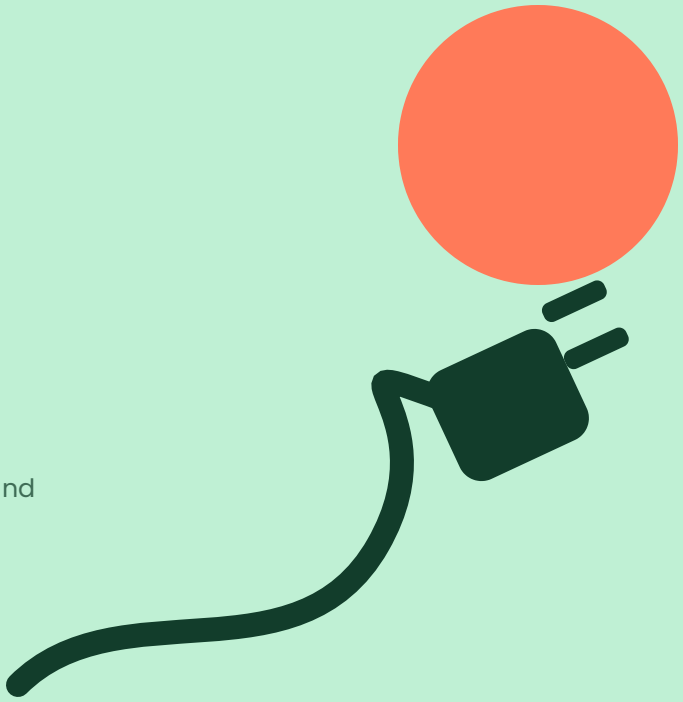
YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

SUMMER · REST · RETREAT



WEEK 1 OF 4

Made for Rest

Theme: Sabbath rest · Main text: Genesis 2:1–3 and Exodus 20:8–11

UNPLUGGED.

Rest is holy.

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

Made for Rest

Theme: Sabbath rest · Main text: Genesis 2:1–3 and Exodus 20:8–11 · Memory verse: Exodus 20:8

THE BIG IDEA

God built rest into creation. Rest is a gift and a way of trusting God, not laziness.

The question to carry all night

"When was the last time I really rested with God?"

By the end, students will…

- See that God rested on the seventh day and called that day holy
- Understand Sabbath as a gift for everyone and a way of trusting God
- Find one real rest time in their week and start **My Unplugged Rhythm**

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	"One Percent" · Genesis 2:1–3 · Exodus 20:8–11	10	12	12
Response Activity	Find Your Seventh Day + My Unplugged Rhythm · 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

Outdoors or at a retreat? Every part of tonight works outside. See the Retreat / Outdoor option on the Activity Menu page.

Supplies

- My Unplugged Rhythm cards: copy the card on student page 2 onto cardstock
- Four corner signs: Sleep · Snack · Outside · Friends (Game C)
- Twist Cards on index cards (Game B) · blankets or towels (Game D)
- Scissors, pens, paper
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles · phone timer

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Genesis 1:31–2:3 and Exodus 20:8–11
- Practice the "One Percent" hook out loud once
- Think of a time you ran on empty, and a time you truly rested
- Pray for each student by name, especially anyone who is worn out

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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 tired ones and a visitor. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every debrief points back to tonight's question. No game needs a phone, and Games A, C, and D work great outside.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Seventh Day Tag Tag for six "days," then everyone stops to rest and talk	High	Open space or a field	Students need to move; you want everyone talking to everyone	10
B. The $0 Day Off Teams plan a perfect rest day that costs nothing	Medium	Paper, pens, Twist Cards	You want laughs and the strongest link to the message	10–12
C. Recharge Corners Walk to how you recharge, then talk with your corner	Medium	4 signs	Lots of new students; zero prep time	8–10
D. Day Seven Hammock Talk Lie back, slow down, and answer easy questions	Low	Blankets (optional)	Small or tired group; the end of a long week	8–10
E. Find Your Seventh Day Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Rhythm cards	Every night: the heart of the week; starts My Unplugged Rhythm	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Seventh Day Tag → B. The $0 Day Off → Message → E. Find Your Seventh Day

