several batons like it) for your relay races. You can use [basic plastic batons](#) or you can make your own with paper towel tubes and decorate them with streamers and [pom poms](#).

ACTIVITY | An Exchange of Facts (and Fictions)

- It’s week two of The Exchange, where we’re talking about how we all have valuable information to exchange with each other. But what happens when we’re not sure if that information is reliable or not?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, split into two teams: students and adults. Give your adults one minute to come up with two facts and one fiction about themselves. Then give them each an opportunity to present their facts and fiction to the students (while holding a [baton](#)). If you’d like only your adults to present their facts and fiction, your students will need to guess at least 75% of the fictions correctly in order to win. If you’d like to give students an opportunity to present facts and fictions as well, give both teams an equal number of turns. Encourage both teams to discuss and debate their answers before making their guesses.

ACTIVITY | Wisdom Relay

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this game, you’ll need a [baton](#) for every team and a set of trivia questions from your favorite trivia card game (or this [random trivia generator](#)). Divide students into equal teams of no more than ten and give each team a baton. When the game starts, each team must send one Messenger to the front of the room (with their baton) to retrieve a trivia question. The Messenger must run back to their team, deliver the question, get their team to agree on an answer, and pass the baton to someone new. The new Messenger must deliver their team’s answer to you and be given a new trivia question to bring back to their team to start all over again. Set a timer! The team who answers the most questions correctly in that time is the winner.

QUESTION | “When might we need help finding answers?”

- In the last few minutes, you’ve worked together to try to find quite a few answers. Sometimes those answers were easy to figure out, but other times, they were a challenge.

- The questions you tried to answer today could easily be figured out with a Google search or a little internet stalking, but in our everyday lives, sometimes coming up with the right answer is a little more challenging.
- Whether it's a question about relationships, faith, or a decision you need to make, we all need help finding answers sometime. When might we need help finding answers?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- If you've ever felt it's tough to know what's true, right, or good, I get it — it is complicated sometimes.
 - Should you choose volleyball or basketball?
 - What should you do when you're done with high school?
 - How do you decide who to be friends with? Or date?
 - What should you believe about the latest controversial topic?
 - How should you navigate the tricky situation you've found yourself in?
- Are these questions we're just supposed to answer on our own? The Bible doesn't exactly say anything about volleyball or college, so . . . what do we do when we need answers?

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's one question you wish you knew the answer to?**
 - **What are some of the big questions about life, relationships, or faith that people your age wish they had answers to?**

POLL | "Do you have someone to go to when you need answers?"

- So when you need answers, who do you go to? Well, it probably depends on the situation. In each of these scenarios, **do you have someone to go to when you need answers?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Either by raising their hands, applauding, texting their responses, or moving to a section of the room that you designate for each option, have your students respond to the following questions with either "No One," "Someone," or "A Few Someones." Give scenarios like:
 - When you still don't understand who started World War I.
 - When you're not sure if that new album everyone's talking about is actually cool or not.
 - When don't know which classes to take the next semester.
 - When you're not sure if that rumor you heard in school is true.
 - When you're not sure which side to take on a controversial subject.
 - When you're unclear about what God wants you to do next.
- Finding answers is more challenging in some situations than others, isn't it?
 - We might have a great group of people to get advice from in one situation, but feel alone in another.
 - Sometimes, a friend might come to us for advice, but we're not sure we're qualified to help.
 - And sometimes, we'll meet a problem or question so big we're not sure how to find the right answer.

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 are some of the common reasons you and your friends give each other advice? How confident are you that advice is worth following?
- ⊗ Has a friend ever asked you for advice, but you didn't feel qualified to help? What happened?

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 2:8-9, 14-18, 22-23

- Last week, we were introduced to two guys named Paul and Timothy. Remember . . .
 - Paul was the older and more experienced Jesus-follower who had a lot of wisdom to share with Timothy, who he was mentoring.
 - But Timothy had a lot of wisdom to share too – not just with Paul, but with the people Timothy was leading.
- Both Paul and Timothy were dedicated to helping some of the earliest followers of Jesus figure out what to do and believe about Jesus and his teachings. But there was a problem.
 - Because the Jesus movement was brand new and spreading quickly, people ended up spreading some incorrect or misleading ideas about who Jesus was and what he came to do.
 - Without leadership from people like Paul, Timothy, and others, Jesus' message was at risk of being confused and distorted.
 - Timothy, a young leader in the church where false teachings were spreading, was in desperate need of discernment. Think of discernment as the ability to know the best thing to do in an uncertain situation.
- I don't know about you, but if I were leading a church like Timothy was, that seems like a problem I would definitely want a wiser person to help me solve. So let's see what wisdom Paul exchanged with Timothy.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 2 Timothy 2:8-9, 14-18, 22-23.
- When Timothy needed discernment to navigate a tricky situation, Paul gave him advice. Paul told Timothy . . .
 - To always remember Jesus, who is the whole reason they are doing everything they're doing.
 - To remember and remind others often about what God has said.
 - That we shouldn't waste our time arguing about little things.
 - That we have to do our best to discern what's true, especially when it comes to what we believe about God.
 - To run away from things that are evil.
 - To run toward things that are good and Jesus-like.
- With these words, Paul stepped into Timothy's confusing situation and gave him clarity – and he did so by giving him practical advice and then pointing him back to Jesus.
 - Paul knew reminding people about the truth of Jesus would help them discern between what's true about him and what's false.
 - But I think Paul also knew pointing people back to Jesus would remind them to look at the way Jesus lived, what Jesus said, and what choices Jesus made.
- When we're stuck about what to do, think, or believe, we can "remember Jesus," like Paul told Timothy to do. If the decision we're making, opinion we're holding, or way we're acting doesn't look like Jesus, then it's probably not what we should be doing, thinking, or believing.
- Because of the wisdom he had gained, Paul knew "remembering Jesus" would help Timothy know how to:
 - Tell the difference between the truth and a lie.
 - Make wise decisions.
 - Discern what to do.
- Paul could see how this exchange of wisdom could continue to happen again and again. If he shared his wisdom with Timothy, Timothy would share his wisdom with the people around him too, and on and on and on.

