

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE

What If...

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to rest?

BIBLE

Mark 6:30–32; Revelation 21:3–6;
Genesis 2:2–3

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Great artists know that to do their best work, they'll need to take a few breaks to rest and reset their creativity. This week, we'll look at a time when Jesus took time to be by himself right before doing something incredible. Jesus' choice shows us how a pause can be spiritual, leaving us wondering, **what if God wants you to rest?**

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Artist's Perspective

- Welcome to another week of *What If...*! We often find ourselves thinking over “what if” deep questions like, “What if I don’t secure a spot at my dream university?” or “What if my car runs out of gas during my drive?” Meanwhile, others ask fun questions like, “What if I decided to sport orange hair?” or “What if I blended every soda flavor into a single super soda?” Our questions may make us a bit anxious or potentially expand our perspective. Let’s replicate this experience with a game.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, gather simple line drawings like [this one](#) or [this one](#), paper, and a pencil for each participant. Choose three to four teenagers for each round. Display an image for fifteen seconds, then allow them one minute to draw it from memory. Afterward, reveal the image for 30 seconds, giving them another minute to refine their drawings. Have the audience vote on the most accurate rendition and award the winner a prize. Continue for additional rounds as desired.*
- Some of us find it challenging to trace art, so drawing from memory would be even more daunting. But you all got clarity when they took a moment to step back and assess your work. It gave a fresh perspective on their drawing, helping better capture the image they were trying to get you all to guess. Sometimes, all we need is to take a break and get perspective.
- This may be easy in a game like this, but sometimes life feels too busy, and getting some room to look at the big picture seems impossible.

QUESTION | “What Is The Latest You’ve Ever Slept In?”

- It seems counterintuitive, but I try to get a good night’s sleep when I need a new perspective. Sleep is essential. Without it, we’d push our bodies to the limit daily and run low on energy.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask the question and have teenagers turn to the people around them and discuss their answers. Then, give a few teenagers a chance to share their responses.*
- **What’s the latest you’ve ever slept in?**
- Experts say that driving while tired ranks among the most dangerous activities since a tired brain lacks the

ability to react quickly to sudden changes. Adequate sleep is crucial, especially for people your age. The National Sleep Foundation suggests that teenagers should aim for between eight to ten hours of sleep nightly. How many of you believe you consistently achieve that recommended amount of sleep?

- Sleep does more than help our bodies function. It also resets our minds so that we can keep doing the things we love. So, why is it that it is often the first thing to go when we get busy?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups.*

- **Are you more of a morning person or a night person?**
- **What are the first signs that you need rest?**
- **What are the things you do to get rest?**

STORY | A Time When You Needed Rest

- Without rest, we wouldn't be able to pursue the things we are passionate about. I have experienced it firsthand!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Think back to a moment when you felt drained and needed a break. Consider a time when you weren't necessarily worn out from physical activities but felt mentally drained, like when you were volunteering in the community, organizing an event, or standing up for a cause you believe in. How did you recognize that you needed to take a step back and rest? What did taking a break actually mean for you? And how did resting impact the outcome or progress of whatever you were working on?*
- Whether or not I wanted to take a break, I needed a break. We're not machines. Eventually, we must take a break to rest, recover, and restore our perspective. This is something we see Jesus do.
- When Jesus was on earth caring for people, making wrong things right, and leading his disciples, he made a habit of rest. Jesus was on to something. He knows if we want to be a force for lasting change in the world, we need to take moments of rest.

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

SCRIPTURE | Mark 6:30–32

- Jesus made a huge impact on the world. Think about it—his life and teachings have inspired countless families and communities to become better versions of themselves, tackling injustices and treating others with kindness. More than anyone else, Jesus' life led to lasting change. Even with all he did, taking time to rest was a regular part of his life.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 6:30–32.*
- Jesus had just sent his disciples on a mission to help out in different places. When they regrouped, a massive crowd had gathered around them. Seeing they hadn't even had a chance to grab a bite, Jesus knew it was time for a breather. He rounded up the disciples, and off they went to find a peaceful spot to recharge.
- After all the hard work they'd put in, Jesus understood the importance of rest and a meal. He felt they needed a break, so he led them to a tranquil place by boat to unwind.
- Jesus wasn't about pushing his disciples to keep grinding, even when they were running on empty. He didn't say, "Just grab a quick snack on the run." Instead, he saw they needed a pause, a chance for peace and rest. Sometimes, taking a break and recharging is your smartest move.

