YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

PHONES · SOCIAL MEDIA · FAITH



WEEK 1 OF 4

Who's Holding Whom?

Theme: Attention and habits · Main text: Matthew 6:19–24

SCREEN TIME.

You're more than your screen.

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

DAHAM
NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

Who's Holding Whom?

Theme: Attention and habits · Main text: Matthew 6:19–24 · Memory verse: 1 Corinthians 6:12

THE BIG IDEA

What gets my attention gets my heart. I can use my phone without letting it use me.

The question to carry all night

"Who is shaping me when I scroll?"

By the end, students will…

- Notice where their attention actually goes in a normal day
- See Jesus' point: what we treasure and look at shapes our heart
- Choose one habit to change and start **My Screen Plan**

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students by name and grade; your 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	"Just Checking One Thing" · Matthew 6:19–24 · 1 Corinthians 6:12	10	12	12
Response Activity	The Habit Check + My Screen Plan · Line 1	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

Phone Parking Lot (optional): set out a basket labeled "Phone Parking Lot." Before the message, invite students to park phones there through small groups, just to see what 20 minutes feels like. It's an experiment, never a rule. Leaders go first.

Supplies

- My Screen Plan cards: copy the card on student page 2 onto cardstock
- A basket or tray with a "Phone Parking Lot" sign
- Tray of 15 small objects and a towel (Game B)
- Scissors, pens, index cards for prompts
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles · phone timer

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Matthew 6:19–34 and 1 Corinthians 6:12
- Check your own screen time. Be ready to admit one habit
- Practice the "Just Checking One Thing" hook out loud once
- Pray for each student by name, especially anyone new

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

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. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every debrief points back to tonight's question. Games A, B, and D need no phones; Game C uses one phone per team (no-phone version included).

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Ding! Groups Mingle, then "ping" a group size and a question	High	Open space	Students need to move; you want everyone talking to everyone	10
B. Did You Catch That? Memory tray and room-change attention rounds	Medium	Tray, 15 objects, towel	You want laughs and the strongest link to the message	10–12
C. Treasure Snap Hunt Photo hunt for "treasures," each with a real story	Medium	List, 1 phone per team	Lots of new students; you have a building to explore	10–12
D. Autopilot Stories Trios trade funny things they do without thinking	Low	None	Small or quiet group; zero prep time	8–10
E. The Habit Check Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Screen Plan cards	Every night: the heart of the week; starts My Screen Plan	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Ding! Groups → B. Did You Catch That? → Message → E. The Habit Check

Small group (4–6)

D. Autopilot Stories (whole group) → Message → E. The Habit Check in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

A. Ding! Groups → C. Treasure Snap Hunt → Message → E. The Habit Check (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

B. Did You Catch That? → Message → E. The Habit Check → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. Nobody shows their messages, photos, or screen-time numbers, and nobody's apps or creators get mocked. If a game starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

A. Ding! Groups

10 min · High energy

Purpose: A fast mingle game that works like a phone going off. Everyone walks around until the leader yells "Ding!" and a number. Students scramble into groups of that size and answer a "notification" question about their real habits. Nobody is ever out. In ten minutes students talk to almost everyone in the room, and they feel how fast a "ding" grabs our attention.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Everyone walks (no running) around the open space. Play music if you have it.
2. The leader yells **"Ding! Three!"** (or any number from 2 to 5). Students quickly form groups of that size.
3. The leader reads the **Notification** for that round (see the list below). Everyone in the group answers in one sentence. About 60 seconds.
4. Leftover players don't sit out. They join the nearest group, or the leader joins them to make a group.
5. Leader yells **"Swipe away!"** and everyone walks again. Play 8–10 rounds, always with new people.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "This is Ding! Groups. You're all walking around like a phone on a table. When I yell 'Ding!' and a number, get into a group that size as fast as you can. Then I'll read you a notification, and everybody in your group answers it. When I say 'Swipe away,' you split up and walk again. Rule: every round, find at least one person you haven't been with yet. Nobody's out. Ready? Start walking…"
>
> "Ding! Two! Your notification: *What's the first thing you do when you wake up?*"

NOTIFICATIONS (ONE PER ROUND)

- What's the first thing you do when you wake up?
- What sound or ringtone do you wish you could delete forever?
- Earbuds, headphones, or speaker out loud?
- What app or game would you keep if you could only keep one?
- Best thing you've ever learned from a video?
- What's your phone battery at right now? Are you a 5% person or a 100% person?
- What do you do when you're bored and there's no phone?
- Do you leave notifications on or off?
- What's a hobby you'd do more if you had an extra hour?
- Group chat: talker, reactor, or lurker?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Skip the walking. Sit in a circle. The leader says "Ding!" and points to a random person; that person answers the notification and then picks who answers next.
- **Silent mode round:** For one round, groups must form without talking. Then they answer out loud.
- **Do Not Disturb:** If someone wants to pass, they can say "Do not disturb!" and the group moves on with a smile.