SCRIPTURE | Proverbs 3:5-6

- But maybe it still seems a bit muddy to know God's best in unclear situations. After all, we don't exactly have Bible verses about Jesus choosing a college or dealing with an awkward break-up.
- In addition to Jesus' life, we also have access to the book of Proverbs. It's a book in the Bible known for its practical advice and wisdom.
 - Lots of these little bits of wisdom were written by a very wise king named Solomon.
 - Think of Proverbs as quotable little pieces of wisdom. They're short, so they're easy for us to remember, understand, and apply.
 - Solomon was great at helping others develop discernment in the days he lived in and he's still helping us now. So what does Solomon suggest we do when we don't know what to do?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Proverbs 3:5-6.
- Ultimately, Solomon reminds us wisdom and discernment come from God. But if we want it, we have to start by trusting God – and not ourselves.
- So what do we do when we're not sure what to do?
 - Like Solomon said, we admit we need help and look to God.
 - Like Paul said, we remember Jesus and everything we know to be true about him. We use his life and teachings as a guide for running toward what's like him and running away from what's not.
 - And like Paul and Timothy demonstrated, we don't try to figure it out alone. There is wisdom to be gained from the people around us because **we can help each other develop discernment.**

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.
- **When we're not sure what to do, how can looking to Jesus help you decide what to do? Do you think looking to Jesus helps in every situation? Why or why not?**
- **Read Proverbs 4:6-7. What are some of the best places we can go for wisdom? What are some of the worst?**

VIDEO | A Clip from Moana (Grandma Talla Gives Wisdom)

- If you've ever seen Moana, you've seen an example of someone helping another develop discernment in a moment of confusion and uncertainty.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip [like this one](#) (0:44-1:38) from *Moana*, where Grandma Talla gives Moana wisdom. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Grandma Talla didn't tell Moana everything she needed to know. She didn't give her every answer. But she gave her what she needed in order to make her decision.
 - Wouldn't you love to always have access to someone who could be that voice of discernment for you?
 - Wouldn't you love to be that voice for someone else?

REFLECTION | What To Do?

- We've talked about a few situations today where you might need help developing discernment.
 - Maybe it's a specific problem you're trying to solve now (like a fight with a friend, a hard decision you have to make, or what to think about a controversial subject).

- Or maybe it's a complicated situation you or your friends might face sometime in the future (like what to do after graduation, how to date with integrity, or what to do when you have questions about what you should believe).
- There are tons of situations we can probably all think of, but I just want you to choose one for now. Write it down. Then try to answer these questions:
 - What are you unsure about?
 - How do you think Jesus might handle it and why?
 - What wise advice have you already been given?
 - Who else can you ask for help?
 - Do you know anyone who might need help with this too?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen, and encourage students to write down a choice they or their friends need to make (or one they can imagine making soon). Play some quiet, reflective worship music while they write and reflect.
- I wonder if there's anyone here today who wrote down the same problem or situation you did. If so, I wonder how you could help each other.
- We all can benefit from having other people speaking wisdom into our lives — and we can do the same for others! When we choose the right people to listen to, we can . . .
 - Hear other perspectives.
 - Learn from other people's past experiences.
 - Avoid mistakes other people have made.
 - Learn lessons from others faster than trying to learn them on our own.
- Imagine how much you could learn by asking for help and advice from all sorts of people. People who . . .
 - Are going through what you're going through.
 - Know a lot about the subject you're dealing with.
 - Have personalities, perspectives, upbringings, or cultures that are different from yours.
 - Are younger than you and see things with fresh eyes.
 - Are older than you and have learned a lot already.
- Asking questions isn't a sign of weakness — it's a sign of wisdom. So when you need discernment:
 - **ADMIT YOU'RE UNSURE:** Like Solomon advised, don't trust in your own ability to know the right answers.
 - **LOOK TO JESUS:** What would Jesus do if he were you? What has he already taught and modeled for you through his life and teachings?
 - **LOOK FOR MORE WISDOM:** You can find it in Scripture, so take a look! You can also find it in the lessons people have already taught you, the knowledge people have already shared, and the experiences you've already had.
 - **ASK FOR HELP:** If we're not open to getting help or humble enough to ask for it, we're going to have a hard time developing the discernment we need. So who in your life can help? They don't need to be perfect. They don't need to be an expert. But who in your life reminds you of Jesus and could help you make some decisions about your next steps?
 - **PRACTICE HELPING OTHERS:** You don't need to be perfect or an expert to help someone else develop discernment. To do that, just share what you know and be honest about what you don't! Be willing to learn and change your mind as you continue developing more discernment too.
- No matter how old we are, this is just one way we can exchange wisdom with the people around us. When things seem confusing or unclear, we can help each other develop discernment.

