YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

GRADUATION · SUMMER

WEEK 1 OF 3

Countdown

Theme: Endings and seasons · Main text: Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

3 · 2 · 1



LAUNCH.

Sent out, not sent away.

Inside: 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · word-for-word scripts · 4 game options · response activity · Joys & Concerns · 3 student pages

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NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

Countdown

Theme: Endings and seasons · Main text: Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 · Memory verse: Ecclesiastes 3:1

THE BIG IDEA

Endings aren't the end. God is in every season, so we can finish well and say thank you.

The question to carry all night

"How do I finish this season well?"

By the end, students will…

- See that every season is in God's hands
- Name what they're thankful for and will miss
- Write a real thank-you and start My Flight Plan

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students; 3-2-1 Countdown; announcements	—	—	5
Game 1	Pick from the Activity Menu (next page)	8	10	10
Game 2	A second game from the menu (optional)	—	—	10
Hook + Message	"T-Minus Zero" · Ecclesiastes 3:1–8	10	12	12
Response Activity	The Last Page + Flight Plan + My One Step	10	12	12
Small Group Talk	Pick 3–4 questions	—	8	10
Joys & Concerns	"I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer."	10	10	10
Pastoral Prayer	Leader prays over what was shared + send-off	5	5	5

Supplies

- Blank cards + envelopes (1–2 per student)
- Paper slips + a box labeled "Leave It Here"
- Pens, markers · a phone with a countdown timer
- Printed Time Match cards (Game B)
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles or a Bible app

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 once through
- Know who is graduating or moving
- Recall one ending *you* rushed past as a teen
- Pray for each student by name

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CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

Activity Menu

Every group is different. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls; some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Open with the 3-2-1 Countdown, pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every game ends with a debrief that points back to tonight's question.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Countdown Clusters Form groups by countdown, answer "this year" prompts	High	None	Students need to move; you want everyone talking to everyone	10
B. Time Match Find your other half, share when it was true	Medium	Printed cards, 5 min	You want the strongest link to the message	10–12
C. The Year-End Awards Teams pick winners for "this year" categories	Medium	Scrap paper	Lots of new students; you want laughs	10
D. Firsts and Lasts Trios trade first-time and last-time stories	Low	None	Small or quiet group; students who don't know each other yet	8–10
E. The Last Page Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Cards, envelopes, slips	Every night: the heart of the week	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Countdown Clusters → B. Time Match → Message → E. The Last Page

Small group (4–6)

D. Firsts and Lasts (whole group) → Message → E. The Last Page in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

C. The Year-End Awards → A. Countdown Clusters → Message → E. The Last Page (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

B. Time Match → Message → E. The Last Page → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. If a game ever starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

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Welcome: The 3-2-1 Countdown

3 min · Every week

Purpose: A quick, fun opener you'll use all three weeks of LAUNCH. Students turn to a neighbor and count down their week (or their year) in three quick answers. It gets everyone talking in the first five minutes, and it quietly trains students to notice good things and say thank you.

#	SAY IT LIKE THIS	TONIGHT'S VERSION
3	Three highlights	"Three best moments from this school year. Go fast!"
2	Two thank-yous	"Two people you're thankful for this year. First names are fine."
1	One hope	"One thing you hope happens this summer."

> **SAY**
> "Welcome! We're starting a three-week series called LAUNCH. Every week we're going to start with a countdown. Turn to someone near you. You've got about a minute each. Give them three highlights from this school year, two people you're thankful for, and one hope for this summer. Ready? Three, two, one… go!"

LEADER NOTE *Do your own 3-2-1 first, fast and a little funny, so students hear how short it can be. New students can count down "the last few months" instead of the school year.*

A. Countdown Clusters

10 min · High energy

Purpose: Students race around the room forming groups of whatever number the leader counts down to, then answer a quick "this year" question inside that group. Groups change every round, so everyone ends up talking with almost everyone, and nobody is ever left standing alone for long.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Everyone walks slowly around the open room. Music helps.
2. The leader calls a countdown: **"Five… four… three!"** The number you stop on is the group size. Students quickly grab people and form a group of exactly that size.
3. Leftover students join the nearest group. Nobody is "out."
4. The leader reads a **This Year** prompt. Everyone in the group answers in one sentence.
5. Say "Launch!" and everyone walks again. Call a new number and a new prompt. Rule: you can't be in a group with the same person twice in a row.
6. Play 8–10 rounds. End on a round of 2 for the Bridge prompt.