LEADER NOTE *Group sizes leave someone alone fast. Watch the edges. Call numbers that fit your crowd, and jump in yourself so nobody ever stands by themselves.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Did you notice how fast you moved every time I said 'Ding'? You didn't even think about it. You just went. Our phones do that to us all day long. Tonight we're starting a series called Screen Time, and it is not an anti-phone talk. It's about one question: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

B. Did You Catch That?

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: An attention challenge. Pairs study a tray of objects or the room itself, then try to remember or spot what changed. Between rounds, partners answer a question about what grabs *their* attention. It sets up the message perfectly: Jesus says what your eyes focus on fills your whole life.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Students pair up (or trios). New students pair with a regular. Each pair needs one pen and a scrap of paper.
2. **Tray round:** Show a tray of about 15 small objects for 30 seconds, then cover it with a towel. Pairs list as many items as they can in 60 seconds. One point per item.
3. **Room round:** Everyone looks around the room for 30 seconds, then closes their eyes. The leader (or a helper) changes 3 things: moves a chair, flips a sign, hides the trash can. Pairs whisper and write what changed.
4. After every round, partners answer the **Talk Question** together (about 45 seconds).
5. Alternate tray and room rounds. Play 4–6 rounds and finish with the Bridge round.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Grab a partner. This game is about one thing: paying attention. I'm going to show you this tray for thirty seconds. Don't touch, just look. When I cover it, you and your partner write down everything you remember. Ready? Look!"
>
> "Time! Write it down. Okay, before we check, answer this with your partner…" *(Read a talk question.)*

ROUNDS + TALK QUESTIONS

ROUND	TALK QUESTION (AFTER EACH ROUND)
Tray: 15 random objects (keys, a sock, a spoon, a battery…)	"What's something you always notice that other people miss?"
Room: move 3 things	"What's the last thing that made you stop scrolling?"
Tray: all objects the same color	"What's something you could look at for hours?"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Room: change 3 things on the leader	"Who in your life notices the little things about you?"
Tray: 20 objects, only 20 seconds	"When is it hardest for you to focus?"
Room: change only 1 small thing	"What's a song, show, or game you can't stop thinking about?"
Tray: phone stuff (charger, earbuds, case)	"Where does your phone sleep at night?"
Tray: items that make noise	"What's a sound that always grabs your attention?"
Bridge round: "Close your eyes. Without looking, what was the last thing you saw on a screen today?"	"Did you choose to look at it, or did it find you?" Lead into the debrief.

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Play as one team against the clock. Everyone shouts out items together while the leader keeps count.
- **Student spotters:** Let a pair be the "changers" for a room round.
- **Distraction round:** Play loud music or have a leader do jumping jacks while students study the tray. How many items do they get now?

LEADER NOTE *Set up the tray before group and keep it covered. In room rounds, change things in the room or on the leader only, never on a student.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Paying attention is hard work, especially with distractions. And here's the thing: whatever you pay attention to, you start to remember, think about, and care about. Tonight Jesus is going to say something about our eyes that is really about our hearts. Keep this question in your head: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

C. Treasure Snap Hunt

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: A photo scavenger hunt with a twist. Teams search the building for "treasures" on a list, but every photo has to come with a real story from someone on the team. Students explore, laugh, and learn what actually matters to each other. It connects to the message: Jesus says where your treasure is, your heart will be too.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. Mix it up: "Find people you haven't talked to yet tonight." Each team needs **one** phone with a camera (a leader's phone is fine).
2. Give each team the **Treasure List** (below) and set boundaries: which rooms are open, and walking only.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

3. Teams have 6 minutes to photograph as many treasures as they can. The rule: before you snap, one teammate has to tell the real story that fits it.
4. Back in the room, each team shows their 2 best photos and tells the stories behind them.
5. The group votes on the best story, not the best photo. Then delete or keep the photos as the team wants.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Teams of three or four. One phone per team. You've got six minutes to find and photograph things from this list around the building. But here's the catch: before you take a picture, somebody on your team has to tell the story that goes with it. 'Something that reminds you of home'? Somebody has to say what and why. No story, no photo. Stay in the open rooms, walk, and be back when I call time. Go!"