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.*
 - ✪ **When you don't feel qualified to give a friend advice, what can you do?**
 - ✪ **How do you think we can tell if the advice or wisdom we receiving is actually good?**
 - **When you're in a confusing or uncertain situation, what holds you back from asking more people for help?**
 - **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone develop discernment?**
 - **Ask someone to help you develop discernment?**

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other develop discernment.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 2:7-15; Proverbs 3:5-6;
Proverbs 4:6-7

- **What's one question you wish you knew the answer to?**
- **What are some of the big questions about life, relationships, or faith that people your age wish they had answers to?**
- **What are some of the common reasons you and your friends give each other advice? How confident are you that advice is worth following?**
- **Has a friend ever asked you for advice, but you didn't feel qualified to help? What happened?**
- **When we're not sure what to do, how can looking to Jesus help you decide what to do? Do you think looking to Jesus helps in every situation? Why or why not?**
- **Read Proverbs 4:6-7. What are some of the best places we can go for wisdom? What are some of the worst?**
- **When you don't feel qualified to give a friend advice, what can you do?**
- **How do you think we can tell if the advice or wisdom we receiving is actually good?**
- **When you're in a confusing or uncertain situation, what holds you back from asking more people for help?**
- **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone develop discernment?**
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WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

THE EXCHANGE

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THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

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BIBLE

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Proverbs 4:6-7

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- **What are some of the big questions about life, relationships, or faith that people your age wish they had answers to?**
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- **Read Proverbs 4:6-7. What are some of the best places we can go for wisdom? What are some of the worst?**
- **When you're in a confusing or uncertain situation, what holds you back from asking more people for help?**
- **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Help someone develop discernment?**
 - **Ask someone to help you develop discernment?**

WHERE DO YOU NEED DISCERNMENT?

WHAT ARE YOU UNSURE ABOUT?

HOW DO YOU THINK JESUS MIGHT HANDLE IT AND WHY?

WHAT WISE ADVICE HAVE YOU ALREADY BEEN GIVEN?

WHO ELSE CAN YOU ASK FOR HELP?

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO MIGHT NEED HELP WITH THIS TOO?

The Exchange

WHERE DO YOU NEED DISCERNMENT?

WHAT ARE YOU UNSURE ABOUT?

HOW DO YOU THINK JESUS MIGHT HANDLE IT AND WHY?

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The Exchange

WEEK 3 TEACHING GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

BIG IDEA

We can help each other get equipped.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:97-105;
Hebrews 4:12

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

OBJECT LESSON | The Baton Exchange

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Purchase or create at least one baton to use for the next four weeks. As you teach, hold the baton anytime you talk about an “exchange” of wisdom. In the opening activities, use the baton (or several batons like it) for your relay races. You can use [basic plastic batons](#) or you can make your own with paper towel tubes and decorate them with streamers and [pom poms](#).

ACTIVITY | The Great Scavenger Exchange

- Welcome back to *The Exchange*, where we’re talking about all the wisdom we have to exchange with each other! So to get things started, let’s see how good you are at using your wisdom to solve some clues.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Split your students into teams of at least three. Give each team a [baton](#) and make sure at least one player has a camera handy – they’ll need it to take photos of their finds in this scavenger hunt. To play, put at least five clues on your screen that teams will need to solve, find, and photograph. Teams can work in any order they’d like but they’ll need to abide by these limits: only one team member at a time can leave their team huddle to find and photograph the item, they must take the baton with them, they must take only one photograph per trip, and they must pass the baton to someone new when they return. The first team to solve and photograph all of their items is the winner. Use any clues you’d like, but be mindful of where you do (and don’t) want students wandering around in your building. Here are a few ideas:
 - It that was hard to find in stores during the pandemic. (Hand sanitizer, toilet paper, etc.)
 - It can’t mix batter, but it can bake a cake. (Oven.)
 - Its waves are invisible but its beeps are hard to miss. (Microwave.)
 - Stay tuned for this next clue – it has strings that can’t be tied. (Guitar.)
 - A liquid that can wake you up and keep you up. (Coffee, energy drinks, or other caffeinated beverages.)
- Obviously, you’re all pretty smart. But can you imagine how confused you would have been if I had just put these on the screen with no real instructions of what to do with them?
- If I told you “figure it out,” but didn’t equip you with the guidance you needed on what to do next – well, it would have been a pretty awkward five minutes.

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.*
 - **Tell us about a time you were really unprepared for something.**
 - ⊛ **When you realize you're really unprepared for something, how do you usually feel or respond?**

STORY | Talk about two times you didn't feel equipped for a situation.

- Outside of youth group games, most situations in our lives don't exactly come with clear instructions, right? Have you ever been in a situation you didn't feel equipped to handle? Maybe you thought you were well-prepared — but you definitely weren't? Not at all?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Talk about two times you didn't feel equipped for a situation — a lighthearted example (like packing badly for a vacation or showing up to an exam having read the wrong chapter), followed by a real-life example. Maybe you had to make a difficult decision, were trying to navigate a conflict with a loved one, or were trying to figure out what you believed about something specific. Emphasize how you didn't feel like you had the tools, information, or answers you needed to figure it out.*
- For the last couple of weeks, we've been talking about some of the different ways we can exchange wisdom with each other, like by helping each other discover our gifts or develop discernment. That's especially important in tough moments like when . . .
 - We have to make a difficult decision.
 - We're not sure how to navigate a conflict with someone we love.
 - We don't know the wisest choice to make.
 - We're not sure what to think about a controversial subject.
 - Or even we don't know what to believe about God.
- Today I want to talk about what we can do in these moments to help each other make sure we're equipped to handle whatever life throws at us. And here's a hint — the thing that will equip you is something you're already at least a little bit familiar with.