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LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Everybody up and start walking around the room. I'm going to count down, like a rocket launch. Whatever number I stop on, that's how many people need to be in your group. So if I say 'Five, four, three!' you need a group of three, fast. If you're extra, just jump into the closest group. Nobody's out. Then I'll give you a question about this year and everybody answers. When I say 'Launch!' you split up and walk again. Ready? Five… four… three!"

THIS YEAR PROMPTS

- Best thing you ate this year
- A class you ended up liking
- Hardest week of the year
- Something new you tried
- Best field trip, game, or event
- Song of your year
- Something you're proud you finished
- A time you laughed until it hurt
- Something you'll miss about this year
- Something you will NOT miss
- Someone who helped you (first name)
- **Bridge:** One thing that's ending for you soon

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Skip the grouping. Stand in a circle; the leader counts down "3, 2, 1" and points to a direction. Everyone answers to the person on that side.
- **Launch pad:** Tape an X on the floor. After each round, one volunteer group stands on the "launch pad" and shares their best answer.
- **Limited space:** Stay seated. Call a number and students turn to form groups with people nearby.

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "That last question was different, right? Something's ending for almost everybody in this room: a grade, a school, a team, a year. Some of us can't wait. Some of us kind of dread it. Tonight we're asking: **how do I finish this season well?**"

B. Time Match

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Every student gets half of a "time" from Ecclesiastes 3 (or a modern, school-life version) and has to find the person holding the other half. Then partners tell each other when that "time" was true for them this year. It gets everyone mingling, and it teaches tonight's passage before you even read it.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before group, print the pairs below and cut each pair in half. Use as many pairs as you need so every student gets one half. Mix Bible and modern pairs.
2. Hand out one half per student, face down. On "Go," students walk around reading their card out loud ("A time to laugh!") until they find their match ("…and a time to weep!").

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3. Matched partners sit down together and answer the **Talk Question** on the pair: when was each half true for you this year?
4. Collect cards, shuffle, and play a second round with new partners.
5. For the last round, use only the Bible pairs so students hear the real passage.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Everybody gets half of a card. It says 'a time to' something. Somebody else in this room has the other half. Walk around and read yours out loud until you find your match. Some are from a really old poem in the Bible, and some are, let's say, updated. When you find your person, sit down together and tell each other when that was true for you this year. Go!"

MATCH PAIRS + TALK QUESTION

FIRST HALF	SECOND HALF	TALK QUESTION
A time to laugh	and a time to weep	"A time you laughed hard, and a time you were sad this year?"
A time to plant	and a time to pluck up	"Something you started this year? Something you quit?"
A time to keep silence	and a time to speak	"A time you should have spoken up (or stayed quiet)?"
A time to build up	and a time to break down	"Something you built or worked hard on this year?"
A time to keep	and a time to cast away	"What's one thing you'd keep from this year?"
A time to study	and a time to sleep in	"Your worst all-nighter or best sleep-in?"
A time to say hello	and a time to say goodbye	"Someone new you met? Someone you had to say goodbye to?"
A time for school	and a time for summer	"Best summer memory ever?"
A time to try out	and a time to cheer	"Something you tried out for, or cheered someone on in?"
A time to scroll	and a time to log off	"When is your phone hardest to put down?"

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Lay all the halves face up on a table. Take turns matching a pair, then everyone answers that pair's talk question.
- **Odd number:** The leader holds a card too, or make one "triple" card: "A time to laugh / to weep / to dance."
- **Write your own:** For the last round, partners invent a new pair about their real life right now ("A time to pack / a time to unpack").

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LEADER NOTE *"Weep" and "goodbye" can hit close to home for students who have lost someone or are moving. It's fine. Let partners choose which half to answer, and keep the pace light.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Every card had two halves, and most of us had both halves happen this year: laughing and crying, hello and goodbye. That's not a mistake. That's what seasons are like. Tonight we're reading the original poem these came from, and asking: **how do I finish this season well?**"

C. The Year-End Awards

10 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Small teams hold their own awards show for the school year, but the winners are things, moments, and experiences, never people in the room. Teams have to talk, compare stories, and agree. It's funny, it's safe for visitors, and it gets students looking back on the whole year before tonight's message about seasons.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. Mix grades and schools if you can. Give each team scrap paper.
2. The leader reads an award category. Teams have 60 seconds to share their answers and agree on one **winner**.
3. Each team announces their winner like an awards show: "And the award for Best Cafeteria Food goes to… Taco Tuesday!"
4. Everyone gives the winners a quick round of applause. Play 6–8 categories.
5. Finish with the Bridge category: "Best Thank-You We Never Said."