POLL | Is It Restful or Nah?

- Our world is so fast-paced, so our idea of finding peace and relaxation might look different from what Jesus

practiced. So, I'm wondering: what's your go-to for finding a rest?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Poll your group's responses about whether or not a particular action is restful. You could ask them to respond by raising their hands, standing up, or moving to different sides of the room. Ask them why they answered the way they did. Follow up their answers by asking them what rest looks like to them. Here are a few actions you could ask about to get your imagination going:
 - Falling asleep in class.
 - Sleeping on the bus on the way to school.
 - Going to bed at three AM and waking up at noon.
 - Binge-watching a show all night long.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ☆ **What would you say is the difference between rest and numbing out?**
 - **What do you think about the idea that Jesus, as the Son of God, needed rest?**
 - ☆ **How does your view of Jesus change knowing he unapologetically rested?**

IMAGE | Hummingbird – Morgan Harper Nichols

- Taking a break can be tricky sometimes, right? Have you ever been so into something fun like gaming, hanging with friends, or getting lost in a movie that you forget to rest? If we don't slow down now and then, we'll hit a wall. It's essential to carve out some downtime for ourselves and connect with God.
- Artist Morgan Harper Nichols drew this hummingbird image to help communicate what rest looks like.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, Show [this image](#) of a hummingbird by Morgan Harper Nichols while you speak. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - When she explains this art piece, she talks about how we often think of hummingbirds as wild, little birds. They're constantly fluttering from place to place, zooming past us as they continue their busy lives.
 - We don't see it often, but hummingbirds can enter into this state called "torpor." It's this period where the hummingbirds rest and recover. It's not quite sleep, but it is a time when they're just... inactive. It helps them regulate their bodies to survive colder weather, and this period of inactivity helps them recharge their tiny bodies.
- God wired each of us with our own ways to recharge. For some, it might mean soaking up nature or listening to music. Rest isn't a one-size-fits-all deal. It's unique to each of us. The key is making sure we take time to refuel so we're ready to tackle whatever comes our way next, just like we observe in those energetic hummingbirds or in how Jesus showed his disciples the importance of taking a breather.

SCRIPTURE | Revelation 21:3–6

- Okay, so we get it. We need to rest. But ... what does rest have to do with justice? If we look at what God is trying to bring into the world, we'll see the importance of rest.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Revelation 21:3–6.
- God's got this incredible plan in motion, and we're all in on it! Imagine a world without pain, injustice, or hurt—where everyone feels valued and free. That's the dream — we're all part of making it happen.
- While taking breaks and recharging is crucial, we've also got to stay focused. We need to stay connected to God, figure out our part in making this dream a reality, and make sure we're taking care of ourselves so we can help make it a reality.
- When Jesus rested and regrouped, he connected with God, who helped fill him with the energy to continue

his ministry. This meant finding peace and quiet and connecting deeply with God. His downtime was all about nourishing his soul and staying connected to his purpose. We can follow his lead.

- Resting doesn't mean doing nothing—it's about doing things that rejuvenate us and reconnect us with God. It's like hitting the reset button for our souls, giving us the energy and clarity to work towards creating a more just world, just like God envisions.
- If we don't plan for rest or care for our souls, we won't be at our best when teaming up with God. That's why making time for rest is super important, no matter how packed our schedules. We're designed to work alongside God to make things right.
- We're often pushed to do, achieve, and take on more. But what if God's nudging us to pause and rest instead? What if slowing down is the key to truly making a difference in the world? **What if God wants you to rest?**

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

REFLECTION | Rest Plan

- The reality is rest can often feel like a luxury. We're all so busy trying to navigate through life. We have to study for school, connect with our friends, play sports, and participate in extracurriculars—not to mention think about our futures and spend time with our families.
- Honestly, I feel tired just *thinking* about everything teenagers do every day. But this doesn't change the reality that creating a habit of rest like Jesus did is essential if we want to bring God's justice to the world. So, here are a few ways you can start to prioritize rest this week.
 - **PLAN FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.** Have you ever nodded off during a short car ride? It's amazing. This brief 15-minute break can become your go-to rest time when you need to get through the rest of your day. Here are some ideas on how to maximize fifteen minutes of rest:
 - Close your eyes and breathe deeply.
 - Engage in a brief prayer.
 - Taking a walk
 - Stretch.
 - **PLAN FOR ONE HOUR.** An hour seems like a long time, but it's easy for us to get lost reading or watching TV for an hour. Maybe you can rest by taking a long prayer walk, a nap, or turning off your phone. This could be an excellent habit after school or on the weekends to help you recover before you finish your day.
 - **PLAN FOR ONE AFTERNOON.** Once you have the first two down, try planning for an afternoon. Maybe you spend time in a park or outside in nature. You could spend time with some friends, read a book by yourself, or treat yourself to an at-home spa day. This is a bit more involved and might require some extra planning, but you could try to do it once or twice a month to help you feel refreshed and well-rested.
 - **PLAN FOR SOMEONE TO CHECK IN ON YOU.** Find someone this week to share your plans for the rest you created. Ask them to reach out to you this week to remind you to make time for rest and see how it is going. Ask how you can best help them get the rest they need. You can plan to spend time together resting by reading a book, seeing a movie, or grabbing lunch and coffee together.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this reflection, students will need the handout provided in [Week 2 of the series material](#) and something to write with. Help guide teenagers to think about ways they will prioritize rest this week. Consider playing some contemplative music as they respond.*
- No matter how long you have been following God, whether a few years or weeks, you must find a way to

rest. Jesus chose to rest and take time away from ministry to focus on himself and his time with God. Jesus knew the power and importance of taking time away to rest, which is an invitation for us to do the same.

What if God wants you to rest?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **How does your view of rest change, knowing it isn't a weakness but part of God's plan?**
 - **Read Genesis 2:2–3. What does it tell you about God that there is a built-in rhythm of rest? Why do you think God made it this way? What would it look like for you to permit yourself to rest this week?**

RESPONSE | Make Your Mark

- If you were with us last week, you'll recall we began an art project, and we're continuing it today. We encourage you to use your unique perspective to help with this creation. Last time, we laid the canvas foundation with paint. Now, we'll use markers. As we highlighted before, just as each of us adds a unique touch to this artwork, we also uniquely reflect how God designed us to bring justice to the world and to make an impact.
- Take a few minutes to leave your mark on this canvas. Express yourself freely, whether through meaningful words, images, or doodles. Your unique contribution to this artwork mirrors your role in showing God's love and justice to those around you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this Response, you need the same large canvas or thick cardboard from last week, glue, a big thing of permanent markers in different colors, a few tables, and some small sheets of paper. Before your program, set up an area where teenagers will continue the art mural and use different art mediums to create a community art piece. This week, have teenagers use permanent markers to write words, phrases, and doodles about their commitment to rest, which is an integral part of what it looks like to make wrong things right. If students need an idea about what to draw, have them draw an animal that represents what rest looks like for them. In addition to the big station where teenagers can add directly to the mural, there are a few stations where teenagers can do individual drawings independently. Have them glue it to the larger painting at the end of the reflection time.*
- When we work on art like this, we slow down. We think. We reflect. We rest. When we rest, we demonstrate to the world that we are different.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✳ **Why do you think that this idea of rest feels opposite to how our lives are set up? Is there a place in your life where you think you need rest right now?**
 - **Today, who is one person you can ask to help you remember to rest this week? What will that rest look like for you?**

ACTIVITY | The What If ... Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already done so, this would be a great time to invite your students to get involved in "The What if ... Project" discipleship activity. If you have started recruiting, this would be a good time to remind them that it is coming up. There are many ways to help get teenagers involved that you can read about in the [Discipleship folder](#).*

- We don't need to worry or stress because rest is part of what God intends for us. As you leave our time together, consider: **What if God wants you to rest?**