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

STORY | Talk about a time Scripture equipped you for a difficult situation.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Revisit the story you just shared, but this time explain how Scripture equipped you (or could have equipped you) to navigate the difficult situation you were experiencing. Which ideas, stories, people, and truths in the Bible equipped you (or could have equipped you) to handle that difficult situation with wisdom?*

OBJECT LESSON | A Landline Phone

- Some of you don't need me to convince you the Bible is full of guidance and help for these difficult moments. But for some of you, I know that's not the case. And that's okay! I really do get it. But stick with me — because I hope I'll be able to show you just how valuable Scripture can be in moments where our instructions for life aren't quite so clear.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As you teach, hold and interact with a [landline telephone](#).*
- Has anyone ever used (or even seen) a phone like this before? These things might look ancient now, but a few decades ago, they were revolutionary. They helped people connect in ways that were never possible before.

- It can be tempting to look at the Bible like we look at this telephone. I mean, it's ancient! It's outdated! Who would choose to use it when we have so many other options available? How is it even relevant?
- Maybe someone should help God develop a better communication strategy. TikToks, maybe? A YouTube channel? Something – anything more up-to-date?
- But here's the thing about the Bible (and this landline phone). No, it's not brand new. No, we might not know what to do with it right away. But thankfully . . .
 - People have been studying it for a lot longer than we have, so we don't have to figure it out alone.
 - It has withstood the test of time.
 - And most importantly, it works – if you know how to use 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.*
 - **What are some examples of difficult situations we might feel unprepared to handle?**
 - ★ **On a scale of 1-10, how useful does the Bible feel in your everyday life? Tell us why you think so!**

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 3:14-17

- For the last few weeks, we've been talking about two guys named Paul and Timothy. Paul was Timothy's mentor, and they both mentored different groups of Jesus-followers during the days of the early church.
 - The books of 1 and 2 Timothy are two letters Paul wrote to Timothy during those years.
 - Although these books weren't addressed to you and me, they're still relevant and helpful all these years later. Why? Because in these letters, Paul is relaying to Timothy wisdom that comes from God – and God's wisdom and truth is timeless.
 - So let's take a look at what Paul says about God's words that have been recorded in Scripture.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.*
- Paul wanted to help Timothy grow in wisdom, but he knew that would never be possible if Timothy wasn't spending time studying what God had said in Scripture.
- To help Timothy remember how valuable Scripture is, Paul tells him it's useful for:
 - **TEACHING:** Scripture can teach us what's true about God, ourselves, and the world we live in. Sometimes it teaches through stories, sometimes through clear instructions, and sometimes even through poetry or songs.
 - **CORRECTION:** Look, we all need to be corrected sometimes, don't we? Sometimes the correction we need is a little nudge back in the right direction. Other times, a more direct confrontation is needed. In Scripture, we'll find both things – and that's a good thing.
 - **TRAINING:** If you were trying to learn a new skill, but your trainer only ever told you what not to do . . . well, that wouldn't be very helpful. Thankfully, that's not what the Bible does. Scripture isn't just one big long list of nos. It's filled with instructions about how to say yes to the right things – the things God loves.
- Paul wraps this up by telling Timothy Scripture would "equip" him for everything that was ahead of him.

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.*

- Has Scripture ever helped you handle a difficult situation? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?
- ☉ If you're familiar with the Bible, what's one thing it can teach us? What's one way it might correct us? What's one way it can train us?

OBJECT LESSON | The Equipment Bag

- When Paul says God's words would "equip" Timothy, he means Scripture would give him everything he needed to accomplish his purpose – all the guidance, instruction, encouragement, and more.
 - So what's one difficult situation someone your age might need help with?
 - And what "equipment" could Scripture equip you with in that situation?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, grab a bag or suitcase and some miscellaneous supplies. These could be supplies for a specific task or random things you find in your storage closet. What you grab doesn't matter, as long as the supplies you grab are useful. Ask your students to shout out some scenarios a specific teenager might need help navigating. Then brainstorm what kinds of "equipment" Scripture could give you to help you navigate it. Each time an example is given, toss an item into the bag to represent that example.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 119:97-105

- In the Old Testament book of Psalms, there's an entire song (and it's a long one) about how amazing Scripture is. Take a look at how in love the author is with God's words, as they've been written down in Scripture.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 119:97-105.
- In just this short passage, look at all the things the author says God's words do:
 - Make us wise.
 - Give us insight.
 - Give us understanding.
 - Keep us from destructive choices.
 - Keep us close to God.
 - Give us light, clarity, and direction on our journeys.
- Sometimes life is going to be hard to navigate. It will be confusing, unclear, and full of changes. But what never changes is the truth of God's words. They equip us for anything and everything we'll ever face.
 - But in order to get equipped by God's words, we have to actually spend time with God's words, like Paul encouraged Timothy to do.
 - Just like Paul encouraged Timothy to better understand God's words, and just like they both helped the people they led better understand God's words, we can do that for each other too. When we help each other better understand what God has said through Scripture, **we can help each other get equipped.**

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

VIDEO | A Clip from Mulan (Mulan vs. Honghui)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip [like this one](#) (0:00-1:40) from Mulan, where Mulan and Honghui spar during their time in training. You may want to play this clip silently while you continue teaching, since there is no dialogue. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, read this!

- If you've ever seen the movie *Mulan*, you've seen a picture of what it looks like for people to help each other get equipped.
 - In the movie, *Mulan*, Honghui, and their fellow soldiers must learn how to fight and defend China against an invading army. But most of these soldiers have no idea what they're doing.
 - When their training begins, it quickly becomes clear they must work together, challenge each other, help each other, and support each other if they want to succeed. After all, they're not just a bunch of individual soldiers — they're part of a bigger army.