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Welcome to the first annual Youth Group Year-End Awards! Get into teams of three or four. I'll read a category, and your team has sixty seconds to talk it out and pick one winner. Here's the one rule: the winners can be things, moments, songs, foods, whatever, but never a person in this room. When I point to your team, announce it like it's the Oscars. First category…"

AWARD CATEGORIES

- Best cafeteria (or home) food
- Most overrated trend
- Song that defined the year
- Best excuse you heard all year
- Most stressful week
- Best show or movie
- Biggest surprise of the year
- Best way to spend a snow day
- Most useful app
- Moment you felt proudest
- Best thing about summer coming
- **Bridge:** Best Thank-You We Never Said

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VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Play as one team. Everyone nominates, then vote by pointing on "3-2-1."
- **Acceptance speech:** A volunteer from the winning team gives a 10-second "thank you" speech for their award. Keep it silly.
- **Trophy:** Use a plastic cup or a spray-painted water bottle as the trophy that gets passed around.

LEADER NOTE *Keep the "never a person in this room" rule firm. Categories like "Most likely to..." about students always end up singling someone out.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Look at those answers for the last category. There are people who made this year better, and some of them have never heard 'thank you' from us. The year's almost over. Tonight we're asking: **how do I finish this season well?** And I think part of the answer is on that last card."

D. Firsts and Lasts

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm story-sharing game for small or quiet groups. Trios trade quick "first time" and "last time" stories. It's easy for new students to join, and it sets up the message: every season has a beginning and an end, and both matter.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into trios. Mix it up: "Find two people you know the least."
2. The leader reads a prompt that starts with **"The first time I..."** or **"The last time I..."**
3. Each person answers in about 30 seconds. Anyone can pass.
4. After every three prompts, trios pick the best story they heard and give it a title (like a movie).
5. End with the Bridge prompt, then a few trios share titles with everyone.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Get in groups of three. I'm going to read the start of a sentence, like 'The first time I rode a bike...' and you finish it with a real story. Keep it short. Thirty seconds each. Some are firsts, some are lasts. I'll go first so you can see how short it is."

PROMPTS

- The first time I rode a bike...
- The last time I laughed really hard...
- The first day at a new school...
- The last time I tried something new...
- The first concert or big event I went to...
- The last really good meal I had...
- The first time I stayed overnight away from home...
- The last time someone surprised me...
- The first friend I remember having...
- **Bridge:** Something I'm doing for the last time this year...

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VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Stay together and go around the circle. Anyone can pass.
- **Timeline:** Draw a line on scrap paper. Mark your "firsts" on the left and "lasts" on the right as you share.

LEADER NOTE *Model a light story. If a "last time" prompt touches a loss (a last visit with a grandparent), thank the student, keep it gentle, and follow up privately later (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"We remember firsts, but we don't always notice lasts while they're happening. Sometimes you don't know it's the last time until it's over. A lot of you are in a season of lasts right now. So tonight's question is: **how do I finish this season well?**"

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Hook: "T-Minus Zero"

2 min

SAY

(Start a 10-second countdown on your phone and hold it up.) "Count it down with me. Ten, nine, eight… three, two, one!" *(Let students yell it.)*

"Why do we count down? New Year's Eve. The last day of school. A rocket launch. When a rocket gets to zero, NASA calls it 'T-minus zero.' And here's the thing: at T-minus zero, something ends. The rocket's time sitting on the launch pad is over. But that's not the end of the rocket. That's the moment it finally goes somewhere."

"A lot of you are in a countdown right now. School's ending. Some of you are graduating. Some of you are moving, or changing schools, or just changing grades. Endings are coming. So tonight's question is: **how do I finish this season well?**"

Message: A Time for Everything

10 min

1. Everything has a season

SAY

"Nobody likes to admit this, but nothing on earth stays the same forever. Teams end. Friend groups shift. Teachers retire. Your favorite show gets canceled. Even good things end. Especially good things, it feels like sometimes."

"Around three thousand years ago, a wise teacher in the Bible wrote a poem about exactly that. We usually say King Solomon is behind this book. And he looked at all of life and said: it comes in seasons. Listen."

2. Read the poem

[1] *For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:* [2] *a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;* [3] *a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;* [4] *a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;* [5] *a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;* [6] *a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;* [7] *a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;* [8] *a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1–8 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Did you notice? He doesn't say only the happy half is from God. Laughing and crying. Planting and pulling up. Keeping and letting go. It's *all* 'under heaven.' God is in every season, including the ones that are ending."

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3. It's okay to feel two things at once

SAY

"Look at verse 4 again: 'a time to weep, and a time to laugh.' Have you ever been at a graduation? People are cheering and crying in the same five minutes. That's not weird. That's what endings feel like. You can be excited for summer and sad that your friend is moving. You can be ready to leave middle school and still miss it."

"Some of us just rush past endings. We don't say goodbye. We don't say thank you. We act like it doesn't matter. But the Bible says there's a time to mourn. Being honest about what you'll miss isn't weak. It means the season mattered."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about an ending you rushed past as a teenager (a goodbye you never said, a coach you never thanked, a move you pretended didn't bother you), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Students trust leaders who go first.*

4. Finish well: say thank you, and trust what's next

SAY

"So how do you finish a season well? Here's one thing almost anyone can do: say thank you. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to some friends he'd left behind, and he started it like this:"

> [3] *I thank my God whenever I remember you,*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 1:3 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Paul didn't just leave. He looked back and said thank you. And a few verses after the poem, the same teacher says this:"

> [11] *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their hearts, yet so that man can't find out the work that God has done from the beginning even to the end.*
>
> ECCLESIASTES 3:11 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"We can't see the whole story from where we're standing. But God can. He makes things beautiful *in its time*. This ending isn't the end. It's T-minus zero. So: be honest about what you'll miss, say thank you to the people who got you here, and trust God with what's next. Here's the question again, and I want you to actually think about it: **how do I finish this season well?**"

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E. Response Activity: The Last Page

12 min

Purpose: Help students write the "last page" of this season before they turn it: one real thank-you they'll actually deliver, one thing they're choosing to leave behind, and the first section of **My Flight Plan**, the one-page plan they'll build all three weeks of LAUNCH.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. **The Thank-You:** Give every student a card and an envelope. They write a short, specific thank-you to one person who helped them this season: a teacher, coach, friend, parent, grandparent, bus driver. Address the envelope with that person's name.
2. **Leave It Here:** Give everyone a small slip. Privately, students write one thing they want to leave behind as this season ends: a grudge, a habit, a regret, a worry. Fold it and drop it in the "Leave It Here" box. Nobody reads these.
3. **My Flight Plan · Part 1:** On student page 2, students fill in "What I'm thankful for" and "What I'm leaving behind." They'll add a new section each week.
4. Close with a 20-second silent prayer: "God, thank you for this season. I trust you with the next one."
5. **My One Step:** Students fill in "My One Step This Week" on their student page. For most, it's simply: deliver the thank-you card.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (THE THANK-YOU)**
>
> "Grab a card. Think of one person who made this year better for you. Maybe they have no idea. Write them a real thank-you. Not 'thanks for everything.' Be specific: 'Thank you for staying after class to help me with math,' or 'Thank you for driving me to practice every single day.' Put their name on the envelope. You're actually going to give it to them."
>
> **SAY (LEAVE IT HERE)**
>
> "Now take one small slip. This one's private. What's one thing you don't want to carry into the next season? Maybe a grudge. Maybe something you did that you keep replaying. Maybe a worry. Write it, fold it, and drop it in the box. Nobody is going to read these. I'm going to throw them away tonight without opening them. There's a time to keep, and a time to cast away."
>
> **SAY (MY FLIGHT PLAN)**
>
> "Turn to page two. See the box called My Flight Plan? For the next three weeks, we're building a plan for where God is sending you next. Tonight is Part 1: what you're thankful for, and what you're leaving behind. You can copy from your card and your slip, or write something new."
>
> **SAY (ONE STEP)**
>
> "Last thing. Write your one step for this week. For most of you, it's easy: give that card to that person before the week is over. Hand it to them, leave it on their desk, or mail it. Just don't let it sit in your backpack until August."

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Thank-you starters (read aloud if stuck)

- "Thank you for noticing when I was having a bad day."
- "Thank you for never giving up on me in your class."
- "Thank you for sitting with me when I was new."
- "Thank you for every ride, every snack, every practice."
- "Thank you for making me laugh this year."

"Leave it here" ideas

- A grudge
- A bad habit
- A mean comment I keep replaying
- A regret
- Comparing myself
- Worry about next year
- Being too hard on myself
- An "I'm not enough" voice

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. After writing, each person says just the first name on their envelope and one word about why. ("Mrs. Lopez. Patient.")
- **Low-pressure option:** Students who can't think of anyone can write a thank-you to God for one thing from this year. That counts.
- **Group thank-you:** As a group, sign one big card for a church volunteer, janitor, or graduating senior. Deliver it together next week.

LEADER NOTE *Never open or read the "Leave It Here" slips. Throw them away in front of students, or tear them up. Some students may write about things at home, or a loss. If someone looks upset, check in quietly later (see the Care Note). Keep a few extra envelopes for anyone who wants to write a second card.*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"Look at what's in your hands. One card that says thank you. One page with the start of your Flight Plan. And one thing you left in that box. That's what finishing well looks like. It's honest, it's grateful, and it's ready for what's next. **How do I finish this season well?** You just started."

Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

WARM UP

1. What's the best countdown you've ever been part of?
   Follow-up: New Year's, a birthday, a last day, a trip?
2. Which line from the poem describes your year best?
   Keep it light. "A time to sleep in" counts.

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GO DEEPER

3. Why do you think we rush past endings instead of noticing them?
   What are we avoiding?
4. What's something ending for you (or your family) that you have mixed feelings about?
   Is it okay to be excited and sad at the same time?
5. "He has made everything beautiful in its time." Can you think of something that felt bad when it happened but turned out good later?
6. What's the difference between just *leaving* a season and *finishing* it well?

TAKE IT HOME

7. Who is one more person you'd thank if you had another card?
8. What's one thing you want to do before this school year ends so you don't regret it?

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again.*

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Joys & Concerns

10 min

Purpose: Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. It's often the moment new students realize this group actually cares about them. Tonight it fits the theme: there's a time to laugh and a time to weep, and this group is a place where we can bring both to God.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with **"I lift up ___ to God."** Everyone responds together: **"Lord, hear our prayer."**
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Tonight we heard there's a time to laugh and a time to weep. A lot of us have both going on right now: things ending, things starting, people leaving. So let's bring all of it to God together. What's something good from this season you're thankful for? Or something that's hard right now, for you, your family, or a friend?"
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God..." (*All: "Lord, hear our prayer."*)
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- Finishing a hard class or a big project
- A graduation in my family or friend group
- My team's season / a great last game
- Someone I love got good news
- Summer plans I'm excited about

Concern starters

- Finals or end-of-year tests
- A friend (or my family) who's moving
- Changes at home
- A grandparent or relative who is sick
- "I have an unspoken request."

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.

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LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

God of every season,

Thank you for every person in this room. Thank you for this whole year: the good days and the hard ones, the laughing and the crying. None of it was outside your hands.

Thank you for the good things you've given us. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Maya's brother graduating, for Chris's team finishing strong..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Ethan's family as they move. Give Sophia peace before her finals..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

Some of us are ready for this season to be over. Some of us wish it would never end. Help us be honest about what we'll miss. Help us say thank you to the people who got us here. And the things we left in that box tonight, help us really leave them with you.

You make everything beautiful in its time, even when we can't see it yet. For anyone who is saying a hard goodbye, stay close. For anyone who is new here, thank you for bringing them. Help them feel at home. And as this season ends, show each of us where you're sending us next.

In Jesus' name, amen.

SEND-OFF

"Take your student pages home. There's a five-day devotional in there, just a few minutes a day, and your Flight Plan. Bring it back next week, because we're adding Part 2. And deliver that thank-you card! Next time we're talking about stepping into something you've never done before: '**Uncharted.**' And all three weeks, we're asking one big question: **Where is God sending me next?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 with the 3-2-1 Countdown, then ask: "Who delivered their thank-you card? What happened when you gave it?" Let two or three students tell the story, and celebrate anyone who even started. Then have everyone pull out My Flight Plan: "Part 1 is where you've been. Tonight we're adding what's ahead."

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Care Note for Leaders

Endings can stir up more than we expect. For some students, the end of a season means a move, a family change, a divorce, a senior leaving, or a loss they are still grieving. For some, summer is not a break at all. It can mean less structure, fewer meals, more time alone, or more time in a hard home. A student who seems unusually sad, angry, or checked out about "the end of the year" may be carrying something real.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. "I'm really glad you told me."
- **Don't rush their grief** toward "it'll be fine." Sit with it. There's a time to weep.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk.
- **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day.
- **Connect them to trained help:** parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not expected to be a counselor. Your job is to listen well, take it seriously, and make sure they're connected to the right people.

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THE FULL SERIES

LAUNCH · 3 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the three weeks help students finish a season well, step into the unknown with God, and be sent out with the church's blessing. The question every week: *Where is God sending me next?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**Countdown** Endings and seasons	Ecclesiastes 3:1–8
2	**Uncharted** Into the uncharted	Joshua 3:1–17
3	**Sent** Commissioned for what's next	Acts 13:1–3

Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- Response activity + "One Step" challenge
- My Flight Plan, built one section a week
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and 5-day devotional
- Next-week follow-up

Built for real youth groups

These weeks were written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

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Purchasers may photocopy and share the student pages and leader guide for use within their own church or ministry.
Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

Endings aren't the end. God is in every season, so I can finish well, say thank you, and be honest about what I'll miss.

THE POEM · ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 4

"For everything there is a _____, and a time for every purpose under _____…

a time to _____, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to _____."

Which half of the poem is from God? _____

MY YEAR IN SEASONS

Pick a few lines from Ecclesiastes 3 and write when they were true for you this year. Short answers are fine.

"A TIME TO…"	WHEN WAS THIS TRUE FOR ME?
laugh	
weep	
plant (something I started)	
build up (something I worked hard on)	
keep (something I want to hold on to)	
cast away (something I'm letting go)	

FINISH WELL CHECKLIST

Check the ones you want to do before this season ends.

- ☐ Deliver my thank-you card
- ☐ Say a real goodbye to someone leaving
- ☐ Return something I borrowed
- ☐ Make things right with someone
- ☐ Take a picture with people I'll miss
- ☐ Thank God for one thing from this year

One thing I'll miss about this season:

_____

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My One Step

MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Keep it small enough to actually do.

By _____ (day), I will give my thank-you card to _____

One more way I'll finish this season well: _____

Example: "By Friday, I will give my card to Coach Davis after practice."

MY FLIGHT PLAN · PART 1 OF 3 · WHERE I'VE BEEN

Keep this page! You'll add Part 2 next week.

This season, I'm thankful for: _____

_____

As it ends, I'm leaving behind: _____

One thing I'll miss: _____

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step (or read your devotional).

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR…	CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH…

✂ CUT OUT AND KEEP IN YOUR PHONE CASE, WALLET, OR BIBLE

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven."

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

This season, I'm thankful for: _____

My step: M ☐ T ☐ W ☐ T ☐ F ☐ S ☐ S ☐

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5-Day Countdown

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. That's it.

DAY 1 Ecclesiastes 3:1–2 · A season for everything

What season of life are you in right now? Give it a name, like "the busy season" or "the in-between season."

DAY 2 Ecclesiastes 3:4 · Laugh and weep

What's one thing you're glad is ending, and one thing you're sad is ending? Tell God both.

DAY 3 Philippians 1:3–6 · Thankful when I remember

Who do you thank God for when you remember this year? Did your thank-you card get delivered yet?

DAY 4 Ecclesiastes 3:11 · Beautiful in its time

What's something that felt bad at first but turned out good later? What might God be making beautiful right now?

DAY 5 Psalm 31:14–15 · My times are in your hand

What's coming next for you (summer, a new grade, a new school)? Write one sentence handing it to God.

A prayer you can pray this week

God, this season is ending, and I have a lot of feelings about it. Thank you for the people who got me here. Help me say thank you, let go of what I need to leave behind, and be honest about what I'll miss. I trust you with what's next. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **Uncharted**

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