Small group (4–6)

D. Day Seven Hammock Talk (whole group) → Message → E. Find Your Seventh Day in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

C. Recharge Corners → A. Seventh Day Tag → Message → E. Find Your Seventh Day (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

B. The $0 Day Off → Message → E. Find Your Seventh Day → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. Nobody gets teased for being busy, being tired, or not going anywhere this summer. Phones stay out of the games. If a game starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

RETREAT / OUTDOOR OPTION *Take the whole night outside: Game A on grass, Game D on blankets, and read Genesis 2 under the open sky. At a retreat or camp, make this the opening night and give students a real "seventh day" block the next afternoon (free, quiet, no schedule). Bring water and shade, remind students about sunscreen and bug spray, ask about allergies, keep adult-to-student ratios, and follow your church's safety policy for any overnight event.*

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A. Seventh Day Tag

10 min · High energy

Purpose: A tag game built on the creation week. For six "days" it's all motion. When the leader shouts "Day Seven!" everybody stops, sits down with whoever is closest, and talks. Students burn energy, hear real answers from lots of different people, and feel the difference between running and resting before you ever teach it.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Mark the boundaries. Pick 2 taggers (3 for a big group). Inside, **fast walking only**. On grass outside, light jogging is fine.
2. The leader calls out the days, about every 8–10 seconds: "Day One! … Day Two! …" Tag is on. Tagged players freeze with their arms out like a tree.
3. At any point after Day Four, the leader shouts **"Day Seven!"** Everyone stops, including taggers. Frozen players are free.
4. Everyone sits (or lies back on the grass) in twos or threes with the people closest to them and answers the **Rest Question** for that round (about 45 seconds).
5. Leader calls "Day One!" to start a new round. Switch taggers every round. Play 5–6 rounds.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "This is Seventh Day Tag. I'm going to count the days of the week: Day One, Day Two, and so on. While I'm counting, tag is on. If you get tagged, freeze like a tree. But the second I yell 'Day Seven,' everybody stops. Taggers too. Sit down with the one or two people closest to you and answer the Rest Question. Then we go again."
>
> "Here's the first Rest Question, so you're ready: *What's the best nap you've ever taken, and where?* Taggers, ready? Day One!"

REST QUESTIONS (ONE PER ROUND)

- Best nap you've ever taken, and where?
- Perfect Saturday morning: sleep in or up early?
- What do you do to chill after a long day?
- Beach, mountains, backyard, or couch?
- What's a sound that makes you relax?
- Hammock, beanbag, or your own bed?
- Funniest time you fell asleep somewhere?
- Favorite spot to just sit and do nothing?
- Whole free day: what's the first thing you do?
- What's one thing that always cheers you up?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One tagger and a smaller space. On "Day Seven," everyone sits in one circle and goes around with the Rest Question.
- **Creation poses:** Instead of freezing like a tree, tagged players do the pose for that day: Day One, arms up like the sun; Day Five, flap like a bird; Day Six, roar like a lion.
- **Indoors with limited space:** Everyone walks heel to toe. It's slower and funnier.

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LEADER NOTE *On "Day Seven," look for anyone sitting alone and join them yourself, or wave them into a nearby pair. Outside, call a water break every few rounds and keep the game in the shade on hot nights.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Be honest. What was your favorite part of that game? The running, or Day Seven? Day Seven was where you actually got to know people. Tonight we're starting a series called Unplugged, about rest. And it turns out God put a Day Seven into the world from the very first week. Here's the question for all four weeks: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

