



### GOAL

Youth discern which practices they want to incorporate in their lives from those they have learned about in this unit.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



### PRAYER

Creative God,  
give me the courage to  
embrace something new.  
Let my heart be open  
and my mind be receptive  
as I guide and teach.

## THIS SESSION

Experimenting with spiritual disciplines is all about trying out new ways to create space for God in our lives. When we try something new, we learn what we like and don't like, what works and doesn't work for us. Trying new spiritual disciplines reminds us that God continues to show up in our lives in unique and sometimes unexpected ways. This is a good time to summarize what youth have learned and practiced in previous sessions and to encourage them to keep practicing.

## THE BIBLE STORY

Hebrews 3 and 4 highlight God's rest and how we are able to enter that rest through Jesus. Because Jesus was fully human, he understands our confusions and struggles. Knowing this, we can approach God with all that we have in the confidence that we are accepted and embraced.

The word *approach* in Hebrews 4:16 is sometimes translated as "draw near" or "come boldly." We draw near to God through spiritual practices like prayer, dance, song, art, silence, presence, fellowship, and more. Hebrews 4:15–16 encourages us to try new ways to draw near to God. It reminds us that, if we try a spiritual practice and do not find ourselves connecting with God and creation through it, that is OK! We can always try something else.

## CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

While some youth may feel pressure to fit a certain mold, experimentation is a norm for this age. Youth may not, however, feel encouraged to experiment with the different ways they worship, serve, and honor God. Sometimes our Christian communities can pressure youth to fit a certain mold. Youth may find freedom and empowerment by learning that they can experiment with the ways they draw near to God.

## SESSION PREPARATION

- "Call and Response" (p. 40): Post the "Call and Response" newsprint from session 1 (p. 6).

Depending on the options you choose:

- "New Worshiping Communities" (p. 41): Preview the videos and discern which two will resonate best with your youth.
- "Worship Leader" (p. 42): Invite a worship leader or someone involved in teaching spiritual disciplines to speak about the spiritual practices of your church and how your church tries new things.
- "Exploring the Infographic Poster" (p. 42): Obtain the *Practice Spiritual Disciplines* infographic poster ([bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters](http://bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters), Year 1 Set).

# GETTING STARTED

- 
- “Call and Response” newsprint

## CALL AND RESPONSE

QC

Lead youth in the following prayer or invite a volunteer to lead:

Draw near to God

**and God will draw near to us.**

When we try new spiritual disciplines,  
we find new ways to be with God.

**Let us keep company with Jesus.**



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- 
- Drawing supplies
  - Paper

## DRAWING AN EXPERIENCE

C

Distribute paper and drawing supplies. Invite youth to spend some time drawing a picture of a time when they tried something new. After approximately four minutes, invite youth to share their pictures and describe what they’ve drawn. Prompt participants to explain what inspired them to do something new, how they felt during their first experience, and what the outcomes were. As a group, discuss the similarities among different experiences shared.

## LOOKING BACK

C CT

Challenge youth to look back on the past five sessions and summarize what they learned in each session. Call out each session by name—Fast, Pray, Listen to God, Embrace Simplicity, and Unplug—and prompt youth if they are having a difficult time recalling information. Use the following prompts to facilitate a discussion:

- ➔ Which of these spiritual disciplines were you already familiar with? Which one was somewhat new to you?
- ➔ Which of these spiritual disciplines did you connect with the most? Have you tried any of them at home?
- ➔ How do you think spiritual disciplines like these can be useful in your own faith?



Youth often use the term *vibe* to indicate a good feeling or connection. You can also use this as a teaching moment to talk about how many religions use vibrational energy to connect spiritually. For example: a singing bowl—which is often used by Tibetan Buddhists, and now by many practitioners of different faiths—produces a rich, deep tone and vibrates in a way that relaxes practitioners and deepens their meditation practice. Encourage youth to think about the vibrations (organ music, acapella hymns, other forms of music) that deepen their spiritual practice. If you have access to a singing bowl, demonstrate its tone for the group.

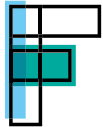
## PRAYING TOGETHER

QC

Ask if anyone knows what *breath prayer* is and have them describe it. Teach youth the following style of breath prayer: place your hands in a prayer position between your chest and chin. As you inhale, expand your hands to shoulder width. With each exhale, bring your hands back to the prayer position.

Challenge youth to think of a spiritual practice or a way of connecting with God that interests them on each inhale. Invite youth to silently pray “Connecting with you” on each exhale.

After ten breaths, say “Amen” and invite youth to share which practices they thought about during the activity.



## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

## SCULPTURE AND SCRIPTURE

A AT

Set out clay and other sculpting supplies so that all can access them. Invite youth to sculpt whatever comes to mind as they listen to the Scripture passage.

Read Hebrews 4:12–16 aloud slowly. Pause for a few moments before slowly reading the same passage from a different Bible translation.

Invite youth to share what they’ve sculpted and explain why they chose to sculpt what they made.