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 4:12. How would you explain what this passage is saying? Have God's words ever done this for you?**
 - **If someone wanted to start reading the Bible for the first time, what advice would you give them?**

RESPONSE | Spiritual Habit Tracker App

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already, this is a great opportunity to introduce (or re-introduce) the fall discipleship activity, the Spiritual Habit Tracker App! This tool is designed to help students grow together by building healthy spiritual habits in community with each other. Encourage students to set Scripture-specific habits based on the ideas listed here.*
- So what does it look like for us to let Scripture help us get more equipped for whatever life throws at us? And how can we help each other do the same? Here are a few ideas.
 - **READ IT!** God's words can't help you navigate life if you never read them. So start there! You don't need to read the whole Bible, cover-to-cover, by next week or anything. Start somewhere manageable, like . . .
 - **A short Bible-reading plan.** There's actually a plan in the Bible app that goes along with this series. Every day, you'll get a short devotional and a short passage of Scripture to read. If you need something quick to get you started or to add on to what you're already doing, try it!
 - **A devotional.** If you're looking for something more in-depth, there are tons of devotional books people have written about different subjects. Some books might help you study a tough subject, while others will study a book of the Bible or a person from Scripture.
 - **A book at a time.** And of course, you can just read the Bible! Books like John, James, Proverbs, and Psalms are great places to start. Pick one and start reading.
 - **LEARN ABOUT IT!** There's a lot to learn about the Bible besides what's written inside the Bible itself. Maybe you want to read a book written by someone who has studied the Bible. Or maybe you want to watch videos about the Bible, like the ones from [BibleProject](#).
 - **MEMORIZE IT!** You don't need to memorize entire books or anything. But when an idea or thought stands out to you, try committing it to memory so it's always available to you when you need it.
 - **TALK ABOUT IT!** Here's where that "helping each other" idea comes in. Don't do any of this alone! Talk to each other about what you're learning, reading, listening to, and discovering about God's words. Share what you find interesting, confusing, or challenging. Jump on FaceTime to debate something you read that you're trying to understand. Talking about what you're discovering in Scripture doesn't have to be a chore. When you're doing it with friends, it can be pretty fun!

- You don't have to be an expert with twelve Bible degrees to help each other learn from God's words. No matter how old we are, we can exchange wisdom with the people around us when **we help each other get equipped**.

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.*
 - ★ **When it comes to the Bible, what are your biggest challenges or questions? How can we help?**
 - **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Get equipped with God's words?**
 - **Help someone else get equipped with God's words?**

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other get equipped.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:97-105;
Hebrews 4:12

- Tell us about a time you were really unprepared for something.
- When you realize you're really unprepared for something, how do you usually feel or respond?
- What are some examples of difficult situations we might feel unprepared to handle?
- On a scale of 1-10, how useful does the Bible feel in your everyday life? Tell us why you think so!
- Has Scripture ever helped you handle a difficult situation? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?
- If you're familiar with the Bible, what's one thing it can teach us? What's one way it might correct us? What's one way it can train us?
- Read Hebrews 4:12. How would you explain what this passage is saying? Have God's words ever done this for you?
- If someone wanted to start reading the Bible for the first time, what advice would you give them?
- When it comes to the Bible, what are your biggest challenges or questions? How can we help?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to:
 - Get equipped with God's words?
 - Help someone else get equipped with God's words?



Open Habits, the spiritual habit-tracker app by Grow Curriculum. Create at least one habit that will help your whole group spend time with Scripture this week. Then make a plan to check in on each other throughout the week.

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other get equipped.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:97-105;
Hebrews 4:12

- **Tell us about a time you were really unprepared for something.**
- **What are some examples of difficult situations we might feel unprepared to handle?**
- **Has Scripture ever helped you handle a difficult situation? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?**
- **Read Hebrews 4:12. How would you explain what this passage is saying? Have God's words ever done this for you?**
- **If someone wanted to start reading the Bible for the first time, what advice would you give them?**
- **This week, what's one thing you'll do to:**
 - **Get equipped with God's words?**
 - **Help someone else get equipped with God's words?**



Open Habits, the spiritual habit-tracker app by Grow Curriculum. Create at least one habit that will help your whole group spend time with Scripture this week. Then make a plan to check in on each other throughout the week.

WEEK 4 TEACHING GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

BIG IDEA

We can help each other find strength.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 4:6-18; Psalm 121;
2 Corinthians 12:9

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

OBJECT LESSON | The Baton Exchange

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Purchase or create at least one baton to use for the next four weeks. As you teach, hold the baton anytime you talk about an “exchange” of wisdom. In the opening activities, use the baton (or several batons like it) for your relay races. You can use [basic plastic batons](#) or you can make your own with paper towel tubes and decorate them with streamers and [pom poms](#).

ACTIVITY | Exchangeable Inflatables

- It's the last week of The Exchange, so let's test your strength and finish strong with one last relay exchange!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need two [batons](#) and two large pool floats. Any shape will do, but we recommend going for something wild, like a unicorn or an avocado. To play, divide your students into two teams and have them stand behind their inflatables. To play, one student must take the baton and climb onto the inflatable. The rest of their team must push them to the other side of the room. When they arrive, the student with the baton must get off, hand the baton to someone else, and stay where they are. Their team must then return to the starting line and repeat with the new baton-holder. When there are only two teammates remaining, one of them must get on the inflatable while their teammate pushes them across the finish line. The first team to get everyone across is the winner.
- Those were some pretty impressive feats of strength, people! But maybe you noticed — things went a lot faster earlier in the game when there were more people sharing their strength with their team.