B. The $0 Day Off

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Small teams plan the perfect day of rest, but it has to cost zero dollars. Every person adds one thing that actually recharges them and explains why, so students learn what really fills each other up. Then Twist Cards change the plan. It sets up the message: Sabbath is a gift God gives to everybody, not a vacation only some people can afford.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. Mix it up: "Find people you haven't talked to yet tonight." Each team gets paper and a pen.
2. Say: "Plan the perfect day off. Morning to night. Budget: zero dollars." Teams build a schedule with **at least 5 things**.
3. The rule: every person has to add at least one thing and tell the team **why it recharges them**, with a real reason. ("Sleeping till ten, because I'm up at six every school day.")
4. After 3 minutes, the leader draws a **Twist Card** and reads it. Teams have 1 minute to fix their plan, then answer the talk question on the card.
5. Play 3–4 twists. Teams read their final plan to the group. Finish with the Sabbath round.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Get in teams of three or four. Your job: plan the perfect day off. A whole day, morning to night. But your budget is zero dollars. No tickets, no shopping, no trips. Every single person has to add at least one thing to the plan and tell your team why it actually recharges you. A real reason. Three minutes. Go!"
>
> "Time! Okay, plans are about to change…" (*Draw a Twist Card.*) "You've got one minute to fix your day. Then answer the question on the card."

TWIST CARDS + TALK QUESTIONS

TWIST	TALK QUESTION (AFTER THE FIX)
It's pouring rain all day	"What's your favorite rainy-day thing to do?"

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It's 95 degrees outside	"Are you a hot-weather or cold-weather person?"
No screens at all, all day	"What would you do first without a screen?"
A little brother or sister has to come along	"Who's someone younger or older you love hanging out with?"
You have to spend most of it outside	"What's your favorite outdoor place around here?"
You only get two hours, not a whole day	"When do you usually get a little free time in your week?"
Your best friend is with you	"Best thing you've ever done with a friend that cost nothing?"
Somebody has to cook a meal	"What's a meal that makes you feel at home?"
You can't leave your house	"Best board game, card game, or backyard game?"
Sabbath round: "Plan a day where you don't have to earn, produce, or prove anything."	Lead into the debrief

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Plan one day off as a whole group. Go around the circle; each person adds one thing and the reason.
- **Outdoor version:** Teams can only use what they can see from where they're standing right now. A tree, a field, a curb, the sky.
- **Keep one thing:** At the end, each team circles the one thing on their plan they'd actually do this week.

LEADER NOTE *The $0 rule is on purpose. It keeps everyone equal, whether a student's family travels all summer or nobody gets a day off. Never ask what anyone's family can afford or where they're going this summer. Write the Twist Cards on index cards before group and keep them face down.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "That last round was the hardest, right? A day where you don't have to earn anything or prove anything. Most of us don't even know what to do with that. But that's exactly the kind of day God invented. And notice: your best plans didn't cost a thing. Keep this question in your head tonight: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

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C. Recharge Corners

8–10 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Almost zero prep and lots of talking. The leader reads a situation, and students walk to the corner that shows how they'd recharge: Sleep, Snack, Outside, or Friends. In their corner, they pair up and answer a quick question. It's easy for new students because everyone has an answer, and you learn how differently people refuel.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Tape a sign in each corner: **Sleep · Snack · Outside · Friends**. The middle of the room is **Something Else**. Outside, use four trees, cones, or backpacks.
2. The leader reads a situation. Everyone walks to the corner that best shows how they'd recharge.
3. In the corner, students pair up (or trios) and answer two things: "Why this one?" and the talk question for that round (about 45 seconds).
4. Ask one or two volunteers per corner to share what they heard. Then read the next situation.
5. Play 8–10 rounds. Always end with the Bridge round.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Look at the corners. Sleep, Snack, Outside, Friends. The middle is Something Else. I'm going to read you a situation. You walk to whatever would recharge you the most. There are no wrong corners. When you get there, find someone and tell them why you picked it, and answer the question I give you. Ready? Here's the first one..."

SITUATIONS + TALK QUESTIONS

SITUATION: "YOU JUST..."	TALK QUESTION IN YOUR CORNER
finished a giant test	"What subject wears you out the most?"
got home from a long practice or rehearsal	"What's something you do that takes a lot of energy?"
spent all day around a lot of people	"Do people recharge you or drain you? Or both?"
got done with a long shift or a day of chores	"What's a job or chore you actually don't mind?"
had a four-hour car ride	"Best or worst road trip ever?"
woke up on the first day of summer break	"Favorite summer memory so far in your life?"
had a day where everything went wrong	"Who's someone you go to on a bad day?"
finished a big project you're proud of	"What's something you made or finished that you're proud of?"
have a Sunday afternoon with nothing planned	"What does a lazy afternoon look like at your house?"
Bridge: are tired in a way sleep doesn't fix	"What do you think helps when you're tired on the inside?"

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VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Skip walking. Everyone holds up fingers (1 Sleep, 2 Snack, 3 Outside, 4 Friends) and the group answers the talk question together.
- **Student situations:** After a few rounds, let students call out their own "You just…" situations.
- **Camp edition:** "You just hiked three miles," "You just got out of the lake," "You just finished cabin cleanup."

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "We all recharge in different ways. Some of you are nap people. Some of you need to get outside. Some of you need your friends. But that last round was different. There's a kind of tired that a nap or a snack doesn't fix. Tonight we're going to see what God says about real rest. Here's our question: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

D. Day Seven Hammock Talk

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm game for small, quiet, or worn-out groups. Students lie back in a circle (like they're in one giant hammock), heads toward the middle, and answer slow, easy questions about rest. Nobody has to make eye contact, so it's easier to talk. It also lets students practice resting together before the message even starts.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Students lie on their backs in a circle like the spokes of a wheel, heads toward the center. Use blankets or towels if you have them. Anyone can sit up or sit in a chair instead.
2. Dim the lights if you're inside. Outside, lie on the grass and look at the sky.
3. The leader reads one question slowly, then waits. Anyone can answer, in any order. No hands, no turns.
4. After two or three people answer, the leader says "Exhale" (everyone breathes out) and reads the next question.
5. Play 8–10 questions. Finish with the Bridge question.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Everybody lie down on your back with your head toward the middle. If you'd rather sit, that's totally fine. This is Day Seven Hammock Talk. I'll ask a question. Nobody has to answer, but anybody can, whenever you want. No hands. When a few people have answered, I'll say 'Exhale,' and we'll all breathe out together. First question: *where's the most relaxing place you've ever been?*"

HAMMOCK QUESTIONS

- Most relaxing place you've ever been?
- A time you finished something big and felt "done"?
- Favorite sound to fall asleep to?
- Best summer day you can remember?
- Who's someone who makes you feel relaxed just being around them?
- What does a "lazy day" look like for you?

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- When you were little, what did weekends look like?
- What's one thing that makes it hard for you to rest?
- If you could nap anywhere in the world, where?
- **Bridge:** If God said, "Take tomorrow off," what would you do?

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Perfect as written. Go a little slower and let every question breathe.
- **Seated version:** Chairs in a circle facing outward, lights low. Same questions.
- **Camp or retreat:** Play it under the stars on the first night, on blankets with a leader at each edge of the circle.

LEADER NOTE *Keep adults spread around the circle and the floor clean. Keep it light; if someone shares something heavy ("I never get to rest at home"), thank them simply and follow up privately later (see the Care Note). Outside, check the ground for anthills and wet spots first.*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"Stay where you are for a second. How did that feel? Some of you probably liked that more than you expected. Some of you felt weird doing nothing. Both are normal. We're starting a series called Unplugged, about rest, and that last question is a real one. God actually did make a day off. Here's our question for all four weeks: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

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Hook: "One Percent"

2 min

SAY

(Draw a battery on a whiteboard with just a sliver of red at the bottom, or hold up a picture of a phone at 1%.) "Okay. Your phone is at one percent. What do you do? Shout it out." *(Let students answer: panic, find a charger, low power mode, beg a friend.)*

"Right. Nobody just keeps scrolling at one percent and hopes for the best. We plug it in. Now a weirder question. Don't say it out loud, just think it. What's *your* battery at right now? Not your phone. You."

"Some of you are at ninety. Some of you have been at one percent since about March. For the next four weeks we're doing a series called Unplugged. It's about rest. Real rest. And the question is: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

Message: God Built In a Day Seven

10 min

1. A lot of us are running on low

SAY

"School, practice, homework, jobs, family stuff, a group chat that never stops. Some of you are busy because you love what you do. Some of you are busy because you don't have a choice: you work, you watch your brothers and sisters, you help out at home. If that's you, hear this: nobody here thinks you're lazy for being tired. Tonight isn't about feeling guilty. It's about something God wants to give you."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about running on empty (a season with no breaks, a time you fell asleep somewhere ridiculous, or a time real rest surprised you), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Don't brag about being busy. Students trust leaders who go first.*

2. God rested, and he wasn't even tired

SAY

"The Bible starts with God making everything. Light, sky, oceans, animals, people. Six days of work. Then the story does something surprising. Listen."

[1] *The heavens, the earth, and all their vast array were finished.* [2] *On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.* [3] *God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work of creation which he had done.*

GENESIS 2:1–3 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

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"God wasn't tired. God doesn't get tired. So why rest? Because he was showing us what a good life looks like. Work, and then stop. And look what he did with that seventh day: he 'blessed' it and 'made it holy.' Think about that. Before there was a holy place or a holy book, God made a holy *time*. Rest was built into the world from the very first week."

3. Rest is a gift for everybody

SAY

"Later, when God gave his people the Ten Commandments, rest made the list. Listen to who gets a day off."

> [8] *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* [9] *You shall labor six days, and do all your work,*
> [10] *but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do any work in it, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates;* [11] *for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy.*
>
> EXODUS 20:8–11 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Did you hear that list? Sons, daughters, servants, foreigners, even the animals. In a world where some people worked every single day with no break, God said: everybody rests. Nobody is too unimportant to stop. Jesus said it this way: 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' Sabbath isn't a test you pass. It's a gift made for you."

4. Rest is a way of trusting God

SAY

"Here's the hard part. Stopping feels risky. If I stop, I'll fall behind. If I stop, something won't get done. But when you rest, you're saying something to God without words: 'You're holding the world. I'm not.' A psalm says it like this:"

> *It is vain for you to rise up early, to stay up late, eating the bread of toil, for he gives sleep to his loved ones.*
>
> PSALM 127:2 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Rest isn't laziness. It's trust. And it doesn't have to be a whole day at the beach. It can be an afternoon, an hour, or twenty minutes on your back step with God. Our memory verse is short: '*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*' Remember. Because we forget. So here's the question again, and I want you to really answer it in your head: **when was the last time I really rested with God?**"

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E. Response Activity: Find Your Seventh Day

12 min

Purpose: Help students look honestly, privately, and without shame at what fills their week, then find one real window for rest with God. Tonight they also start **My Unplugged Rhythm**: a small card they fill in one line per week. By Week 4 they'll have a simple rhythm of rest and prayer, written by them, to take home from summer. Students who want a stretch can also try this week's optional **Unplugged Hour**.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Hold up a Rhythm card. Explain: one line each week, four lines total, and it's theirs to keep. Nobody grades it.
2. **My Week, Honestly:** On student page 1, students privately fill in what fills each day and circle how full it feels. Nobody shares their page.
3. **Find Your Seventh Day:** Students circle one window for real rest. It might be a day, an afternoon, or just 20 minutes.
4. **Rest Prayers:** In pairs, each partner shares their window (only if they want to). The other prays one sentence: "God, give ___ real rest this week." Then switch.
5. **My Unplugged Rhythm · Line 1:** Students fill in "My rest day or rest time: ___" on their card.
6. **Unplugged Hour + My One Step:** Students who want to can plan their Unplugged Hour. Everyone fills in "My One Step This Week" on student page 2.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (UNPLUGGED RHYTHM)**
>
> "This is My Unplugged Rhythm. 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 simple rhythm of rest with God that actually fits your life. Keep it in your Bible, your wallet, or on your mirror."
>
> **SAY (MY WEEK, HONESTLY)**
>
> "On your first page, find My Week, Honestly. For each day, write what fills it, like school, practice, work, or watching your little brother. Then circle how full it feels. Be honest. This is just between you and God. If your week is packed, that's okay. Nobody is in trouble. I'll tell you mine: Saturday is way more packed than it should be."
>
> **SAY (SEVENTH DAY + REST PRAYERS)**
>
> "Now look for one window. One spot where you could actually stop and rest with God. It doesn't have to be a whole day. It might be Sunday afternoon or twenty minutes before bed. Circle it. Then find a partner. Share your window, only if you want to, and pray one sentence for each other: 'God, give Jordan real rest this week.' That's it."
>
> **SAY (LINE 1 + UNPLUGGED HOUR)**
>
> "Grab your Rhythm card. Line 1: 'My rest day or rest time.' Write the window you circled. Then, if you want a challenge, there's the Unplugged Hour on page 2. Pick one hour this week to unplug and rest with God. You decide when and how. A walk counts. A nap counts. Lying in the grass counts. It's optional. Last thing: write your one step for this week."

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Rest windows (read aloud if stuck)

- Sunday afternoon
- Saturday morning
- 20 minutes after school
- Before bed
- A lunch break at work
- When the little kids nap
- An evening walk
- The ride home

"Rest with God" step ideas

- Say my memory verse when I start my rest time
- Lie down for 10 minutes with no phone and just breathe
- Take a slow walk and thank God for three things
- Go to bed 20 minutes earlier one night
- Text my prayer partner one line on Monday

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person names their window (or passes) and prays one sentence for the person on their left.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the pairs. Students write their window on the card, and the leader prays one prayer over everyone: "God, give each of us real rest in the time we just wrote down."
- **Outdoors or at camp:** Send students to find their own spot within sight of a leader for five quiet minutes, then come back to write Line 1.

LEADER NOTE *Never collect or look at student pages, and never compare whose week is busiest or who rests most. Some students work, care for siblings, or don't have a quiet place at home; help them find a tiny window, and tell them it counts. Keep extra Rhythm cards for students who start in Week 2 or 3. If a student seems truly overwhelmed, 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 have to fix your whole schedule tonight. You just find one window and give it to God. And remember: God rested first. He's not asking you to do something he hasn't done. **When was the last time I really rested with God?** Maybe the answer this week can be: Line 1."

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 day off you've ever had?
   Follow-up: What made it so good?
2. Are you a "sleep in" person or an "up early" person?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

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GO DEEPER

3. God wasn't tired, but he rested anyway. Why do you think he did that?
   What was he showing us?
4. Why do you think it's so hard for people to stop and rest?
   What makes it hard for you?
5. Exodus 20 gives rest to everyone, even servants and animals. What does that tell you about how God sees people?
6. What's the difference between rest and just being bored or zoned out?
   Can you rest and still be with God?

TAKE IT HOME

7. When is one time this week you could actually stop and rest with God?
8. What usually gets in the way of rest for you, and what's one small way around 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. Never make a busy or tired student feel like a bad example.*

Care Note for Leaders

Rest is not simple for every student. Some work long hours, care for siblings, or live in homes that are loud, chaotic, or not safe. For some, quiet brings up anxiety or grief. Watch for a student who seems exhausted all the time, can't sleep, talks about being burned out or "done," or doesn't want to go home. Respond calmly, without shame, and never ask for details in front of others.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. Being tired is normal; feeling unsafe at home, not sleeping for weeks, or feeling hopeless is not something to handle alone.
- **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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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: when we hand our worries to God together, we get to set them down, and that is a kind of rest too.

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 talked about rest. One of the best ways to rest is to stop carrying everything by yourself. So let's hand some things to God together. What's something good you're thankful for? Or something heavy 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 good night's sleep or a day off
- School's out, or a great summer day
- Time with a friend or family
- Someone I love got good news

Concern starters

- Feeling really tired or stressed
- 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." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

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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 the seventh day,

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 day off, 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 strength for her long shifts this week..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

You made the whole world, and then you rested. You blessed the seventh day and made it holy, and you made rest for everybody, not just for some. Some of us are worn out tonight. Some of us have jobs, families to help, and schedules that never stop. Some of us don't even know how to rest. Thank you that rest is your gift, not something we have to earn. Teach us to stop and trust you. Remind us that you hold the world, so we don't have to.

For anyone who is new here, thank you for bringing them. Help them feel at home. And help each of us find one real window this week to rest with you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

> **SEND-OFF**
>
> "Take your student pages home: a five-day devotional and a tracker for your one step. Keep your Unplugged Rhythm card somewhere you'll see it. Line 1 is done, and next week you'll add Line 2. If you're trying the Unplugged Hour, pick your hour before you go to sleep tonight. Next time we're talking about how to quiet your mind and heart with God, even when you don't have it all figured out. It's called **'Quiet Soul.'** And every week we'll keep asking: **when was the last time I really rested with God?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their One Step tracker and Rhythm Line 1. "Did anybody find a little rest this week? Did anyone try the Unplugged Hour? What helped? What got in the way?" Celebrate any rest, even ten minutes, and laugh about the weeks that got away from us (leaders too). Never compare who rested most. Have extra Rhythm cards ready for new students.

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THE FULL SERIES

UNPLUGGED · 4 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week, and every week can be run indoors, outside, or at a retreat. Taught in order, the four weeks help students rest with God: Sabbath rest, a quiet soul, meeting God in creation, and a simple rhythm to take home. The question every week: *When was the last time I really rested with God?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**Made for Rest** Sabbath rest	Genesis 2:1–3 and Exodus 20:8–11
2	**Quiet Soul** Being quiet with God	Psalm 131
3	**Outside** Meeting God in creation	Psalm 104:10–24
4	**Take It Home** A rhythm to keep	Daniel 6:10–11

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 Unplugged Rhythm every week and an outdoor or retreat option
- An optional Unplugged Hour challenge
- 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 are 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

God built rest into creation. Rest is a gift and a way of trusting God, not laziness.

THE STORY · GENESIS 2:2–3

"On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done;
and he _____ on the seventh day from all his work which he had done."
"God _____ the seventh day, and made it _____."

MY WEEK, HONESTLY

Private, just you and God. Write what fills each day (school, practice, work, chores, family). Circle how full it feels. Then **star** one window where you could really rest with God.

DAY	WHAT FILLS IT	HOW FULL?
Mon		Packed · Busy · Some space
Tue		Packed · Busy · Some space
Wed		Packed · Busy · Some space
Thu		Packed · Busy · Some space
Fri		Packed · Busy · Some space
Sat		Packed · Busy · Some space
Sun		Packed · Busy · Some space

REMEMBER · EXODUS 20:8

"Remember the _____ day, to keep it _____."

If rest is a way of trusting God, one thing I could let God hold while I rest:

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My One Step

MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

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

I will rest with God by _____

Example: "Every night before bed, I will lie down for 10 minutes with no phone, say Exodus 20:8, and thank God for one thing."

My Rhythm · Line 1

My rest day or rest time:

_____

Copy it onto your card below.

Unplugged Hour (optional)

My version: _____

When I'll try it: _____

Working or babysitting? Fifteen minutes counts. Keep your phone near if you need it to stay safe.

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 UNPLUGGED RHYTHM CARD

✂ Cut out along the dashed line. Keep it in your Bible, wallet, or phone case. Add one line every week, starting tonight with Line 1.

REST IS HOLY

My Unplugged Rhythm

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

EXODUS 20:8

1. My rest day or rest time: _____

2. My quiet spot: _____

3. My outside time: _____

4. My daily rhythm with God: _____

Signed: _____

WEEK 1

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5 Days of Made for Rest

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. Bonus: read it during your rest time.

DAY 1 Genesis 2:2 · God rested

God wasn't tired, but he rested anyway. What do you think he wanted to show us?

DAY 2 Genesis 2:3 · A holy time

God blessed a day and made it holy. What's one time in your week you could set apart for God?

DAY 3 Exodus 20:9–10 · Everybody rests

Even servants and animals got a day off. Who in your life needs rest? How could you help them get some?

DAY 4 Mark 2:27 · Made for you

The Sabbath was made for you, not you for the Sabbath. What would make rest feel like a gift instead of one more thing to do?

DAY 5 Matthew 11:28 · Come to me

Jesus says, "Come to me… and I will give you rest." What are you carrying that you could hand to him today?

A prayer you can pray this week

God, thank you that rest is your gift and I don't have to earn it. When I feel like I can't stop, remind me that you're holding the world, not me. Help me find one real time this week to rest with you. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **Quiet Soul**

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