- Clay/playdough and other sculpting supplies
- Bibles

## READING TOGETHER

C CT

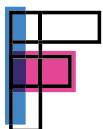
Distribute Bibles to youth. Invite youth to turn to Hebrews 4:12–16, and invite several volunteers to read the passage in its entirety. After several readings of the passage, use the following questions to process the meaning together:

- ➔ What stands out to you from this passage?
- ➔ What questions does this passage bring up for you?
- ➔ How does this Scripture text relate to experimenting with new spiritual disciplines?

- Bibles



This activity can stand alone, or the conversation questions can be used after the previous activity.



## FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

## NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

X T C

Show two, three, or all four of these YouTube videos:

- Team Sweaty Sheep ([bit.ly/FMSweatySheep](https://bit.ly/FMSweatySheep), 2:00)
- Neighborhood Esperanza ([bit.ly/FMEsperanza](https://bit.ly/FMEsperanza), 2:22)
- Wild Goose Christian Community Takes Flight ([bit.ly/FMWildGoose](https://bit.ly/FMWildGoose), 2:00)
- Missing Peace, Ormond Beach, Florida ([bit.ly/FMMissingPeace](https://bit.ly/FMMissingPeace), 1:41)

- Internet-connected device

Use the following questions to wonder together after showing the videos:

- ➔ How do you think the people in these videos might define *the church*?
- ➔ How would you define *the church*?
- ➔ Where can you experience *church* in your day-to-day life?

- 
- Foundational essay (p. 45)

## IN MORE DEPTH

C AT

Invite youth to assume a comfortable position and close their eyes. Read the conclusion section of the foundational essay aloud to the youth. Invite youth to respond to the following questions as they process:

- ➔ What stuck out to you in the passage?
- ➔ What do you think a spiritual discipline is?
- ➔ Why are spiritual disciplines important?
- ➔ Why might it be important to practice multiple spiritual disciplines?

- 
- Worship leader

## WORSHIP LEADER

X

If your church intentionally introduces new worship styles, songs, or spiritual practices, invite someone who is involved in planning and teaching these new experiences. Encourage the speaker to discuss how youth can be creative in their communal and personal prayer lives.

Alternatively, invite a worship leader to discuss how worship looks different throughout the church calendar. For example, they may discuss choosing more somber songs and liturgical readings during Lent and crafting a celebratory liturgy during Advent. Encourage youth to ask questions of your guest.



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- 
- Paper
  - Pens
  - Colored pencils

## PRAYER IN COLOR

A C

Distribute paper, pens, and a variety of colored pencils. Instruct youth to write one of the names we use for God in the center of the paper. For example, they may write, *Comforter*, *Lord of Lords*, or *Holy One*. Then, invite youth to decorate the area around the name using the colored pencils.

Instruct youth to write the name of a person they want to pray for and then decorate around that name as well. Encourage youth to creatively connect the name of the person they are praying for back to what they wrote in the center of their paper. Challenge youth to choose different people to pray for as they finish decorating each name.

- 
- Practice Spiritual Disciplines infographic poster (Year 1 Set)

## EXPLORING THE INFOGRAPHIC POSTER

C CT

Display the *Practice Spiritual Disciplines* infographic poster and read through it. Invite youth to determine where they think they are on the path and what sorts of spiritual disciplines they hope to practice. Encourage youth to explain to the group how they answered each question and which spiritual disciplines they feel most drawn to. Encourage them to keep exploring these after this session is over.

## CHECKING THE LIST

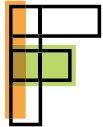
CT

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and writing supplies. Facilitate the activity using the following prompts:

- Read through the list.
- Put a question mark next to any spiritual practices you do not understand.
- Underline practices you have tried.
- Circle practices you are interested in trying or doing again.
- Write down the practices you think are missing from the list.

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- Writing supplies

Encourage youth to tell some of their responses to the group.



## FOLLOWING JESUS

## CLOSING PRAYER

QC

Remind youth that, over the past few sessions, they have discussed and practiced a lot of different ways to connect to God. Encourage them to continue drawing near to God through spiritual practices. Close with this prayer or one of your choosing:

O Lord,  
you are always with me.  
You offer yourself in so many ways.  
Open my eyes to see you.  
Open my ears to hear you.  
Open my heart to love you.  
Open my hands to serve you.  
Help me walk with you all my days.  
I pray in the name of Christ Jesus, the risen Lord,  
who shows me what love looks like.  
Amen.

## Mark a List

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray in Color      | <input type="checkbox"/> Centering Prayer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Labyrinth         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dance                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Create Music      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to Music    | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a Letter        | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk/Hike         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditate           | <input type="checkbox"/> Be Mindful            | <input type="checkbox"/> Silence           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy Nature       | <input type="checkbox"/> Share a Meal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Make Art          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy Art          | <input type="checkbox"/> Contemplative Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Express Gratitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast               | <input type="checkbox"/> Unplug                | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Worship     | <input type="checkbox"/> Read the Bible        | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts of Kindness  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate           | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lectio Divina</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Beads      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chant              | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden                | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-care         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breath Work        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacraments            | <input type="checkbox"/> Confession        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship         | <input type="checkbox"/> Solitude              | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rest                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to a Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Give                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                       | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                       | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                       | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |