



A 4-WEEK SERIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ON

RIGHTING WRONGS

A JUSTICE SERIES FROM GROW'S ANNUAL TEACHING STRATEGY

THIS SERIES
ALIGNS WITH THE
DISCIPLESHIP
ACTIVITY CALLED...



What If...



CREATED WITH...

**DANNY SUGIMOTO, ROBBY SMERNOFF, ARHEN MARTINEZ, CLAY
HOLT, CARLEE OGG, GRACE TORRES & MUNYOKI MULWA**



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- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Video](#)
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- ▶ [Lesson Guide and Lesson Builder](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Video](#)
- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
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ABOUT THIS SERIES

Some of the most incredible pieces of art were created when the artist wondered, "What if I ... ?" Their curiosity inspired them to look at what was in front of them to imagine something entirely different. As we grow closer to God, we realize that God asks us to do something similar—to look through the hurt, pain, and evil in the world and wonder what it might look like for things to be different. In this 4-week series from the New Testament and Prophets, we'll wonder about what it might look like to be a part of making a difference as we explore questions like **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, help others heal, or make wrong things right?**

WEEK 1

This week, we'll hear Tabitha's story as we explore how we can serve our communities and let them serve us in return.

- **BIG IDEA:** What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?
- **BIBLE:** Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:6–8; Proverbs 22:9

WEEK 2

This week, we'll look at a time when Jesus took time to be by himself right before doing something incredible.

- **BIG IDEA:** What if God wants you to rest?
- **BIBLE:** Mark 6:30–32; Revelation 21:3–6; Genesis 2:2–3

WEEK 3

This week, we'll look at the time when Jesus noticed a man at a pool and went out of his way to heal him.

- **BIG IDEA:** What if God wants you to help others heal?
- **BIBLE:** John 5:1–9; Micah 6:8; Psalm 147:3

WEEK 4

This week, we'll hear the story of when Paul and Silas were in prison, and an earthquake opened the doors to their prison cell.

- **BIG IDEA:** What if God wants you to make wrong things right?
- **BIBLE:** Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–13; Romans 12:18

MEMORY VERSE: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8 (NIV)

HOW TO DISCIPLE DURING THIS SERIES

We all know teenagers don't get disciplined just by sitting through a sermon every week. So here's what else we've provided along with this series to **help teenagers 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 2 is about creating space to rest and recharge with God. In Week 3, teenagers engage in five stations that help them creatively connect with God and ask what it looks like to help heal others.



SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS

In Week 2, students are encouraged to find friends that help them find Godly rest and do something that helps them recharge together. In Week 4, teenagers consider what it would look like to help right wrongs in their community.



USE YOUR GIFTS

In Week 1, teenagers consider the specific gifts God has given them to help right wrongs. Every week, students are given an opportunity to express themselves creatively through a variety of different art forms by doing a community art project.

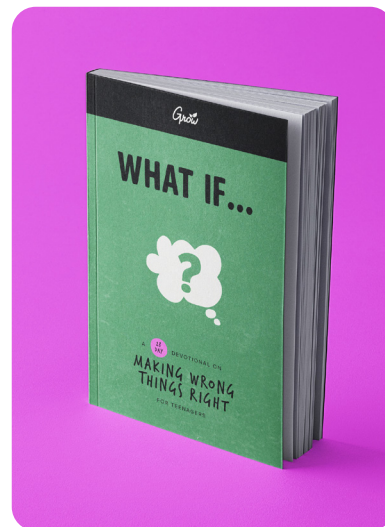
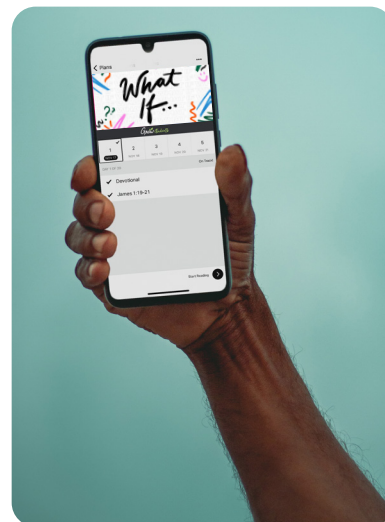


SHARE YOUR STORY

In Week 2, students reflect on their lives and share the places they need Godly rest. In Weeks 3 and 4, teenagers are asked to consider the places in their story where they need healing and share it with God.

DEVOTIONALS

To help students regularly **spend time with God**, every series comes with daily readings and devotionals. You can find them online through [The Bible App](#) or in print [on Amazon](#). Use [the flyers we've provided](#) to share them with students, parents, and volunteers too.



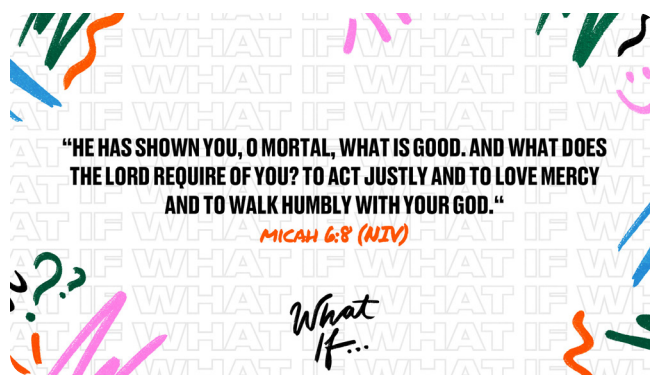
DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITY

If you're following along with the Grow annual strategy, our discipleship activity this quarter is [The What If... Project](#), an activity to help students **share their story**. 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 this series. Here's the verse we chose — and [we made graphics](#) you can post, print, or show on screen too!



SPIRITUAL HABITS APP

The [Grow Habits App](#) is designed to help teenagers (and grown-ups too!) set goals, track their spiritual habits, and share their progress!

ENVIRONMENT

On top of your weekly teaching time, there's a lot that goes into the environment you create. Between your room design, graphics, music, games, and more — there's a lot to do. But here's an easy way to think about your weekly environment so we can put a strategy around it: **determine an engaging theme for each teaching series that complements what you're teaching**. Then create an environment around it!



GAMES

There's more to an environment than what it looks and sounds like. It also matters what it *feels* like. That's why, with every series, we recommend one group game each week — because your environment should feel fun and welcoming! **Since this series talks about creativity, the games for this series are all art-themed.** To get the instructions and graphics for each game, just click the images or visit the [Grow Games & Icebreakers app](#).





ROOM DESIGN

How your physical space is structured is an important part of your weekly environment. No matter the size or set-up of your space, here are some ideas to help reinforce what you're teaching through the design of your room.

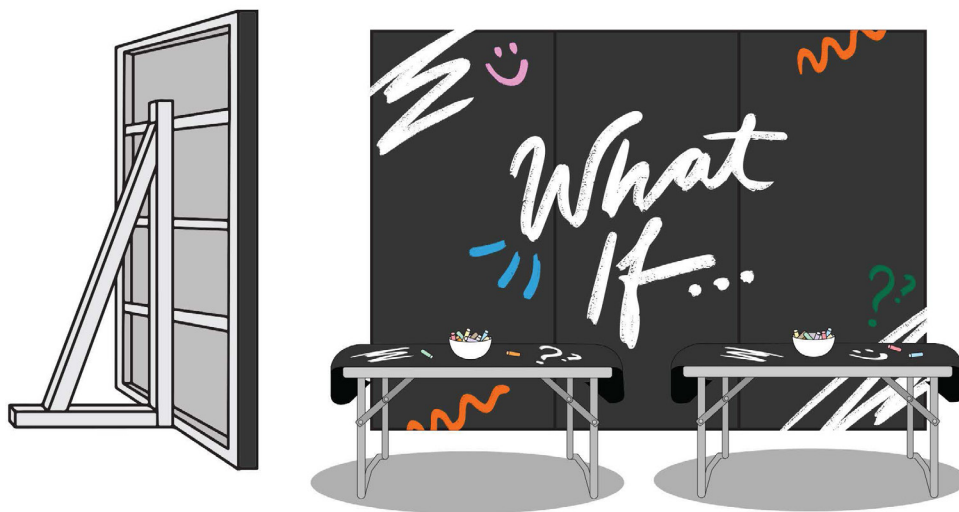
For this series, you will create an art-themed stage design that can both set the mood for the series and be an interactive tool while teaching.

To create this, you'll first need a backdrop. There are tons of ways to create a backdrop you can reuse multiple times each year. Check out [this post](#) for a list of ideas. For this series, we recommend using plywood panels.

Once you have your backdrop set up, paint these panels black. You can use a simple black paint or a heavy coat of [chalkboard paint](#) to make it possible for teachers and teenagers to draw on this board with [chalk markers](#). Once your plywood pieces are painted and aligned, you can paint the series title, "What If..." using white paint in

the middle of your backdrop. You can freehand these words and add your own artistic style to them or use a projector to display this series graphic, found in your [Graphics and Video folder](#) for this series, and trace the title to match the series font.

Finally, in front of your backdrop, set up two folding tables to create standing mural stations that will be used throughout this series in your creative reflection times. You can add various art supplies each week and cover the tables in black paper for teenagers to draw on before adding any of their artwork to your actual backdrop, which will become a community art project throughout the series.



And don't forget — **we provide you with posters for every teaching series and posters for each of Grow's four spiritual habits.** Print them on your own or through the [Grow Print Shop](#). Then hang them up to add visual reminders of what you're teaching.



MUSIC

What students hear (and sing!) is an important part of your weekly environment. That's why we've chosen a few songs to help enhance both the message of this series and the theme too. Play them before, during, or after your weekly program.

WORSHIP SONGS

- **Let Justice Flow (Stripped)** (The Common Place Music)
- **Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly** (Pat Barrett)
- **Refiner** (Maverick City Music)
- **Justice (Micah 6:8)** (Will Carlisle)
- **The Kingdom is Yours** (Common Hymnal)
- **Cry Out** (Refresh Worship)
- **Dance Like David** (Black Voices Movement)
- **Every Nation** (Black Voices Movement, Circuit Riders Music)
- **How Much Longer** (Common Hymnal)
- **Never Lost** (TRIBL)

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

BONUS SONGS

- **Glory** (Common, John Legend)
- **A Change is Gonna Come** (Sam Cooke)
- **Rise Up** (Andra Day)
- **Misconceptions 4** (feat. nobigdyl., Jon Keith & A.I. The Anomaly) (Lecrae)
- **Tu Voz** (The Common Place Music)



GRAPHICS

Visuals are an important part of your weekly environment. That's why, with every series, we give you tons of **ready-made images** in your [Graphics folder](#), as well as **editable high-resolution files**. Whether you're editing what we've provided or making something brand new . . .

Use [these fonts!](#)

DRUK WIDE HEAVY

PERMANENT MARKER REGULAR

And use these colors!



HEX #F17ADE
CMYK: 0/47/7/5



HEX #025939
CMYK: 34/0/13/65



HEX #2A95D9
CMYK: 69/27/0/15



HEX #FF6C00
CMYK: 0/58/100/0

Once your graphics for this series are finished, you're going to need to print or display them! We've got you covered there too.

With the [Grow Print Shop](#), you can print extra resources for this teaching series, like handouts, posters, flyers, cards, stickers, shirts, and more!

And with [Grow Slides](#), you can create your own presentations (or edit [the presentation we've already built for you](#)). Your pre-built presentation already includes this series' . . .

- Countdown Video
- Bumper Video
- Title Slide
- Background Slide
- One-Minute Sermon Video
- Big Ideas
- Memory Verse
- Discussion Questions

HACKS

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with disabilities, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique and diverse audience.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HACKS

REVISE

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

Revise the question modules in Weeks 1 and 2 by giving your answers first. For emotional and developmental reasons, middle schoolers will be in a better place to share if they hear you share something first.

In Week 1, don't skip the "Justice" video from The Bible Project. The subject of this series is justice and making things right, which may be an abstract concept for some of your teenagers. To help your middle schoolers understand what you're talking about, be sure to watch the video and, if you have the space to do it, allow them to ask any questions they may have about the video.

In Week 2's "Rest Plan" reflection, the teaching gives more examples of how they can rest in their everyday lives. Consider inviting them to cut down on the amount of time they spend gaming alone so they can get better sleep. Maybe challenge your teenagers to practice weekly stints of rest with you.

In all four weeks, during the community art project, remember to have strategies to help keep some of your more energetic teenagers under control. Have your volunteers be aware as students respond every week to ensure the art supplies are only being used for what they are intended for.

In all four weeks during the art project, keep in mind that your teenagers may struggle to engage with the art project. Spend extra time helping middle schoolers learn how to do reflective art projects. Remind your volunteers that this spare time may feel difficult but will ultimately help students use art to process and reflect on what they are experiencing.

REPLACE

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

In multiple places in this series, there are videos and stories told by a single person. Replace them with short stories from a variety of people. Your high schoolers would be great storytellers for this series! While dealing with complex or abstract topics, it's important to remember how new our middle schoolers are to the world. They may not always have the life experience to understand a situation without lots of examples. Having more than one person share stories of their experiences will give your middle schoolers more ideas to relate to. And if those people are high schoolers instead of adults, there's an even better chance they'll connect!

REMEMBER

Middle schoolers may struggle to connect with or process abstract ideas like justice and mask emotions like anger. That doesn't mean you shouldn't tackle these subjects with them, though! Dealing with our anger while processing the injustices and wrongs we may have experienced is a crucial developmental step. It just means you need to tackle them in age-appropriate ways. Stories, object lessons, specific examples, and practical application steps can help.

HIGH SCHOOL HACKS

REVISE

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

In Week 1, don't skip the "Justice" video from The Bible Project. The subject of this series is justice and making things right, which may be an abstract concept for some of you teenagers. To help your high schoolers understand what you're talking about, be sure to watch the video and, if you have the space to do it, allow them to ask any questions they may have about the video.

In Week 1, after teaching Isaiah 58:6–8 Bible Passage, lead a more pointed conversation about justice. If you feel prepared and equipped to have this conversation, try focusing on one specific subject where your high schoolers might already be aware of what injustices they see happening in the world.

In Week 2, challenge your teenagers to find a Rhythm for rest together. More and more research is coming out about how important rest and sleep is for the mental health of teenagers. Invite them to honor the way God has made them and take care of their bodies.

In Week 3, spend more time challenging your high schoolers to put healing into action. Help teenagers move from simply talking about helping others to doing something about it and making a plan to help someone else that week.

In Week 4, encourage high schoolers to get honest about their passion for making wrong things right. This honesty isn't there to praise them or shame them. Helping right wrongs in the world is a core part of what it means to follow Jesus. This allows them to create a realistic starting place to grow and become more like Jesus.

REPLACE

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

In all four weeks, shorten or eliminate the opening activities so you have more time for teenagers to share the results of their reflection time. Instead of keeping their reflections to themselves, invite your high schoolers to share what they were processing during each week's time of reflection. But if you're running short on time, the fun opening activities will be the easiest to cut!

REMEMBER

Because of its prevalence in the news and politics, the term "justice" is one your high schoolers may have a lot of thoughts or questions about. But "justice" is a word we find all over Scripture and in this series! So keep in mind this word carries a lot of baggage, but it's a great time to discuss what "justice" means, share how it's used in Scripture, and open the floor for a healthy discussion. Our typical summary of justice in Scripture is "making wrong things right."

ACCESSIBILITY HACKS

REVISE

To make this series more accessible for people with disability barriers, here's what to adjust ...

Consider adjusting Week 3's "Color by Number Relay" into a "Sticker by Number Relay." These sticker books may be much easier for teenagers with disabilities than the coloring activity for students who may get overwhelmed.

During Week 3's Teaching on John 5:1–9, add clarity about Jesus' choice to heal man by the well. Because this week involves a story of Jesus healing someone with a disability, it's important to address the reality that God will not heal all of our physical challenges or disabilities here on earth, but that's okay! God made all of us with love, care, and purpose, and our differences are things we should celebrate and not expect God to take away. Encourage your volunteers to monitor any conversations that unfold on this subject and manage them carefully.

In Week Four's Paint Pop Relay, be aware of environmental triggers. Loud noises, bright lights, and hot or cold temperatures can disrupt a person's thinking pattern and cause an unnecessary outburst, interrupting your group's time together. Be mindful of these environmental triggers and partner with parents and teenagers to find solutions that help them engage.

In all four weeks, consider obstacles that may limit how teenagers with mobility devices engage in the collective art project. Make sure aisles are wide enough, they have enough space to hang their creation on the mural, and art supplies are in places where people of all abilities can access them.

In all four weeks of this series, provide printouts of paintings referenced while you teach. For teenagers with visual impairments who cannot see the screen, give them paper copies of the painting printed large enough (such as 11" x 17" paper) to see them clearly.

REPLACE

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

In all four weeks, choose one passage of Scripture to focus on. Every week of this series uses at least two passages of Scripture, but you might find that there's a lot of Bible to explain or remember for teenagers with certain special needs! If so, that's okay—pick just one passage each week to focus on. We recommend the passages from the Gospels and Acts if you're going to choose.

REMEMBER

Remember, teenagers with disabilities have likely experienced injustice, discrimination, or mistreatment. Depending on their age and type of disability, they may or may not be able to process or discuss the feelings they have felt from these experiences with the group—but they do exist. Teenagers who have had experiences like this will likely respond differently to the big ideas you talk about weekly. Reminded teenagers that God sees them, is with them, **wants to meet their needs** (Week 1), **gives them the rest they need** (Week 2), **empowers them to help others** (Week 3), and **invites them to help make wrong things right** (Week 4).

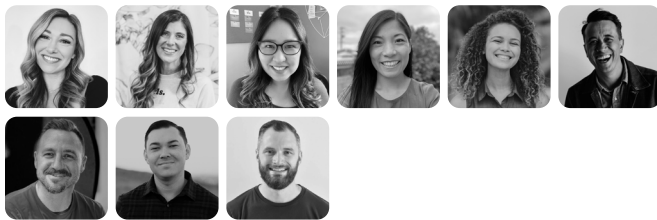
CREDITS

Every teaching series we create for Grow Curriculum is a big team effort! Here's a closer look at some of the people who helped make this one happen...



Danny Sugimoto is a former youth pastor from Menifee, California, and content strategist at Stuff You Can Use. **Robby Smirnoff** serves as the high school pastor at Mecklenburg Community Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. **Ahren Martinez** is a writer and youth advocate from Azusa, California. **Clay Holt** is currently serving as Lead Pastor at First United Methodist Church in Pearisburg, Virginia. **Carlee Ogg** started in Youth Ministry as a small group leader, which has led to an 8-year run in Kids Ministry at churches in Florida and California. **Grace Wilkinson** is the Director of Youth Ministry at Quest Church in Seattle, Washington. **Munyoki Mulwa** is the Discipleship Pastor at Mariners Church Oceanside in Oceanside, California.

CURRICULUM TEAM



AND THE REST OF THE STUFF YOU CAN USE TEAM!



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WEEK 1 LESSON OUTLINE



BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

BIBLE

Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:6–8;
Proverbs 22:9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When artists paint, they're intentional about the colors they use because each one serves a purpose. This week, we'll hear Tabitha's story as we explore how we can serve our communities and let them serve us in return. We can follow her model and make a difference in the people around us because **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

WHAT?

Every day presents us with opportunities to help people. When we see someone with a need, we are left with the question, "What if I helped?" Helping others can better their lives, uplift them, alleviate their burdens, and even help us feel full of joy and purpose. Moving from seeing a need in someone's life to taking action is important. So, what will your next step look like?

SO WHAT?

In Acts 9:36–43, we read about Tabitha, who was described as always doing good and helping people experiencing poverty. At this time, there was a struggle with what it looked like to follow Jesus and who was allowed to be part of the community worshipping Jesus. But Tabitha didn't let those labels stop her from caring for people. She wanted to use her gifts to help others. She used her skills and talents to make clothes and robes for the widows. Tabitha created a space for people to feel loved, secure, and cared for.

Tabitha was living in a way God had always hoped we would. God's people were intended to help create justice in the world. In Isaiah 58:6–8, we see that the Early Church was continuing something the people of God were always supposed to be about. When we say "yes" to following God, we're invited to become people who bring justice into the world with God's help. We can focus on helping care for the basic needs of others while showing them the way toward the freedom found in Jesus. The story of Tabitha and Isaiah begs a simple question: **What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

NOW WHAT?

Here are a few things that can help you think about the question: What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

- **GOD INSPIRES YOU TO BECOME BETTER.** There are parts of your life God has already transformed. So, what parts of your story could you use to help care for others? Think about how you can connect with people who may have similar experiences and look to take care of their needs.
- **YOU CAN MAKE THINGS BETTER.** You're already a part of a group of friends and a community of people who need someone to care for their needs. You can care for those people and help them in their areas of need. What spaces can you make better by just being there?

When you see someone this week who needs help, ask a simple question—**What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE

What If...

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

BIBLE

Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:6–8;
Proverbs 22:9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When artists paint, they're intentional about the colors they use because each one serves a purpose. This week, we'll hear Tabitha's story as we explore how we can serve our communities and let them serve us in return. We can follow her model and make a difference in the people around us because **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Paper Plate Pictionary

- Welcome to the first week of our new series, *What If ...!* Who doesn't love a "what if" question? What if McDonald's runs out of ketchup? What if I lose my retainer in the trash can again? What if my sister tells my parents what happened to the lamp in the living room? Raise your hand if you've ever thought of or asked a silly or serious "what if" question yourself. I'm glad to see I'm not alone! Now, let's kick things off with a game that will leave us all with more questions.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this game, you'll need some paper plates, a hole punch, string, and something to draw with, like crayons, colored pencils, paint, and brushes. To play, divide the room into two teams and choose two volunteers to compete against each other. Give both volunteers one word. After strapping their paper plate to the top of their head, players attempt to draw their words without looking, periodically showing the audience their picture for them to guess—the first team to correctly guess wins.
- When you hear "Pictionary," that's probably not what you had in mind! You needed so much creativity and flexibility to get close to what you needed to draw! It's wild how a little tweak to what we're doing can make things so much more complicated! I know that when things are difficult, I can use all the help I can get.

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's the kindest thing someone has ever done to help you?
 - ☆ What's easier for you: to ask for help or to give help? Why do you think that is?
 - Do you know of any people for whom helping comes naturally? Why do you think it is easy for them?

STORY | Talk About A Time Someone Met Your Needs

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a short story about a time someone helped you. Maybe they offered you a ride while

your car was in the shop or cooked you a meal while recovering from an illness or injury. To add a thematic element, find a coloring page, turn yourself into a [coloring page](#), tape it to the wall, and incorporate talking about when they met your needs and added color life to your story. Share about what they did, which needs they met, and how it made you feel. Every time they do something, color in the picture to show how they help add color to your life.

- Every day presents us with opportunities to help people. Helping others can better their lives, uplift them, alleviate their burdens, and even help us feel full of joy and purpose. Moving from seeing a need in someone's life to taking action is important, but it is also one of the most difficult. What would it look like for you to take the next step to actually help someone?

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

SCRIPTURE | Acts 9:36–43

- The Bible shows remarkable examples of people who took time to care for others. One of those people is named Tabitha. Her story is found in Acts 9.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Acts 9:36–43.
- Tabitha is awesome! She's described as always doing good and helping people who are experiencing poverty. At this time, there was a struggle with what it looked like to follow Jesus and who was allowed to be part of the community worshiping Jesus. But Tabitha didn't let those labels stop her from caring for people. She just wanted to use her gifts to help others and tell them about Jesus.
- So that's what she did. She served and cared for people. She was such a beloved community member the people were devastated when she died. When Peter shows up, this group of widows she had been caring for shows him all of the incredible clothes and robes Tabitha made for them.
- She added goodness, joy, and hope to the lives of those around her, covering them with her care and kindness.
- As Tabitha looked around the world, she could recognize the world wasn't as it should be. She saw so many people with needs and decided to do something about it. People knew who she was because she cared for this group of widows—often among the community's most vulnerable.
- She used her skills and talents to make clothes and robes for the widows, but it wasn't just about what she could do for them. Her care made them feel differently, too. Tabitha created a space for people to feel loved, secure, and cared for.
- When we think about helping people, we often go straight to needs like food, water, and shelter. Those are essential needs, but we can't overlook how we can love people through connection, a kind word, or simply acknowledging their existence. Tabitha did all of those things and, by doing so, showed a way toward justice in the world.

VIDEO | "Justice" From The Bible Project

- Tabitha was living in a way God had always hoped we would. God's people were intended to help create justice in the world. This was made clear in the life of Jesus. Humanity was always meant to partner with God to see the wrongs in the world and make them right.
- The term "justice" is frequently used, but its meaning can vary. For Tabitha and God's followers, justice has specific significance. While today's understanding of justice varies, the Bible clearly defines and shows us what it means to live justly.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play [this video on "Justice"](#) (0:03–5:49) from The Bible Project as a teaching tool. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

- As you can see, justice is an ancient biblical idea. The Early Church continued something the people of God were always supposed to be about.

SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 58:6–8

- Here's a passage from about 700 years before Tabitha was caring for the people around her, and it has some specific ways God hoped people would care for each other.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Isaiah 58:6–8.
- A lot is happening here, so let's break it down. Before these verses, we see God addressing people who have tried to follow through with religious practices, such as fasting, except they are missing the mark. God is not interested in them merely checking off "fasted" from a religious to-do list. God is far more interested in how God's people treat each other. So, God reminds the people of the complete picture of what they were invited into.
- When we say "Yes" to following God, we're invited to become people who bring justice into the world with God's help. We can focus on helping to care for the basic needs of others while showing them the way toward the freedom found in Jesus.
- In Isaiah 58, God shows us practical ways to make a real difference—like sharing food, giving clothes, and helping those facing tough situations. It could mean helping out at a food drive, donating clothes to a shelter, or volunteering with after-school programs to work with kids who need support. The Bible reminds us that with God's help, we can step up and bring positive change and justice to the world around us.

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.
 - If someone described you like Tabitha as "always doing good and helping the poor," what kind of thing would you be involved in?
 - ★ What sticks out to you about Isaiah 58? What do you think about what Isaiah says God wants us to be concerned about? Are these things you care about?
 - How do these two passages challenge your understanding of God?

IMAGE | A Sunday Afternoon On The Island of La Grande Jatte—Georges Seurat

- Everyone wants to be a part of making things right for people. This vision of justice God gives to us is inspiring. Of course, we want people to be fed, sheltered, loved, and protected. Of course, we want to see people be free from their burdens. But ... how do we do it? There is an art technique that can help us visualize what it looks like to care for others.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, show a picture like [A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte — Georges Seurat](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - This painting is *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by artist Georges Seurat. It uses a painting technique called pointillism, where an artist uses tiny dots of color to create a painting. If you look closely, it almost feels like a static Instagram filter was placed on top of this image, but that's just the Pointillism technique at work.
 - If you zoom in close to this photo, you see a series of little dots all doing their own thing. It might not even look like a painting but a random assortment of colors and paint. You only get the full effect of pointillism when you zoom out and see the whole thing working together.
- That's sort of what it can look like for us to bring justice and God's love into the world. Like Tabitha, it starts as an individual thing. She used what she was already good at to bless and love her community. One woman

did one thing to show love to one group of people. Tabitha was adding her dot of color to God's world.

- If we all took her approach and zoomed out, we'd see all these little individual people working towards creating the beauty in the world God dreamed of. Each dot of color would be part of a larger work of justice that God is creating. That's the great thing about pointillism—and about the life God has set up for us—every little detail matters. All of it works together to make a huge difference in us, the people we care for, and our communities.
- When Tabitha looked at the world, she saw a new way to do things. She connected her gifts with God's vision for the world and took action to show care for a group of people that mattered to her. She saw a need and took steps to help meet them.
- You don't need the most money, the best resources, or a five-point plan to start helping people. God is giving you the chance to start taking care of people today—right now—and working towards bringing justice and beauty into the world. God is inviting you to add a dot of color to the world. The story of Tabitha and Isaiah begs a simple question: **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

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

RESPONSE | Making Things Right

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this response, you'll need either a whiteboard and dry-erase markers or a large sheet of paper and markers. Before your program, set them up so you can write down your group's ideas. Ask teenagers about the needs they see and ways they can help meet those needs. As they come up with ideas, write down their responses and help create tangible ways to follow through this week.*
- God has already equipped you to start caring for people's needs. You are in a unique position with specific gifts and perspectives to start making a difference by bringing God's justice to the world. Here are a few things that can help you think about the question: **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**
 - **GOD INSPIRES YOU TO BECOME BETTER.** There are parts of your life God has already transformed. No matter how long you've been following Jesus, you're in the process of being made better every single day. As you are being changed, God adds color to your world and wants you to share that experience with others. So, what parts of your story could you use to help care for others? Think about how you can connect with people who may have similar experiences and look to take care of their needs.
 - **YOU CAN MAKE THINGS BETTER.** You're already a part of a group of friends and a community of people who need someone to care for their needs. You can care for those people and help them in their areas of need. What spaces can you make better by just being there? That's what Tabitha did. She connected her presence to her gifts and worked to make the space she was already in even better for people. Just like Tabitha used her gifts to help those in need, you can use yours to meet the needs of those around you.
- Let's start thinking about tangible ways to make things right and call out the beauty in our communities. When we look to take care of other people's needs and trust God to lead us in the right direction, we help bring beauty and new life into the world.
- So remember, God makes you better, and you can improve things. You can show care to others. You just have to respond to a question and let God lead you toward bringing justice to your community. **What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

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.*

- ✧ Have you ever seen one small caring action snowball into bigger ones? What happened? What would it look like for you to replicate those actions?
- ✧ What is something that holds you back from meeting people's needs? What would it look like to overcome that this week?

REFLECTION | Make Your Mark

- This week, we are starting an art project and will add to it as a community every week. Each of you contributes your unique skills and perspective to this world. We're going to spend a few minutes painting this canvas, and we're going to add a new layer to it each week of this series. Paint however you feel led to paint... in big strokes, small strokes, one color, lots of colors. Use this time to express how God is speaking to you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this Response, you need a large canvas or thick cardboard, a paint tarp, paints, cups to hold paint, glue and paintbrushes, a few tables, and some small sheets of paper. Before your program, set up an area where teenagers will start a progressive art mural to use different art mediums to create a community art piece. If you use the room design suggested in the environment guide, this station is built into that backdrop. In addition to the big station where teenagers can add directly to the mural, there are a few small stations where students can paint independently. Have them attach it to the larger image at the end of the reflection time. If it helps your teenagers have a prompt about what to paint, have them create an art piece about what it looks like to meet people's needs. If they need more direction, encourage the group to add a few dots and use a Sharpie to write how they will meet someone's needs on the mural.*
- You can utilize how God intentionally made you to bring justice and make a difference. You have made a unique contribution to this work of art, just like you have made a contribution to helping bring God's love to set things right in the lives of the people around you.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups.*
 - **Read Proverbs 22:9. Why do you think the writer says that people who meet other needs and not just those who meet their needs are happy? Have you ever experienced that to be true? What is one thing you could do to test if this is true in your life this week?**
 - **Today, what's one step you will take toward meeting people's needs?**

ACTIVITY | The What If ... Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already done so, this would be a great time to invite your group to get involved in "The What if... Project" discipleship activity. There are all sorts of ways to help get teenagers involved that you can read about in the planning documents over in the [Discipleship folder](#).*
- When you see someone this week who needs help, ask a simple question—**What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**



WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

BIBLE

Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:6–8;
Proverbs 22:9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When artists paint, they're intentional about the colors they use because each one serves a purpose. This week, we'll hear Tabitha's story as we explore how we can serve our communities and let them serve us in return. We can follow her model and make a difference in the people around us because **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

- What's the kindest thing someone has ever done to help you?
- What's easier for you: to ask for help or to give help? Why do you think that is?
- Do you know of any people for whom helping comes naturally? Why do you think it is easy for them?
- If someone described you like Tabitha as "always doing good and helping the poor," what kind of thing would you be involved in?
- What sticks out to you about Isaiah 58? What do you think about what Isaiah says God wants us to be concerned about? Are these things you care about?
- How do these two passages (Acts 9:36–43 and Isaiah 58:6–8) challenge your understanding of God?
- Have you ever seen one small caring action snowball into bigger ones? What happened? What would it look like for you to replicate those actions?
- What is something that holds you back from meeting people's needs? What would it look like to overcome that this week?
- Read Proverbs 22:9. Why do you think the writer says that people who meet other needs and not just those who meet their needs are happy? Have you ever experienced that to be true? What is one thing you could do to test if this is true in your life this week?
- Today, what's one step you will take toward meeting people's needs?



INSTRUCTIONS: As a group, rewrite Isaiah 58:6–8 in your own words. Ask each other why they chose the words they did and made the decisions that they did. What would it look like to implement those things into their lives?



WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

BIBLE

Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:6–8;
Proverbs 22:9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When artists paint, they're intentional about the colors they use because each one serves a purpose. This week, we'll hear Tabitha's story as we explore how we can serve our communities and let them serve us in return. We can follow her model and make a difference in the people around us because **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs?**

- What's the kindest thing someone has ever done to help you?
- Do you know of any people for whom helping comes naturally? Why do you think it is easy for them?
- If someone described you like Tabitha as "always doing good and helping the poor," what kind of thing would you be involved in?
- How do these two passages (Acts 9:36–43 and Isaiah 58:6–8) challenge your understanding of God?
- Read Proverbs 22:9. Why do you think the writer says that people who meet other needs and not just those who meet their needs are happy? Have you ever experienced that to be true? What is one thing you could do to test if this is true in your life this week?
- Today, what's one step you will take toward meeting people's needs?



INSTRUCTIONS: As a group, rewrite Isaiah 58:6–8 in your own words. Ask each other why they chose the words they did and made the decisions that they did. What would it look like to implement those things into their lives?

WEEK 2 LESSON OUTLINE

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?

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. We're not machines. Eventually, we must take a break to rest, recover, and restore. This is something we see Jesus do. He knows if we want to be a force for lasting change in the world, we need to take moments of rest.

SO WHAT?

In 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 that 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. He felt they needed a break for their well-being, so he led them to a tranquil place by boat to unwind.

In Revelation 21, we see why God built rest into the rhythm of what it looks like to be human. God's got this incredible plan in motion, and we're all in on it! Imagine a world without pain, injustice, or hurt—a place where everyone feels valued and free. We are invited to stay connected to God, learn our part in God's story, and make sure we're taking care of ourselves so we can help make it a reality. Slowing down is the key to truly making a difference in the world. So... **What if God wants you to rest?**

NOW WHAT?

Creating a habit of rest, like Jesus, 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.** A brief 15-minute break can be all you need to recharge and get through the next part of your day.
- **PLAN FOR ONE HOUR.** An hour seems like a long time, but try resting by taking a long prayer walk, a nap, or simply turning off your phone.
- **PLAN FOR ONE AFTERNOON.** Try planning for an afternoon. Just know that this will be a bit more involved and might require extra intention, but it will help you feel refreshed and well-rested.
- **PLAN FOR SOMEONE TO CHECK IN ON YOU:** Have a friend 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.

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?**



WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE



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 planning documents over 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?**



WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What If...

THIS WEEK

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?**

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



INSTRUCTIONS: As a group, come up with a phrase you and your small group can text or repeat to each other to give yourselves permission to get the rest you need this week.



WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to rest?

BIBLE

Mark 6:30–32; Revelation 21:3–6;
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- 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?
- Today, who is one person you can ask to help you remember to rest this week? What will that rest look like for you?



INSTRUCTIONS: As a group, come up with a phrase you and your small group can text or repeat to each other to give yourselves permission to get the rest you need this week.

REST PLAN

Reflect on these two questions by writing your responses. Then use the space below to draw or write out a plan for how you will find rest.

What are the things that help you feel alive and connected to God?

What parts of your life make you feel refreshed and renewed?

15 Minutes	1 Hour	1 Afternoon

REST PLAN

Reflect on these two questions by writing your responses. Then use the space below to draw or write out a plan for how you will find rest.

What are the things that help you feel alive and connected to God?

What parts of your life make you feel refreshed and renewed?

15 Minutes	1 Hour	1 Afternoon

WEEK 3 LESSON OUTLINE

What If...

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to help others heal?

BIBLE

John 5:1–9; Micah 6:8; Psalm 147:3

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Artists rarely get things right on the first try, so they learn how to fix their mistakes as they get their artwork to match their vision. This week, we'll look at the time when Jesus noticed a man at a pool and went out of his way to heal him. Jesus' actions remind us of God's vision for the world and invite us to wonder, **what if God wants you to help others heal?**

WHAT?

Each week, we've started with some "What if" questions. What if I woke up tomorrow with a superpower? What if time travel was possible? What if our dreams became a reality? It's evident the world has challenges. So, the question arises: "What if we have the power to change the world?"

SO WHAT?

When we see Jesus, we might expect him to spend most of his time at the temple, which would have been the center of religious activity. But in John 5:1–9, Jesus goes to a pool where various people with different challenges and disabilities would gather. He met a man who had been paralyzed for just under four decades, and he healed him. Jesus shows us what true healing and justice can look like when we lean into God's plan.

The life of Jesus has shown each of us what it looks like to help make wrong things right. This was something God had always wanted humanity to be about for years. Jesus lived out every day what the prophet Micah had wanted for God's people. Jesus acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God. When we humbly walk with Jesus and rely on his presence in our lives, he helps us care for others and right wrongs, like he did. You can help point others to Jesus and show justice to others by regularly asking this one question: **What if God wants you to help others heal?**

NOW WHAT?

Here are some tips to help you take action to make a difference in the injustices we witness.

- **START ALLOWING GOD TO HEAL YOU.** We all have areas in our lives that need healing. By inviting God into our story, He can help heal our pain and turn it into purpose. This week, let's take steps to heal and consistently collaborate with God on our healing journey.
- **START TO BRING HEALING TO YOUR FAMILY.** You can be a positive voice for your family. Take a moment to ask God how you can support a family member as they navigate their healing journey.
- **START TO BRING HEALING TO YOUR COMMUNITY.** When we stand up for our community and support those facing challenges, the Holy Spirit works through us to foster healing in our neighborhood. This week, watch for opportunities to be like Jesus by showing compassion and caring for those in your community.

This week, ask yourself, **what if God wants you to help others heal?**



WEEK 3 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to help others heal?

BIBLE

John 5:1–9; Micah 6:8;
Psalm 147:3

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Artists rarely get things right on the first try, so they learn how to fix their mistakes as they get their artwork to match their vision. This week, we'll look at the time when Jesus noticed a man at a pool and went out of his way to heal him. Jesus' actions remind us of God's vision for the world and invite us to wonder, **what if God wants you to help others heal?**

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Color By Numbers Relay

- Welcome back to week three of *What If...* Each week, we've started with some "What if" questions. What if I woke up tomorrow with a superpower? What if time travel was possible? What if our dreams became a reality? The world has challenges. So, the question arises: "What if we have the power to change the world?" Let's keep our series rolling with a game.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, you need a few color-by-number sheets [like this one](#), along with crayons, colored pencils, or markers, and one table for each team. You want one copy of each sheet per team. Split the group into two teams and have them line up on opposite sides of the room. Place a color by numbers sheet between the two teams in the center of each table. Then, give each person on the team a number. When you call out a number, those players will run to the center and begin coloring in the drawing with their number on it until you call a new number. The first team to finish filling in all the colors in their drawing wins.*
- Are you tired of running? I'm tired of watching you sprint back and forth to color! When you were playing, there was so much you had to do to help your team win. You had to listen for your number, run over to the table, quickly look at the drawing, find the right color and number, and start filling in shapes. But by the end, as a team, you helped that sad, colorless picture look like we all know it was intended to!

ACTIVITY | Color Matching

- Have you ever been curious about how colors actually come to life? Not just how our eyes perceive them, but the "how-to" of how they are made? Let's dive in. Who here thinks they have a knack for picking the perfect shade?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you need a few paint swatches from a hardware store, some [paint](#), some paper, and a few paintbrushes. Choose one or two volunteers. Show them and the audience a color swatch and give them two minutes to match the colors using the paints in front of them.*
- Getting the right paint shade can be a challenge. You've got an idea of the color you want, but sometimes, you go overboard with one shade or skimp on another. Achieving that perfect hue can be tricky. But guess what? A cool thing called Color Theory is your cheat code for balancing and matching colors like a pro.

VIDEO | Color Matching – Fitz Does Color

- Color theory takes a lot of time and patience to learn. There's so much to know about how color and light interact, but you can do some artistic things once you understand even a little about it! Let's look at what can happen when you understand color theory.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play [this video](#) like this one of someone matching colors perfectly. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- This is a video from Fritz Does Art. He's an artist who's a pro at color theory. He can look at a color and replicate it with trial and error. After adding some colors, he can see a pathway to where he needs to be to get the perfect shade. If he makes a mistake, he knows exactly how to fix it by adding a little bit of another color.
- I wish I had that level of awareness in my life! How about you? Can you imagine if you knew exactly what to do when you made a mistake or when you felt hurt? Could you imagine what kind of world we could create if we knew which parts of our lives to balance so we could become the people we want to be?

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.*
 - **If you could only see one color for the rest of your life, which one would it be?**
 - **In addition to physical problems or sickness, what are some things you think people need "healing" from today?**
 - ★ **What do you think about the idea that people may need physical or emotional healing? Do you have experience with either?**

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

SCRIPTURE | John 5:1–9

- Throughout his ministry, Jesus spent a lot of time with people. Occasionally, he'd meet someone with a specific need or condition and take steps to heal them. Let's take a look at one of those stories.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 5:1–9.*
- When Jesus came to Jerusalem, he went to a pretty unexpected place. We might expect Jesus to spend most of his time at the temple, which would have been the center of religious activity, but he goes to this pool instead.
 - At this particular pool, Jesus encountered a variety of people with different challenges and disabilities. Word had it that every once in a while, the water in this pool would ripple in a miraculous way, and whoever got in first would experience healing.
 - So, people would gather, hoping to catch that healing moment in the water where this guy is when Jesus approaches him.
- Upon learning the man has been paralyzed for 38 years, Jesus cut to the chase with a straightforward question: "Do you want to get well?" The man might have thought Jesus was referring to the rumored healing water and started explaining how he's always missed the chance, as there's no one to assist him into the pool during those rare moments of stirring.
- Did you catch that? Instead of a straightforward "Yes" or "No," the man goes off with reasons why he thinks he can't be healed. He's so laser-focused on his version of a solution he misses the bigger picture. Have you ever felt like that? I know I have!

- This story is amazing. It shows us the transformative power of aligning ourselves with Jesus and inviting him into our lives. It gives us a glimpse of what true healing and justice can look like when we lean into God's plan. So, let's dive deeper into what this story might mean for us today...
 - **JESUS SAW EACH PERSON UNIQUELY.** Amidst a crowd at the pool, Jesus tuned into this one guy's story and responded directly to his situation. Despite so much going on around him, Jesus didn't let distractions cloud his focus. He zeroed in on this man, giving him his full attention and care.
 - **JESUS SAW AN INJUSTICE.** In a brief conversation, Jesus picked up on the injustice this man faced. Living with a disability for 38 years is no small feat, and hearing how the community overlooked him hit home for Jesus. He saw the unfairness and didn't just walk away—he took action.
 - **JESUS HEALED A SPECIFIC NEED.** Sure, this guy had a laundry list of challenges, but Jesus honed in on the most pressing one. By addressing this crucial need, Jesus set the stage for a ripple effect to transform this man's entire life. He didn't try to tackle everything at once—he focused on what mattered most.

SCRIPTURE | Micah 6:8

- The life of Jesus has shown each of us what it looks like to help make wrong things right. This wasn't a new idea Jesus came up with. It's something God had always wanted humanity to be about. We can read about it in the words of the prophet Micah.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Micah 6:8.*
- Through Jesus, we see what it looks like to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." Think of justice, kindness, and humility as the colors we mix into our own life canvas as we strive to align with Jesus' example. A good starting point? We can look to bring healing to the lives of the people around us.
- Honest faith has to move beyond simply what we say we believe... faith must carry over into how we live and what we do. Faith is action marked by compassion and the ability to see and respond to the needs of others around us. This is something we don't tend to do naturally. Left to ourselves, we often focus on meeting our own needs. But when we humbly walk with Jesus and rely on his presence in our lives, he helps us care for others and right wrongs, like he did.
- We won't be able to help everyone, but we can point people toward the kind of healing and hope that comes from knowing Jesus. By standing up for what's right and living like Jesus, God opens doors for us to show others how a relationship with Jesus can change their lives for the better. We simply need to tune into their needs and find ways to help, just like he would.

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.*
 - **Who in the story do you relate with? The man asking for healing? The crowd gathered around the pool. Why?**
 - **Why do you think Jesus asks, "Do you want to get well?"? Are there times we might need healing from something but don't always want to get well? What are some reasons that might be true?**
 - **How does Micah 6:8 challenge your understanding of following Jesus?**

IMAGE | "Self-Portrait" by Frida Kahlo

- Sometimes, the answer isn't to tell people everything we know about God. Occasionally, we need to let

people experience God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As you teach, show an image of a self-portrait by Frida Kahlo like [this one](#) on screen.
- This is Frida Kahlo—well, this is a self-portrait of artist Frida Kahlo. She was a talented artist, but art wasn't her first passion.
- Art didn't become her focus until she experienced a horrible accident that left her in bed for months. In those months of recovery, Frida discovered the healing power of art and how it helped her heal from her physical condition and emotional toil.
- Art became a way for her to express herself and create something that expressed her feelings deep down inside. It helped her do more than just overcome a situation. Art gave Frida Kahlo a chance to work towards holistic healing.
- Just like Frida Kahlo needed a space to experience healing through art, the people in our lives might need space to experience the healing that can only come from God. They need us to see them, love them well, and pursue justice alongside them.
- Together, even if we're only focused on one person, we can help them get a small taste of the possible healing through God. We can help them connect with the God who created them, loves them, and can heal them. You can help point others to Jesus and show justice to others by putting this question at the center of your life—**What if God wants you to help others heal?**

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

OBJECT LESSON | Start Somewhere

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this object lesson, you need a blank canvas and an easel to put it on. This canvas is supposed to stay blank as you teach.
- When we look around and see how many people are hurting—whether it's physically, emotionally, or spiritually—it can be overwhelming. It's like staring at a blank canvas and being told, "Create something!" You're left wondering, "Where do I even start?" It feels like there's so much to address, and it's hard to know where to dive in.
- So, as you're thinking, **"What if God wants you to help others heal?"** Here are some tips to help you push past that overwhelmed feeling and take action to make a difference in the injustices we witness.
 - **START ALLOWING GOD TO HEAL YOU.** We all have areas in our lives that need some healing. By inviting God into our story, He can help heal our pain and turn it into purpose. This week, let's take steps to heal and consistently collaborate with God on our healing journey.
 - **START TO BRING HEALING TO YOUR FAMILY.** You can be a positive voice for your family. Whether it's the people you live with or your chosen family, you can help point them to Jesus and how he treated people with love and compassion. Take a moment to ask God how you can support a family member as they navigate their healing journey.
 - **START TO BRING HEALING TO YOUR COMMUNITY.** When we stand up for our community and support those facing challenges, the Holy Spirit works through us to foster healing in our neighborhood. Whether you're giving your time, listening to someone's story, or sharing what you can, your efforts can make a difference and bring healing to those around you. This week, watch for opportunities to emulate Jesus by showing compassion and caring for those in your community.

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.

- ✪ Like Frida and her art, have you experienced something that God has used to help heal you? Is it something you are still doing it?
- Read Psalm 147:3. How do you need God to heal your heart and bind your wounds? Have you asked God for that help? Why or why not?

REFLECTION | Healing As An Art Form Station

- Ever think of healing as an art form? Well, today, let's explore that idea together. Healing's a journey, right? And like any masterpiece, it takes time, patience, and a whole lot of heart. Let's dive into some creative ways to see and feel God's healing power.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this reflection, you need the instruction printouts [included in this week's series materials](#), watercolor pencils, watercolor paper, paint brushes, a few cups of water, a bin of legos, some paper, pens, Mod Podge, scissors, magazines, tissue paper, a few tables, and a cross. Set up various stations around your meeting area, each equipped with specific materials listed below. Allow ample time for reflection, and consider playing music for an immersive experience.
 - STATION ONE: WATERCOLOR PENCILS
 - Materials: Watercolor pencils, paper, paintbrushes, and cups of water.
 - Activity: Students can sketch with the watercolor pencils and then use brushes to blend and add water. This process symbolizes how God's love and healing reveal new facets of our lives.
 - STATION TWO: LEGO BUILDING
 - Materials: LEGO pieces.
 - Activity: Encourage teenagers to build something symbolizing how they want to support others in their healing journey. As they build their creations, prompt them to reflect on potential habits they could develop or change to assist others. Encourage moments where they might remove a block, using it as a time to contemplate what aspects of their own lives they might need to adjust to better aid others.
 - STATION THREE: POETRY
 - Materials: Paper and pens.
 - Activity: Encourage students to write a poem or write freely about their healing experiences. Prompt them to reflect on what they've overcome, their aspirations, individuals needing healing in their lives, and how they envision God's role in this process. With their words, they can convey hope and inspire others to find solace in God.
 - STATION FOUR: ASK GOD FOR HEALING
 - Materials: Paper, pens, and a cross.
 - Activity: Encourage your group to jot down areas where they or someone they care about seeks healing. They can place these notes at the base of the cross. Assure them that these will remain private, letting them know the group will collectively pray for these requests at the end of your time together.
 - STATION FIVE: MAKE YOUR MARK
 - Materials: Canvas or thick cardboard from previous weeks, Mod Podge, paintbrushes, scissors, magazines, tissue paper.
 - Activity: Encourage teenagers to contribute to your progressive art mural using Mod Podge, magazines, and tissue paper. Get creative and collaborate to craft something uniquely beautiful together.
- You have a unique contribution you can make to this work of art, just like you have a unique contribution you can make to helping bring God's love and justice to those around you." These stations help us see how we can take steps to help people heal.

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 it matters that we address the areas that must be made well before we think about helping others heal? Where is one place you need to start asking for healing from God?**
 - **Today, what role can you play in helping others get well? What would it look like for you to start doing that this week?**

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 it is coming up. There are all sorts of ways to help get teenagers involved that you can read about in the planning documents over in the [Discipleship folder](#).*
- This week, ask yourself, **what if God wants you to help others heal?**



WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to help others heal?

BIBLE

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- If you could only see one color for the rest of your life, which one would it be?
- In addition to physical problems or sickness, what are some things you think people need "healing" from today?
- What do you think about the idea that people may need physical or emotional healing? Do you have experience with either?
- Who in the story do you relate with? The man asking for healing? The crowd gathered around the pool. Why?
- Why do you think Jesus asks, "Do you want to get well?"? Are there times we might need healing from something but don't always want to get well? What are some reasons that might be true?
- How does Micah 6:8 challenge your understanding of following Jesus?
- Like Frida and her art, have you experienced something that God has used to help heal you? Is it something you are still doing it?
- Read Psalm 147:3. How do you need God to heal your heart and bind your wounds? Have you asked God for that help? Why or why not?
- Why do you think it matters that we address the areas that must be made well before we think about helping others heal? Where is one place you need to start asking for healing from God?
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WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

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WEEK 4 LESSON OUTLINE

What If...

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to make wrong things right?

BIBLE

Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–13;
Romans 12:18

ABOUT THIS WEEK

So much art is made by repurposing broken or discarded materials to create something brand new. This week, we'll hear the story of when Paul and Silas were in prison, and an earthquake opened the doors to their prison cell. Their decisions during this unique situation inspire us to think, **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

WHAT?

Some of us might prefer to avoid doing or saying anything that causes conflict. We just want to navigate life without making waves. However, if we aim to address the injustices in the world, sometimes we have to voice uncomfortable truths. When we strive to bring about God's justice on Earth, God's right there beside us, supporting us all the way.

SO WHAT?

In Acts 16, we see Paul helped free a woman from a condition that was harming her. But when he did so, he upset some powerful people in the process, which ended up landing him and Silas in jail. Despite facing an unjust situation, Paul chose not to make a run for it. Instead, Paul stayed in his jail cell—even though he shouldn't have been there to begin with. We see him counteract the injustice done to him with the love and hope found only in Jesus. And because of this, the jailer *and his whole household started to follow Jesus*. God took something wrong in their life and made it right.

Staying close to God can be challenging, especially when faced with resistance from others. That is why passages like Revelation 22:12–13 remind us of the power of Jesus to correct all wrongs. Nothing is too broken for God's healing, and Jesus has chosen to work through people like us to bring about this transformation. Scriptures like these beg us to ask the question: **What if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

NOW WHAT?

Here are a few steps you can take today to spread God's hope in the world.

- **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOU:** Throughout his teachings, Jesus emphasized the significance of the heart, as it influences many of our values and passions. When your passions align with the life of Jesus, ask for God's guidance to solidify that passion in your life. And if you recognize a cause that Jesus prioritized but you haven't, ask God to transform your heart.
- **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS.** Good friends provide a supportive environment where you can voice concerns or discomforts. When godly friends surround you, they'll appreciate and welcome gentle reminders to reflect more of Jesus in your interactions.
- **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** Identify areas where others might benefit from support, love, or encouragement in your neighborhood or school. Collaborate with others to actively pursue God's justice, aiming to bring positive change and resolve injustices within your community.

Let's commit to continuing to pose meaningful questions to ourselves and our peers, like: **What if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

What If...

BIG IDEA

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Romans 12:18

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WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Paint Pop Relay

- Welcome back to the final week of “What If...!” We all love pondering those intriguing “what if” scenarios, right? From the lighthearted ones like, “What if cats could talk?” or “What if the ground magically turned into lava?” to the deeper ones such as, “What if I miss my morning bus?” or “What if my relationship doesn’t work out?”
- Throughout this series, we’ve centered on one big “what if” question: “What if we can change the way things currently are?” So, let’s play a game that’s all about changing something
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you need two pieces of plywood or foam board, darts, several balloons, drop cloth, and tempura paint. In a space that’s allowed to get messy or outside, fill an equal number of balloons with paint and staple them to each board [like this](#). To play, divide the group into two teams and have them stand an equal distance from their boards. One at a time, teams will attempt to toss a dart at their board to pop a balloon. The first team to pop all of their balloons wins.*
- Sometimes, life can feel a bit messy. For the last few weeks, we’ve been talking about how to pursue God’s vision for the world by helping right the wrongs we see. Inevitably, when we do this, it means we will have conflict. Not everyone is going to want what God wants for the world.
- We all have different feelings about conflict. Some people thrive on conflict. Others will do everything in their power to shy away from conflict.

POLL | How Comfortable Are You With Conflict?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Poll your group’s responses to the question above. You could have them hold up a number on their fingers, indicating how comfortable they are with conflict. One finger means not comfortable at all. Ten fingers means very comfortable with conflict.*
- How comfortable are you with conflict? When we see injustice in the world, we’re called to take action, even if it means facing some conflict along the way.

VIDEO | Good Trouble

- Some of us might prefer to avoid doing or saying anything that causes conflict. We just want to navigate life without making waves. If you resonate with that, awesome! Your perspective helps balance out those of us who feel compelled to speak up and act.
- However, if we aim to address the injustices in the world, sometimes we have to voice uncomfortable truths. But let's reframe this notion so it doesn't feel like we're stirring up chaos.
- The late John Lewis, a renowned civil rights leader who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, introduced the concept of "good trouble" to reshape our understanding of standing up for what's right. Listen to him explain what he means in this 2014 commencement address.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play [this video](#) (0:00–1:08) of John Lewis speaking about "good trouble" in a 2014 commencement address. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- John Lewis was a firm believer that if you spot something unjust, it's crucial to speak up and take action—to get into "good trouble." Sure, it might cause some conflict, but sometimes, we need to step up and challenge what's wrong to make things right.
- Over the past month, we've learned that when we strive to bring about God's justice on Earth, God's right there beside us, supporting us all the way. So, let's dive into a story from the Early Church to explore what it means to get into a little "good trouble" while making things right.

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

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:16–24

- Paul started off with quite the reputation. Initially, he was on a mission to stop Christianity and the emerging movement around Jesus. However, after a transformative experience, Paul became one of the most outspoken advocates for the Christian community.
- His willingness to speak out often got him into some difficult situations. He was working to create communities aligned with God's vision for the world, but not everyone saw eye-to-eye with him. Paul and his companions would often find themselves in prison for the things they did to share the good news of Jesus. Take a look...
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Acts 16:16–24.
- Paul spoke out and freed this woman of a spirit, but it upset people. Eventually, these people channeled their frustrations onto Paul and Silas, and the pair were arrested after being severely beaten.

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:25–34

- We might expect Paul to be upset about what happens, but...this story ends differently.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Acts 16:25–34.
- While they were locked up, a powerful earthquake shattered the chains of all the inmates and swung open the cell doors. The guard, noticing the open doors, figured the prisoners had fled. However, Paul quickly reassured him everyone was still present.
- Despite facing an unjust situation, Paul chose not to make a run for it. Instead, Paul stayed in his jail cell—even though he shouldn't have been there to begin with. By doing so, he met an injustice with something that was just. He counteracted what happened to him by simply doing the right thing. On top of that, he protected the jailer from harming himself. He spoke out to shield, comfort, and tell him about Jesus.
- In Paul's story, we see him counteract the injustice done to him with the love and hope found only in Jesus. Because of Paul's action here, the jailer and his whole household started to follow Jesus. This chapter of

Paul's life started with good trouble and ended with sharing the good news. God took something wrong in his life and made it right.

SCRIPTURE | Revelation 22:12–13

- Throughout your journey, there will be distractions trying to steer you away from doing what's right. You might feel tempted to stay silent or believe maintaining the status quo is easier. But our connection with God reminds us that standing up against injustice is more important than following the crowd or straying from the path Jesus laid out for us. God encourages us to be steadfast in our commitment to correcting injustices within our communities and relationships. This message resonates in the following passage from Revelation ...
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Revelation 22:12–13.*
- Staying close to God can feel difficult—especially when you feel like you are meeting resistance from the people around you. But following Jesus means that our reward is Jesus. We can build habits that keep us close to him, connecting with Jesus regularly to strengthen our faith and to remind us how we can be a part of righting wrongs in the world God has made.
- But we can also, at times, feel like the world is so broken that there is no reason to stand up for what is right because we know that it will just get broken again. But that's why this passage is so important. It reminds us that in Jesus, there's power that can make all wrongs right. There's nothing too broken outside of God's reach of healing, and God is partnering with people like you and me to help make this happen.

IMAGE | Kintsugi

- The ways Jesus has transformed our lives and brought about our healing can deepen our connection to him. Reflecting on God's incredible transformations in our lives fuels our desire to remain close to him.
- Each of us has a personal story of how Jesus has reconciled us with God, healing our wounds and mending what was once broken. These narratives empower us to share the message of Jesus with others and work towards restoring brokenness in the world.
- A beautiful example from Japanese culture that illustrates the concept of turning brokenness into something exquisite is Kintsugi. This art involves repairing fractured pottery with lacquer mixed with gold, creating a stunning visual of healing and beauty from brokenness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, show an image of an item restored through kintsugi [like this](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Kintsugi isn't about washing over something that may have been painful or may have broken the object. It's about honoring the object's history while making something brand new. It highlights the dignity of the pottery and moves to heal and highlight what's possible in the future.
- Each of these gold scars is part of a story and part of healing and making things right. We can all go out into the world with the same attitude Paul held and want to cling to what is good while showing others what is possible. We can be a group focusing on making the wrong things right and creating new futures for ourselves and others.
- Navigating this journey won't be a walk in the park, and that's perfectly fine. Righting wrongs demands both time and patience. Drawing inspiration from kintsugi, we can redefine our role in the world. Regardless of our location or how long we've been walking with Jesus, we have the ability to piece together fragments to create something new and meaningful.
- God wants to partner with us to take what's fractured and envision its renewed worth and potential. We can be catalysts for positive change. God calls us to be proactive participants in our world—even when it pushes us out of our comfort zones—responding to injustices with the transformative message of Jesus and pondering the question: **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

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

VIDEO | Make Wrong Things Right — Judith Scott

- What if God wants you to open your eyes to the world around you? What if God wants you to help those in challenging situations? What if God wants you to speak up for marginalized people and reach out to those no one cares about? **What if God wants you to make wrong things right?** There is a story of an incredible modern artist we would have never known about if it wasn't for her sister doing precisely that.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play this short clip from [2011's BBC's Culture Show](#), from (0:27–6:15) or of one similar of someone seeing something that was not right and doing something about it. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- For Judith, her sister stepped up, showing the love and support that pulled her out of a tough spot and into a joyful life. So, where can you begin? It doesn't take much for us to see the brokenness all around us, especially with social media and the internet highlighting global challenges right at our fingertips.
- Navigating all that information can feel overwhelming, leaving us unsure of where or how to jump in. With so much happening, we must recognize that we can't tackle everything single-handedly. However, here are a few actionable steps you can take today to spread God's hope in the world.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOU:** Throughout his teachings, Jesus emphasized the significance of the heart. It influences so many of our values and passions. If your vision of addressing injustice doesn't resonate with God's heart or if your compassion doesn't mirror God's compassion, you may struggle to make a meaningful impact. When your passions align with Jesus' passions, pray for God's guidance to solidify that passion within you. And if you recognize a cause that Jesus prioritized but you haven't, look to God for help.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS.** God also desires to set things right within our friendships. Friendships play a significant role in our lives, shaping us while we also shape them. This could involve having compassionate conversations with your friends about their humor and how they interact and treat others. Encourage them to offer you feedback as well! True friends provide a supportive environment where you can voice concerns or discomforts. When godly friends surround you, they'll appreciate and welcome gentle reminders to reflect more of Jesus in your interactions.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** Once you've navigated the journey of setting things right within your heart and friendships, you can address injustices in your school or community. Identify areas where others might benefit from support, love, or encouragement in your neighborhood or school. Are there existing school clubs or groups that align with God's mission to right wrongs? Think about ways you can contribute. Collaborate with your friends and like-minded people to actively pursue God's justice to bring positive change and resolve injustices within your community.

RESPONSE | Make Your Mark

- If you were here for the other weeks of this series, we've been working on this art mural. You all have a unique way in which God has created you to make a difference in this world, and we want you to demonstrate your unique perspective in this art piece. This week, we're putting on our finishing touches. Everyone is invited to contribute, whether you've been here in previous weeks.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this Response, you need the same items you used last week: A large canvas or thick cardboard, glue, string, plastic gems, fabric scraps, and any other items you think could enhance the mural. Before your program begins, designate an area where teenagers can continue working on the collaborative*

art piece. Encourage them to use various art techniques to contribute to this community artwork. This week, your group will add 3D elements, drawing inspiration from Judith Scott's style.

- Just as each of us added our unique touch to this art piece, we all have distinct strengths and qualities God intentionally gave us to address injustices. This empowers us to make a positive impact on the world around us. Engaging in activities like this art project allows us to pause, contemplate, and reflect.

ACTIVITY | The What If ... Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already done so, this may be the last week to invite your students to participate in "The What if... Project" discipleship activity. If it hasn't already happened, it may be coming up quickly, so encourage them to participate. There are all sorts of ways to help get teenagers involved that you can read about in the planning documents over in the [Discipleship folder](#).*
- As we conclude this series, let's commit to continuing this thoughtful process, posing meaningful questions to ourselves and our peers, such as: What if **God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, and help others heal** and finally, **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to make wrong things right?

BIBLE

Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–13;
Romans 12:18

ABOUT THIS WEEK

So much art is made by repurposing broken or discarded materials to create something brand new. This week, we'll hear the story of when Paul and Silas were in prison, and an earthquake opened the doors to their prison cell. Their decisions during this unique situation inspire us to think, **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

- What's the silliest argument you have gotten into with someone?
- Is it easier for you to address conflict when you are directly involved or when you are speaking up from someone else?
- How do you tell the difference between things we shouldn't let get to us and things that require us to speak up and take action?
- How have you experienced conflict making things better?
- What's something in the story of Paul and Silas that surprised you? Why?
- Who do you relate with in this story? Paul? Silas? The jailer? The prisoners? Why? What do you think they were feeling at different parts of the story?
- What does this passage in Revelation tell us about God's character? Does any of it challenge your understanding of who God is?
- Who can you count on to help you reframe and get perspective on a difficult situation?
- Read Romans 12:18. What sticks out to you about this verse? How does it help you know what your role is and isn't when it comes to peace, conflict, and challenging circumstances?
- Today, what's one step you will take toward helping make wrong things right?



WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*

What If...

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to make wrong things right?

BIBLE

Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–13;
Romans 12:18

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LOOKING FOR A DEVOTIONAL?



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DEVOTIONAL

for volunteers



Some of the most incredible pieces of art were created when the artist wondered, "What if I ... ?" Their curiosity inspired them to look at what was in front of them to imagine something entirely different. As we grow closer to God, we realize that God asks us to do something similar—to look through the hurt, pain, and evil in the world and wonder what it might look like for things to be different. In this 4-week series from the New Testament and Prophets, we'll wonder about what it might look like to be a part of making a difference as we explore questions like **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, help others heal, or make wrong things right?**

To get ready for this teaching series, spend a few minutes each week **studying** the passages of Scripture we'll be teaching, **praying** about what God wants to do in and through us in the next few weeks, and **growing** by putting God's words into practice in your own life.

WEEK 1

What if God wants you to meet someone's needs?

Acts 9:36–43; Isaiah 58:3,6–8; Proverbs 22:9

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, ask God to help you meet the needs of people around you.

GROW

So what's your next step? Is there someone you could thank for helping you? Do you need a better sense of the needs in your community? Could you make a list of the skills and resources you have to offer? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 2

What if God wants you to rest?

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

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, thank God for caring so much about our rest and recovery.

GROW

So what's your next step? Can you schedule a short time to disconnect and rest? Can you talk with someone who inspires you to rest? Could you help someone who struggles to slow down and rest? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 3

What if God wants you to help others heal?

John 5:1–9; Micah 6:8; Psalm 147:3



STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.

What stands out to you in this passage and why?



PRAY

This week, ask God to help you be part of bringing healing to those who need it.



GROW

So what's your next step? Is there a situation where you need to heal? Do you need to ask for help with a specific need? Can you share the stories of when God helped heal you? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 4

What if God wants you to make wrong things right?

Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–14; Romans 12:18



STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.

What stands out to you in this passage and why?



PRAY

This week, thank God for making beautiful things from our pain and brokenness.



GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need to make something right in your heart? Can you take action to make something right in your community? Can you take steps to forgive someone this week? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

DEVOTIONAL

for parents



Some of the most incredible pieces of art were created when the artist wondered, "What if I ... ?" Their curiosity inspired them to look at what was in front of them to imagine something entirely different. As we grow closer to God, we realize that God asks us to do something similar—to look through the hurt, pain, and evil in the world and wonder what it might look like for things to be different. In this 4-week series from the New Testament and Prophets, we'll wonder about what it might look like to be a part of making a difference as we explore questions like **what if God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, help others heal, or make wrong things right?**

Want to learn and grow alongside your kid as we go through this teaching series? You can! Spend a few minutes each week **studying** the passages of Scripture we'll be teaching, **praying** about what God wants to do in you and in your family, and **growing** by putting God's words into practice in your own life.

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MARKETING CHECKLIST



BEFORE THE SERIES

✓	Print your Series Poster , Series Flyers , and Devotional Flyers , and display them where students, parents, 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, along with the Parent Devotional .
✓	Customize and schedule your Volunteer Emails for each week of this series, and don't forget to include the Volunteer Devotional !
✓	Review and customize the suggested Social Media Posts and Captions for this series.
✓	Post the Bumper Video on social media with this caption: This week we're starting a new series about partnering with God to help right the wrongs we see in the world, called "What If..."

AFTER WEEK 1

✓	Post the One-Minute Sermon Video for Week 1 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, we heard about Tabitha's story as we explored how we could serve our communities and let them serve us in return.
✓	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 1 on social media with this caption: Remember, we can focus on helping care for the basic needs of others while showing them the way toward the freedom found in Jesus.
✓	Post the Memory Verse on social media by posting either the graphics provided, a video of someone reciting the verse, or a creative way one of your students is memorizing it.
✓	Send the Volunteer Email for next week of this series.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓	Post the One-Minute Sermon Video for Week 2 on social media with this caption: If you missed last week, we read about a time when Jesus encouraged his disciples to get some rest right before he did something incredible.
✓	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 2 on social media with this caption: Remember, we're invited to stay connected to God, learn our part in God's story, and spend time recharging to help make God's justice a reality.
✓	Post the Memory Verse on social media by posting either the graphics provided, a video of someone reciting the verse, or a creative way one of your students is memorizing it.
✓	Send the Volunteer Email for next week of this series.

AFTER WEEK 3

✓	Post the One-Minute Sermon Video for Week 3 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, we looked at a time when Jesus noticed a man who wanted to be healed and helped him.
✓	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 3 on social media with this caption: Jesus's life and how he cared for others reminds us of God's vision for the world and invites us to ask big questions.
✓	Post the Memory Verse on social media by posting either the graphics provided, a video of someone reciting the verse, or a creative way one of your students is memorizing it.
✓	Send the Volunteer Email for next week of this series.

AFTER WEEK 4

✓	Post the One-Minute Sermon Video for Week 4 on social media with this caption: Last week, we read a story about when Paul and Silas helped right the wrongs of people affected by unjust situations.
✓	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 4 on social media with this caption: Remember, nothing is too broken for God's healing, and Jesus has chosen to work through people like us to bring about this transformation.
✓	Post the Memory Verse on social media by posting either the graphics provided, a video of someone reciting the verse, or a creative way one of your students is memorizing it.
✓	Get ready for the next series!

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS

What If...

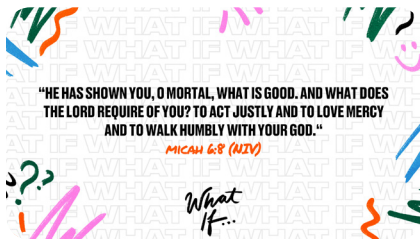
Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

BEFORE THE SERIES



BUMPER VIDEO

This week we're starting a new series about partnering with God to help right the wrongs we see in the world, called "What If..."



AFTER WEEK 1



ONE-MINUTE SERMON VIDEO

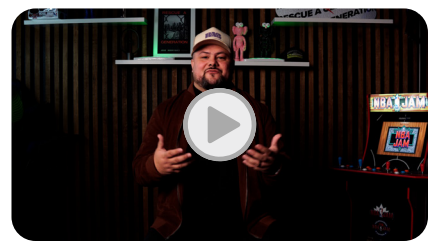
In case you missed it, we heard about Tabitha's story as we explored how we could serve our communities and let them serve us in return.



BIG IDEA

Remember, we can focus on helping care for the basic needs of others while showing them the way toward the freedom found in Jesus.

AFTER WEEK 2



ONE-MINUTE SERMON VIDEO

If you missed last week, we read about a time when Jesus encouraged his disciples to get some rest right before he did something incredible.



BIG IDEA

Remember, we're invited to stay connected to God, learn our part in God's story, and spend time recharging to help make God's justice a reality.

AFTER WEEK 3



ONE-MINUTE SERMON VIDEO

In case you missed it, we looked at a time when Jesus noticed a man who wanted to be healed and helped him.

AFTER WEEK 4



ONE-MINUTE SERMON VIDEO

Last week, we read a story about when Paul and Silas helped right the wrongs of people affected by unjust situations.



BIG IDEA

Jesus's life and how he cared for others reminds us of God's vision for the world and invites us to ask big questions.



BIG IDEA

Remember, nothing is too broken for God's healing, and Jesus has chosen to work through people like us to bring about this transformation.

ONE-MINUTE SERMONS

VIDEO LINKS



INSTRUCTIONS

In addition to your full teaching time each week, we recommend **posting a video summary of your message in one minute or less**. We've already filmed these 1-Minute Sermon Videos for you and included them in your downloads but if you want to film your own, we've included the scripts in your downloads too. Make your own, or post ours – whatever you want!

AUG	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div>	<div> </div>	RESTART
SEP	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div>	<div> </div>	GOOD CALL
OCT	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div>	<div> </div>	UNAFRAID
NOV	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div>	<div> </div>	ON REPEAT
DEC	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div>	<div> </div>	REMEMBER WHEN
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APR	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div>5</div> <div>6</div> <div> </div> </div> <div> <p>CLICK THE WEEK YOU'D LIKE TO DOWNLOAD!</p> <p>OPEN IN FOLDER</p> </div> <div> <p><i>Invited</i></p> </div>
MAY	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div> </div> </div> <div> <p>CLICK THE WEEK YOU'D LIKE TO DOWNLOAD!</p> <p>OPEN IN FOLDER</p> </div> <div> <p><i>What If...</i></p> </div>
JUN	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div> </div> </div> <div> <p>CLICK THE WEEK YOU'D LIKE TO DOWNLOAD!</p> <p>OPEN IN FOLDER</p> </div> <div> <p>MORE TO THE STORY</p> </div>
JUL	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div> </div> </div> <div> <p>CLICK THE WEEK YOU'D LIKE TO DOWNLOAD!</p> <p>OPEN IN FOLDER</p> </div> <div> <p>IN THE SHADOWS</p> </div>

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