TREASURE LIST

- Something that reminds someone of home
- Something older than everyone on your team
- Something you'd save in a fire (pretend!)
- Something that makes someone on your team happy
- Something that would be a great gift
- Something you've never noticed here before
- Something a grandparent would love
- Something that isn't a screen but is fun
- Something someone on your team is good at
- Your team's best "treasure face" (group selfie, optional)

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Hunt as one team with the leader's phone. Each person picks two items from the list and tells the story.
- **No-phone version:** Teams bring the treasure back (if it's movable) or sketch it on paper in 20 seconds.
- **Lots of visitors:** Give new students the "Something you've never noticed here before" item. They'll have the best eyes in the room.

LEADER NOTE *Photos stay of objects and willing teammates only, never of people who didn't agree. Tell teams they can delete every photo at the end. If your building isn't open, play in one room and shorten the list.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "The photos were fun, but the stories were the best part. Nobody's treasure was really the object. It was the person, the memory, the thing it meant. Jesus is going to say tonight that whatever we treasure pulls our heart along with it. So here's the question: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

D. Autopilot Stories

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm, funny, story-based game for small or quiet groups. Students share things they do on "autopilot," without thinking, and the group guesses what sets them off. Everyone has autopilot moments, so

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

nobody looks weird. It shows how habits run our day, which is exactly where the message goes.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Sit in trios (or one circle for small groups).
2. The leader reads an **Autopilot Moment** from the list. Each person who has done it raises a hand, and one volunteer tells a quick story about it.
3. The trio guesses the **trigger**: what made the autopilot start? (Bored? Nervous? Hungry? Just habit?)
4. After a few rounds, each person shares one autopilot moment of their own that isn't on the list.
5. Finish with the Bridge question.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Everybody does stuff on autopilot. Your body just does it while your brain is somewhere else. I'll read one. If you've ever done it, raise your hand. Then somebody tell the story, and your trio guesses why it happens. I'll go first: I once put the cereal in the fridge and the milk in the cupboard. Trigger? It was 6 a.m. and I was reading my phone."

AUTOPILOT MOMENTS

- Opened the fridge, stared, closed it, opened it again
- Walked into a room and forgot why
- Unlocked your phone, then forgot what you wanted
- Said "you too" when it made no sense
- Sang a song you don't even like
- Drove or rode somewhere and didn't remember the trip
- Picked up your phone the second it got quiet
- Watched "one more" episode or video
- Checked the same app twice in one minute
- Kept scrolling after you stopped enjoying it

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One circle. Go around and let everyone tell one autopilot story; the group guesses the trigger.
- **Good autopilot:** Add a round of helpful autopilot habits: brushing teeth, saying thank you, buckling a seatbelt.

LEADER NOTE *Keep it light. If a story turns into "I'm on my phone all night and can't stop," thank them and say, "That's a big one. We'll actually talk about that tonight." Follow up later if it seems heavy (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Autopilot isn't always bad. It's how you tie your shoes without thinking. But some of our autopilot is aimed at our screens, and it's running more of our day than we realize. Tonight we're asking: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Hook: "Just Checking One Thing"

2 min

SAY

(Hold up your own phone.) "Confession time. Last week I picked up my phone to check the weather. Twenty-five minutes later I had watched a guy restore an old boat, I knew way too much about a celebrity's dog, and I still didn't know the weather."

"Raise your hand if you've ever picked up your phone to check one thing, and then lost a big chunk of time." *(Raise your own hand.)* "Yeah. Me too. That's not because we're bad people. It's because these things are really, really good at holding our attention."

"So here's tonight's question, and it's the name of tonight: when I'm holding my phone… **who's holding whom?** For the next four weeks we're doing a series called Screen Time. This is not an anti-phone talk. Phones are amazing. But every week we'll ask one question: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

LEADER NOTE *Phone Parking Lot (optional): right before the message, point to the basket. "If you want to, park your phone here until small groups are done. It's not a rule. It's an experiment: see what twenty minutes feels like. I'll go first." Park yours. Don't comment on who does or doesn't.*

Message: Holding It Without Being Held

10 min

1. Your attention is worth a lot

SAY

"Here's something to think about. A lot of the apps on your phone are free. So how do the companies make money? Mostly by getting your attention and holding it as long as they can, so they can show you ads. There are really smart people whose whole job is figuring out how to keep you scrolling. That's why it's hard to stop. It's not just you. Your attention is valuable. Everybody wants it."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about your own screen habit (the app you open without thinking, the late-night scroll, the time you missed something real), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Don't guilt anyone. Students trust leaders who go first.*

2. Where your treasure is, your heart goes too

SAY

"Jesus didn't have a phone, but he knew all about things that grab our hearts. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said this:"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

[19] *"Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal;* [20] *but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal;* [21] *for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

MATTHEW 6:19–21 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

> "Look at verse 21. Jesus doesn't say your treasure follows your heart. He says your heart follows your treasure. Whatever you spend yourself on, your time, your money, your attention, your heart goes there too. So if a feed gets three hours of my day, it's going to get a big piece of my heart."

3. What you look at fills you up

> **SAY**
> "Then Jesus keeps going, and it sounds like he's talking about screens:"

[22] *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light.* [23] *But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!* [24] "No *one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Mammon.*

MATTHEW 6:22–24 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

> "Your eyes are like a window. Whatever comes in through them fills up the rest of you. Funny videos, kind words, cool stuff you learn? Light. Stuff that makes you feel worse about yourself, or keeps you up at 2 a.m.? That fills you up too."
>
> "And then verse 24: nobody can serve two masters. 'Mammon' means money and stuff, anything we let take God's place. Here's a way to say it: a phone is a great tool, but a terrible master. A tool helps you do what you want. A master tells you what to do. So which one is your phone?"

4. Use it. Don't let it use you.

> **SAY**
> "Our memory verse is from a letter Paul wrote to a church that loved saying, 'I'm free! I can do whatever I want!' Paul agreed, sort of. Listen:"

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are expedient. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be brought under the power of anything.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

> "'Expedient' means helpful. Paul isn't making a list of banned apps. He's saying: yes, you're free. And because you're free, don't let anything own you. Not a game, not a feed, not your notifications. You're allowed to use your phone. You're just not supposed to belong to it."
>
> "Here's the best part. You already belong to someone. Jesus made you, loves you, and calls you his. No feed can give you that, and no feed can take it away. You're more than your screen. So you get to choose, on purpose, what shapes you. Hold onto this question all week: **who is shaping me when I scroll?**"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

E. Response Activity: The Habit Check

12 min

Purpose: Help students look honestly, privately, and without shame at when and why they reach for their phones, then choose one small habit to change. Tonight they also start **My Screen Plan**: a small card they fill in one line per week. By Week 4 they'll have a whole plan, written by them, that they can keep in a phone case, tape to a mirror, or snap as a wallpaper photo.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Hold up a Screen Plan card. Explain: one line each week, four lines total, and it's theirs to keep. Nobody grades it.
2. **The Habit Check:** On student page 1, students privately mark each moment: do *I* hold the phone there, or does it hold *me*? Nobody shares their answers.
3. Students circle the **one moment** where they'd most like to take back control.
4. **Tool or Master pairs:** In pairs, each partner shares one moment (only what they want to share) and one idea that might help. Then each prays one sentence for the other: "God, help ___ hold it, and not be held."
5. **My Screen Plan · Line 1:** Students fill in "One habit I'll change: ___" on their card.
6. **My One Step:** Students fill in "My One Step This Week" and the private Screen Check box on student page 2.

LEADER SCRIPT

SAY (SCREEN PLAN)

"This is your Screen Plan. It's not a rulebook from me. You're going to write it yourself, one line a week. By the end of the series you'll have a plan you actually made. Put it in your phone case, on your mirror, or take a picture and make it your wallpaper."

SAY (HABIT CHECK)

"On your first page, find The Habit Check. For each moment, ask yourself: am I holding my phone here, or is it holding me? Check the box that's true. Be honest. This is just between you and God. Nobody is going to see it, and nobody's in trouble. I'll tell you mine: bedtime is a 'holding me' for me."

SAY (TOOL OR MASTER)

"Circle the one moment where you most want to take back control. Now find a partner. Share that moment, only if you want to, and one idea that might help. Then pray one sentence for each other: 'God, help Jordan hold it and not be held at bedtime.' That's it. One sentence."

SAY (LINE 1 + ONE STEP)

"Now grab your Screen Plan card. Line 1: 'One habit I'll change.' Make it small and real. Like: 'My phone charges outside my bedroom.' Then on page 2, write your one step for this week, and fill in the Screen Check box. Only you see that one."

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Habit ideas (read aloud if stuck)

- Phone charges outside my bedroom
- No phone for the first 15 minutes of my day
- Phone face down at meals
- Notifications off for one app
- Homework first, then scroll
- Set a timer before I start scrolling
- Put my most-used app off my home screen
- Ask "Why am I picking this up?"

"Hold it, don't be held" step ideas

- Read my memory verse before I unlock my phone in the morning
- Pray one sentence before bed instead of one more video
- Replace 10 minutes of scrolling with a walk, music, or a friend
- Text my prayer partner one line on Monday
- Thank God for one real-life moment every night

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person names their circled moment (or passes) and prays one sentence for the person on their left.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the pairs. Students write their habit on the card, and the leader prays one prayer over everyone: "God, help each of us use our phones, and not be used by them."
- **No cardstock?** Students cut the card from student page 2 or take a photo of it and set it as their lock screen.

LEADER NOTE *Never collect or look at student pages, and never ask students to share screen-time numbers or hand over phones. Keep extra Screen Plan cards for students who start in Week 2 or 3; they can begin with whatever line that week is on. If a student seems truly stuck or upset, check in quietly afterward (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Look at that one line you wrote. It's small. That's the point. You don't change everything tonight. You just take back one moment. And you're doing it because you already belong to Jesus, not to a feed. **Who is shaping me when I scroll?** This week, you get to choose."

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. If your phone disappeared for one day, what would you miss most? What wouldn't you miss at all?
   Follow-up: What would you do with the extra time?
2. What's the best thing you've ever seen or learned on a screen?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

GO DEEPER

3. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If someone looked at how you spent your time this week, what would they say you treasure?
   Is that what you'd want them to say?
4. "The lamp of the body is the eye." What fills you with light when you're online? What leaves you feeling worse?
   No need to name apps. Just describe the feeling.
5. What's the difference between a phone being a tool and a phone being a master? What are the warning signs?
6. Paul said, "I will not be brought under the power of anything." Why do you think it matters to God what has power over us?

TAKE IT HOME

7. What's one moment this week when you could hold your phone instead of letting it hold you?
8. Who could you ask to check in with you about your Screen Plan line?

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. Never ask students to compare screen-time numbers.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

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: for a few minutes, we give our full attention to real people, real joys, and real needs, and 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**
>
> "We just talked about how much our attention matters. So let's spend some of it on each other. No scrolling, just listening. What's something good you're thankful for? Or something you're carrying, 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)

- A great day with friends, in real life
- Something I finished or did well this week
- My team, club, or band had a good week
- Someone I love got good news

Concern starters

- A test, a project, or a stressful week
- A grandparent or relative who is sick
- A friend who's going through something
- "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.

LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." That includes no screenshots, posts, or texts about what someone shared. If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

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 who sees us,

Thank you for every person in this room, especially anyone here for the very first time tonight.

Thank you for the good things you've given us this week. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Maya's great game, for Chris's good news..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

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

Jesus, you said that where our treasure is, our hearts will be also. So many things are trying to get our attention every day. Some of them are good, and some of them pull us away from you and from each other. Thank you for phones and for all the good they bring. But help us hold them without being held. When we pick them up without thinking, remind us that we belong to you. Fill our eyes with light, and let nothing have power over us but your love.

For anyone who is new here, thank you for bringing them. Help them feel at home. And help each of us take back one small moment this week and give it to you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

> **SEND-OFF**
>
> "Grab your phone from the Phone Parking Lot if you parked it. How did twenty minutes feel? Take your student pages home: a five-day devotional and a tracker for your one step. Keep your Screen Plan card somewhere you'll see it. Line 1 is done, and next week you'll add Line 2. Next time we're talking about comparison, highlight reels, and who you really are. It's called **'Filtered.'** And every week we'll keep asking: **who is shaping me when I scroll?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their One Step tracker and Screen Plan Line 1. "How many days did you hold it instead of being held? What helped? What got in the way?" Celebrate any progress, even one day, and laugh about the slips (leaders too). Never ask for screen-time numbers. Have extra Screen Plan cards ready for new students.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Care Note for Leaders

A talk about phones can open real hurts. Watch for a student who is anxious about something online, targeted in a group chat or comments, losing sleep, constantly comparing, or troubled by content they wish they hadn't seen (sometimes explicit or violent material). Respond calmly, without shame, and never ask for details in front of others.

- **Cyberbullying and pile-ons:** Listen, thank them, and help them save evidence, block, and report. Loop in parents and the school.
- **Pressure for photos or threats (sextortion):** They should tell a trusted adult right away, not pay or send anything more, and save the messages. Report to the NCMEC CyberTipline at **report.cybertip.org** or **1-800-843-5678**. NCMEC's Take It Down (**takeitdown.ncmec.org**) can help remove images. Make clear it is not their fault.
- **Never ask students to hand over or unlock phones,** and never view images a student wants to show. **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 or a tech expert. Your job is to listen well, take it seriously, and make sure they're connected to the right people.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

THE FULL SERIES

SCREEN TIME · 4 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the four weeks help students look honestly at life on a screen: what holds their attention, what shapes how they see themselves, how they use their words, and how to rest and really connect. The question every week: *Who is shaping me when I scroll?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**Who's Holding Whom?** Attention and habits	Matthew 6:19–24
2	**Filtered** Comparison and who I really am	1 Samuel 16:1–13
3	**Before You Hit Send** Words that build up	James 3:3–10
4	**Look Up** Rest and real connection	Mark 6:30–32

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
- A new line for My Screen Plan every 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.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together. All rights reserved.
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

What gets my attention gets my heart. I can use my phone without letting it use me.

JESUS SAID · MATTHEW 6:21–22, 24

"For where your _____ is, there your _____ will be also."

"The lamp of the body is the _____."

"No one can serve two _____."

THE HABIT CHECK

Private, just you and God. For each moment, check whether **you** hold the phone or it holds **you**. Then **circle** the one moment where you most want to take back control.

THE MOMENT	I HOLD IT	IT HOLDS ME
First thing when I wake up	☐	☐
In bed before I fall asleep	☐	☐
Doing homework	☐	☐
At meals with family or friends	☐	☐
When I'm bored	☐	☐
When it's awkward or quiet	☐	☐
When I'm sad, stressed, or lonely	☐	☐
Other: _____	☐	☐

NOT UNDER ITS POWER · 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

"'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be brought under the _____ of anything."

Because I already belong to Jesus, one thing I don't need my phone to give me:

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

My One Step

MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Every _____ (morning / after school / homework / bedtime)

I will hold my phone, not be held, by _____

Example: "Every night at 9:30, I will plug my phone in outside my bedroom and pray one sentence."

My Screen Plan · Line 1

One habit I'll change:

_____

Copy it onto your card below.

Screen Check (only you see this)

My average daily screen time this week (check your settings): _____

The app that gets the most of me:

_____

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step.

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…

MY SCREEN PLAN CARD

✂ Cut out along the dashed line and keep it in your phone case, on your mirror, or snap it as your wallpaper. Add one line every week.

SCREEN TIME

My Screen Plan

"All things are lawful for me," but I will not be brought under the power of anything.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

1. One habit I'll change: _____

2. One account I'll mute or unfollow, and one I'll follow: _____

3. Before I hit send, I'll ask: _____

4. My rest rhythm: _____

Signed: _____ Witness: _____

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

5 Days of Holding, Not Held

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. Bonus: read it before you open any app.

DAY 1 Matthew 6:21 · Where my heart goes

Your heart follows your treasure. Where did most of your time and attention go yesterday? Is that where you want your heart to be?

DAY 2 Matthew 6:22 · The lamp of the body

What did you look at today that filled you with light? Was there anything that left you feeling worse? Tell God about both.

DAY 3 Matthew 6:24 · Tool or master?

Think of one moment today when your phone felt more like a master than a tool. What could you do differently next time?

DAY 4 1 Corinthians 6:12 · Not under its power

You're free, and you don't have to belong to anything. What's one thing that has a little too much power over you right now?

DAY 5 Psalm 16:11 · Fullness of joy

"In your presence is fullness of joy." No feed can fill you like that. What's one way you can spend five minutes with God today?

A prayer you can pray this week

Jesus, thank you that I belong to you, not to my phone or any feed. Help me notice where my attention goes. Help me hold my phone without letting it hold me, and fill my eyes and my heart with your light. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **Filtered**

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together