VIDEO | A Clip of a Runner Being Carried Across the finish line

- Have you ever seen one of those clips that tends to go viral where a runner gets injured in the middle of a race? It's so heartbreaking — until another runner or two steps in and helps carry them over the finish line. I don't know what's more likely to make me cry: videos of puppies getting rescued or something like this . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:00-0:59) of a runner finishing a race with some help. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- I don't know exactly what it is about these clips that gets me, but I think it has something to do with this:

- There have been moments in my life when someone gave me the strength and support I needed when I was hurting or weak.
- But I've also had moments when I really needed some support from the people around me, but I struggled to find it.
- And there have been times when I've had the chance to be strong for someone I loved when it was hard for them to be strong for themselves.

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.*
 - **No matter how "strong" you think you are, what's a viral video that always makes you tear up a little bit?**
 - ★ **Who's someone in your life who you'd consider "strong"? Why do you think so?**
 - ★ **On a scale of 1-10, how strong do you think you usually are? Why do you say that?**

QUESTION | "When might someone need to borrow other people's strength?"

- Whether you can relate to that or not, what do you think? **When might someone need to borrow other people's strength?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- When we're feeling stressed, tired, defeated, hurting, or afraid, it can feel a little bit like we're running a race all alone.
 - We might wonder if anyone understands or cares about what we're experiencing.
 - We might get angry or bitter when people don't show up for us the way we want or need them too.
 - Or we might even do the opposite. We might convince ourselves we can handle it alone — that we don't need anyone else's help.
- Even if life feels pretty good for you right now, the truth is, we all have moments when we could borrow some strength from other people. Right now, maybe it's you. Or maybe it's someone you know.

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

STORY | Talk about a time someone helped you find strength.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time someone helped you find strength during a difficult moment. Share what was happening, who helped you, how they helped you find strength when you needed it, and how it impacted you. You may also want to share how this person knew to support you. Did you ask for help or did they notice your needs without you needing to reach out?*
- Look, I know you're strong. I think I'm pretty strong too. There are a lot of things we can handle on our own. But aren't you glad we don't have to handle everything alone?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What are some situations that might make us feel tired, discouraged, or weak and in need of strength? Which of those have you experienced?**
 - **When you're feeling tired, discouraged, or weak, what helps you find strength?**

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 4:6-18

- Over the course of this series, we've talked a lot about Paul and Timothy. Remember . . .
 - Paul was an older guy who had experienced a lot, made big mistakes, and learned some hard lessons. As a result, he had tons of wisdom to share. He was also a really important leader in the early church and was passionate about spreading the message of Jesus around the world.
 - Timothy was a younger guy Paul was mentoring. He sometimes traveled with Paul on his trips to share the message of Jesus in different cities. Other times, he and Paul went separate ways so Timothy could work in one city while Paul traveled to another.
 - Paul saw something valuable in Timothy, so he began mentoring him by exchanging letters (and wisdom) with him. We can find these letters in the Bible in the books 1 and 2 Timothy.
- In the last few weeks, we've read a lot of Paul's words of wisdom to Timothy. But what we're going to read today will be a little different. These are actually some of Paul's last words to Timothy.
 - Paul was writing this letter from prison. He had actually been to prison before because he refused to stop preaching the good news of Jesus. But this time was different. He was about to die and he knew it.
 - So you know everything we've been reading and talking about for the last few weeks? Paul gave all of that advice to Timothy, knowing he wouldn't get another chance.
 - This guy who had done so many incredible things for God and exchanged so much wisdom with people was now alone in a jail cell waiting for his death.
- But even when things were looking dark for Paul, he took the time to share whatever strength he still had with Timothy by encouraging and supporting him.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 2 Timothy 4:6-18.*
- Did you notice how much strength Paul seems to have in this moment? Instead of showing fear or anger at his circumstances, Paul . . .
 - Celebrates the fight he has fought and the race he has run.
 - Is filled with hope and joy for what's to come when he sees Jesus.
- But Paul is also honest about the difficult things he's experiencing.
 - He's been deserted by at least one friend.
 - His other friends are in different cities.
 - Another person did something to cause Paul harm.
 - His supporters deserted him.
 - And, of course, he was facing the threat of death.
- But did you notice what he said? After all of that, Paul says, "but God gave me strength." He says he knows God will protect him, even if he dies. He's confident in God — and that's where his strength comes from.
 - Paul wasn't asking for Timothy to give him strength. He had already found it in God. But I think Timothy's presence also helped Paul find the strength he shows in this passage.
 - Even though Timothy was far away, Paul knew he wasn't alone. He wrote this letter to Timothy, knowing Timothy would read it and continue passing on the wisdom Paul had been exchanging with him.
- In many ways, Paul's final exchange with Timothy wasn't just with Timothy. It was an exchange with all of the people Timothy led and shared Paul's letters with. And it's even an exchange with us today, people living thousands of years later, as we continue reading Paul's writings and learning from his insight.

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.*
 - ✪ **Just like Paul was honest with Timothy, why do you think it's important to share the difficult things we're experiencing with each other? What could happen if we don't?**
 - ✪ **What are some unhealthy or ineffective ways people sometimes try to be strong? What would you say to those people to help or encourage them?**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 121

- Like Paul and Timothy, we can find strength in each other when life gets difficult. But ultimately, the strength we can exchange with each other comes from one place — God.
 - Psalm 121 is a psalm that was often sung by the Jewish people as they traveled from their homes to the temple in Jerusalem, where they would gather to worship.
 - For many people, it would have been a long and tiring journey. But as they made the difficult journey and sang this song, they would remember together where their strength really comes from.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 121.*
- You and I only have a limited amount of strength.
 - **We can't always be strong.** If we can't admit our own weaknesses, we miss out on opportunities to experience God's amazing strength.
 - **We can't always be strong for other people.** We weren't meant to carry our own burdens, or anyone else's, forever. We're only human.
 - **But we can always trust that God is strong.** Our help comes from God — our source of strength who never gets tired, gives up, or doesn't show up for us.
- Just like Paul and Timothy helped each other find strength during Paul's final days, we can do that for each other too. When we're tired, stressed, upset, afraid, defeated, or hurting, we can exchange support with each other. When life is difficult, **we can help each other find strength.**

