

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE For Middle Schoolers

focus

It's not easy to stay focused. Especially these days, when we're connected to a never-ending stream of new notifications, ads, messages, videos, posts, and entertainment, it makes sense if we feel a little distracted sometimes. Maybe you've struggled recently to stay focused on your homework, or on the story your friend was telling you, or on the movie you were watching — but have you ever struggled to stay focused when you were spending time with God? In this four-week series, we're going to get honest about how difficult it can be to stay focused when we're trying to pray, read the Bible, or grow in our faith. Each week, we'll explore passages from Psalms and the Gospels as we challenge ourselves to focus on practicing four spiritual disciplines that can help us grow. Together, we'll try focusing on **what God has said**, on **giving something up**, on **talking to God**, and on **rest**.

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Focus on giving something up.

BIBLE

Matthew 6:16-18; Psalm 121:1-8

WHAT IS FASTING? Fasting is a spiritual discipline that's been around for a long time and is practiced by just about every faith tradition. Fasting simply means giving up one thing, for a set period of time, in order to gain something else.

- **What's one thing you couldn't go a day without?**
- **Have you ever given up something you really liked for a good reason? What happened?**
- **Have you ever been tempted to do something because it would make you seem more "holy"? What happened and how do you feel about it now?**
- **How do you think giving something up could help you grow closer to God?**
- **Read Psalm 121:1-8. If you were to fast, how can these verses help you to focus on God?**
- **This week, what's one thing you're going to give up to help you better focus on God?**