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

VIDEO | A Clip from *Onward* (Ian Crosses the Invisible Bridge)

- If you've ever seen the movie *Onward*, you've seen an example of how we can help each other find strength during these difficult moments.
 - If you haven't seen the movie, it's the story of two boys named Barley and Ian, who are on a quest to spend one more day with their dad.
 - Along the way, they encounter a bottomless pit they can't figure out how to cross — until they discover Ian has the ability to walk on thin air. Check out how Barley helps Ian find the strength to make it across.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip [like this one](#) (1:13-3:26) from *Onward*, where Ian crosses an invisible bridge. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- When you're in the middle of a situation that's scary, stressful, or painful, wouldn't it be nice to have someone like Barley behind you cheering, "you can do this"?

- This may not seem like original or life-changing advice, but when we need strength in a difficult moment, we don't usually need original or life-changing advice anyway. In those moments, what we really need to know is we're not alone.

RESPONSE | Sending Strength

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For your final week of this series, set up a photo booth after your teaching time for students, small groups, or your whole group of students together, can take photos together. If you've already used the room design ideas provided with this series, we recommend using that set-up as your backdrop. Encourage students to take pictures together and send them to each other, along with a message offering their support and strength during tough times.
- Take a look around this room.
 - It's filled with people who can help you find strength when you're going through a tough time.
 - It's also filled with people who need someone like you to help them find strength when they're going through a tough time.
- We can't be each other's ultimate, never-failing, always-available sources of strength. No human is capable of that kind of support. But that's okay, because Jesus is. It's our job to help each other find strength in him.
- So what can we do when we know (or suspect) someone we care about needs a little extra strength?
 - **PRAY:** But don't just say you'll pray for them — really do it! And when you pray for them, let them know. Shoot them a text that says, "Hey, I prayed for you today! How are things?" When you let someone know you're praying for them, you're not only letting them know they're not alone — you're also pointing them back to God, their ultimate source of strength. But praying for someone isn't the only thing you can or should do to help them find strength. You should also . . .
 - **HELP:** Sometimes when someone is struggling, it's because they need more than prayers or emotional support. They need help. They might need someone to talk to. Their family might need help paying rent. They might need help finding a trusted adult to confide in. Or they might just need a little help with a big project that's really stressing them out. Whatever their need is, when you show up to help, you let them borrow some of your strength for a moment — that's God's love in action. If you're not sure how to help, that's okay! You don't need to know the answers. You just need to ask, "How can I help you right now?"
 - **ENCOURAGE:** Just like Barley cheering Ian on over that invisible bridge, sometimes someone just needs a kind word or some gentle reassurance they'll be okay. Sometimes it's hard to know what to say when our friends are struggling though. We might be afraid of saying the wrong thing or saying something cliché. If you're not sure, start with, "I'm here for you," or "I care about you," or "We'll get through this together."
- Giving and receiving support from each other isn't a sign of weakness. It's actually a sign of strength and courage.
 - When life gets a little tough, there are so many ways we can exchange support. But we don't do that by trying to be each other's sources of strength forever.
 - We do it by helping each other know we're not alone and that God is our ultimate source of strength. That's how we'll really **help each other find strength.**

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 2 Corinthians 12:9. What do you think Paul means when he says he's strong when he's weak?
- Is there anything going on in your life right now that's making you feel weak and in need of strength? If so, how can we help?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to:
- Find strength in God?
- Help someone else find strength in God?

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other find strength.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 4:6-18; Psalm 121;
2 Corinthians 12:9

- No matter how "strong" you think you are, what's a viral video that always makes you tear up a little bit?
- Who's someone in your life who you'd consider "strong"? Why do you think so?
- On a scale of 1-10, how strong do you think you usually are? Why do you say that?
- What are some situations that might make us feel tired, discouraged, or weak and in need of strength? Which of those have you experienced?
- When you're feeling tired, discouraged, or weak, what helps you find strength?
- Just like Paul was honest with Timothy, why do you think it's important to share the difficult things we're experiencing with each other? What could happen if we don't?
- What are some unhealthy or ineffective ways people sometimes try to be strong? What would you say to those people to help or encourage them?
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. What do you think Paul means when he says he's strong when he's weak?
- Is there anything going on in your life right now that's making you feel weak and in need of strength? If so, how can we help?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to:
 - Find strength in God?
 - Help someone else find strength in God?

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

THE EXCHANGE

We all make exchanges — all the time, in fact! Whether you're shopping, texting your best friend, swapping snacks at the lunch table, or returning a wave to a neighbor, most of the exchanges we make aren't very memorable. But the exchanges that stick with us are the exchanges we have with people who impact our lives for the better. Maybe you've exchanged meaningful advice, wisdom, or encouragement with your friends, family members, heroes, coaches, pastors, or younger people you've invested in. Those exchanges are what this series is all about. In this four-week series from 2 Timothy, we'll explore some advice the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring, because we can learn from Paul's wisdom too. Through it, we'll see how we can all exchange wisdom with each other (no matter our age) by helping each other **discover our gifts, develop discernment, get equipped, and find strength.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

We can help each other find strength.

BIBLE

2 Timothy 4:6-18; Psalm 121;
2 Corinthians 12:9

- No matter how "strong" you think you are, what's a viral video that always makes you tear up a little bit?
- What are some situations that might make us feel tired, discouraged, or weak and in need of strength? Which of those have you experienced?
- When you're feeling tired, discouraged, or weak, what helps you find strength?
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. What do you think Paul means when he says he's strong when he's weak?
- Is there anything going on in your life right now that's making you feel weak and in need of strength? If so, how can we help?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to:
 - Find strength in God?
 - Help someone else find strength in God?

ONE-MINUTE SERMON SCRIPTS

THE EXCHANGE

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

Okay, it's time to brag! What's one thing you're really, really good at? Now, there have been times in my life when it was for me to see value in my gifts. But fortunately, I've had people in my helped me develop those gifts. We see this in the story of Paul and Timothy, two guys we can read about in Scripture. In the first chapter of the book 2 Timothy, Paul takes time to point out some of Timothy's gifts and encourage him to keep developing them, and to be bold about it too! But whether your gifts include speaking, serving, running, singing, writing, speaking in five different languages, or knowing more about comic books than anyone you've ever met, remember – the important thing is how you use your gifts for a purpose: to serve God and others. We all have unique gifts that are valuable. Sometimes we just need a little help seeing how valuable they are. So let's all exchange some more wisdom, because **we can help each other discover our gifts**.

WEEK 2

In a typical day, we probably have a lot of questions that can figured out pretty easily with a Google search or a little internet stalking. But in our everyday lives, sometimes coming up with the right answer is a little more challenging. Whether it's a question about relationships, faith, or a decision you need to make, we all need help finding answers sometime. In the book of 2 Timothy, chapter two, we read about a situation where Paul gave Timothy (the guy he was mentoring) some advice about how to handle a difficult situation. He gave him a lot of practical advice about what to do, but he also encouraged him to simply "remember Jesus" – to look to him as the source of all wisdom, guidance, and discernment. When we do, we can not only gain more wisdom from others, but we can share the wisdom we've gained with others too. There is so much wisdom to be gained from the people around us because **we can help each other develop discernment**.

WEEK 3

So listen. I know some of you might need a little convincing to believe the Bible actually contains the kind of help and guidance you need during difficult moments. And that's okay! I really do get it. So stick with me — because I hope I'll be able to show you just how valuable Scripture can be in moments where life doesn't seem to come with clear instructions. In the book of 2 Timothy (that's in the Bible), we have a letter from a guy named Paul to Timothy, a guy he was mentoring. To help Timothy remember how valuable Scripture is, Paul tells him it's useful for teaching, correction, and training. He also says it would "equip" Timothy for everything that was ahead of him. That's a pretty big promise, especially when life gets hard to navigate. Sometimes it's confusing, unclear, and full of changes, but what never changes is the truth of God's words. And when we help each other better understand God's words, **we help each other get equipped.**

WEEK 4

Have you ever seen one of those viral clips where a runner gets injured in the middle of a race? It's heartbreaking — until another runner or two steps in and carries them over the finish line. I don't know about you, but there have been moments in my life when someone gave me the strength and support I needed when I was hurting or weak. And there have been times when I've had the chance to do that for others. In the book of 2 Timothy, we get a look at a situation where strength and support was really needed. Paul was in prison and about to be killed for his faith, so he wrote a letter to his friend Timothy, encouraging him to be strong and reminding him their strength came from God. In the same way, when you and I are feeling stressed, afraid, weak, or hurting, it's so important to remind each other know we're not alone and that God is our ultimate source of strength. That's how we'll **help each other find strength.**

MARKETING CHECKLIST

THE EXCHANGE

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 this week called The Exchange – it's all about passing the baton of wisdom back and forth. See you there!

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, this week we talked about helping each other discover how we're gifted! Here's a recap.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption: Remember, your words are powerful, so tell other people the good things you see in them! Even if you think it's obvious, it's possible no one has ever told them how gifted they are.
	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, this week we talked about how to help each other make wise choices when life is complicated. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, asking questions isn't a sign of weakness — it's a sign of wisdom. Imagine how much you could learn by asking for help and advice from all sorts of people!</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, this week we talked about how Scripture prepares us to handle tricky situations with wisdom. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, Scripture can help you get more equipped for whatever life throws at you. So read it! Learn about it! Memorize it! And talk about it with others!</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, this week we talked about giving each other support when we're in need of strength. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, when life gets tough, we don't support each other by trying to be each other's sources of strength forever. We do it by helping each other know we're not alone and that God is our ultimate source of strength.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS

THE EXCHANGE

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 this week called The Exchange — it's all about passing the baton of wisdom back and forth. See you there!

AFTER WEEK 1



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 1)

In case you missed it, this week we talked about helping each other discover how we're gifted! Here's a recap.

AFTER WEEK 2



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 2)

In case you missed it, this week we talked about how to help each other make wise choices when life is complicated. Here's a recap!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)

Remember, your words are powerful, so tell other people the good things you see in them! Even if you think it's obvious, it's possible no one has ever told them how gifted they are.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)

Remember, asking questions isn't a sign of weakness — it's a sign of wisdom. Imagine how much you could learn by asking for help and advice from all sorts of people!

AFTER WEEK 3



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 3)

In case you missed it, this week we talked about how Scripture prepares us to handle tricky situations with wisdom. Here's a recap!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)

Remember, Scripture can help you get more equipped for whatever life throws at you. So read it! Learn about it! Memorize it! And talk about it with others!

AFTER WEEK 4



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 4)

In case you missed it, this week we talked about giving each other support when we're in need of strength. Here's a recap!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)

Remember, when life gets tough, we don't support each other by trying to be each other's sources of strength forever. We do it by helping each other know we're not alone and that God is our ultimate source of strength.

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

The Exchange



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

The Exchange



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WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

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