

Invest in your spiritual health: *Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines*

LESSON AT A GLANCE	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum can be found on the NAC USA YouTube channel <i>and</i> in the NAC USA mobile app 	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are spiritual disciplines? ➤ Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life? <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spiritual disciplines are behaviors and activities that help us train ourselves to be practically equipped to be sustainably engaged in a deepening relationship with God. ➤ We want to deepen our relationship with God because we love Him and want to be with Him forever. Our love for Him and desire to connect are motivating factors for our desire to exercise spiritual disciplines. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IGNITE Bible ➤ Catechism Q&A ➤ NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum – October 2018 – Session 1 ➤ Something to play a video (TV, computer, tablet, projector, etc.) <p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bible: Matthew 4:2, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, John 4:23-24, John 7:15, 1 Timothy 4:7-8
PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
	<p>What is needed in order to exercise? Join us tomorrow for small group at _____ to share your thoughts.</p>
POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This message can be customized with local information as necessary. • The NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum can be found on the NAC USA YouTube channel and in the NAC USA mobile app. 	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week we discussed spiritual disciplines and why they are important to our ongoing spiritual development. The discussion centered around 1 Timothy 4:7-8. Consider reading this passage together with your child and discuss what 'exercise yourself towards godliness' means to you. Another conversation starter about spiritual disciplines is the NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum – October 2018 – Session 1 video.</p> <p>Partnering with you, Your Youth Leaders</p>

SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday’s sermon? ➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn? ➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday? ➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
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HOOK (up to 10 minutes)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are you and how are you feeling today? ➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week? <p>Remind the students that the previous session introduced the new semester “Invest in your spiritual health” and the students helped define “health”. Now ask the students, “What is needed in order to exercise?” (from the pre-discussion message)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider listing their answers on a whiteboard or chart paper ➤ After the students have had a chance to contribute some answers, supplement with the below points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment (weights, treadmill, etc.) ▪ Time ▪ Desire/will/intention to exercise <p>This week’s discussion will explore spiritual disciplines and exercise toward godliness.</p>
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SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preview the “I wonder” questions with the students. 	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are spiritual disciplines? ➤ Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?
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LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- *Practically:* in a way that is reasonable or logical; in a practical way; not theoretical
- *Sustainably:* in a way that can be maintained at a certain rate or level

- Ask a student to read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 from their Bible:
 - *"But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."* (emphasis added)

Student Question #1 How does someone exercise toward godliness ?

- Spiritual disciplines and habits help exercise toward godliness

Student Question #2 What are spiritual disciplines?

- Spiritual disciplines are behaviors and activities that help us train ourselves to be practically equipped to be sustainably engaged in a deepening relationship with God.
 - Consider asking some of the below follow-up questions:
 - What are some other behaviors and activities that have become habits in your life?
 - How did these behaviors become habits?
 - Can a behavior and activity be practical, but not sustainable?
 - What is an example?
 - Can a behavior and activity be practical and sustainable, but not help deepen a relationship with God?
 - What is an example?

Student Question #3 Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?

- Spiritual disciplines help us develop intimacy with God
 - They create the space for us to connect with God and allow Him to speak in us and through us.
 - The goal isn't to accomplish the behavior or habit as if we're 'earning' anything. This treats the spiritual discipline in a legalistic way as something on a 'to do' list rather than in an authentic approach to connecting with God
- Spiritual disciplines help us become like Christ (Transform our nature using Jesus as our example)
 - Jesus practiced spiritual disciplines throughout His life:
 - Worship – John 4:23-24
 - Prayer – Luke 6:12
 - Study of Scripture – John 7:15
 - Fasting – Matthew 4:2
 - Solitude – Luke 5:16
 - In all things, Jesus perfectly modeled how we should think, act, and feel. Through spiritual disciplines, Jesus demonstrates how to best connect with God, the Father.

- Refer to some of the points from the 'Hook' activity regarding what is needed for exercise.

- Refer back to 1 Timothy 4:7-8 if needed

Student Question #4 How are physical exercises/disciplines SIMILAR to spiritual exercise/disciplines?

- Like physical exercises and disciplines, spiritual exercises and disciplines require intention and desire to grow, time, dedication, and perhaps equipment (Bible, journal, music, divine service experience, etc.).
- Both types of exercises contribute to health and growth.

Student Question #5 How are physical exercises/disciplines DIFFERENT from spiritual exercise/disciplines?

- Physical exercises and disciplines are for the growth and development of our bodies, whereas spiritual exercises and disciplines help us connect with God and grow and develop spiritually.
- Spiritual growth has present and eternal impact, whereas physical growth and development is restricted to this earth.

Corporate and personal

- The spiritual disciplines can be exercised in a group or in private. It is important to highlight the need for both. While God has given us a community of believers to help us on our journey of transforming our nature, we are ultimately responsible for our spiritual health. We can't blame others if we don't have the time to exercise spiritual disciplines (pray, worship, study Scripture, etc.).
- We come together on a Sunday to do, in a group, what we do individually all week (pray, worship, meditate, learn from Scripture, etc.).

Throughout this semester we will be exploring the spiritual disciplines of:

- Submission to God's will
- Prayer
- Studying Scripture
- Simplicity
- Worship
- Fasting
- Service
- Silence and Solitude

Ask the students which discipline(s) intrigue them the most and what about those disciplines they hope to learn.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- The NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum can be found on the [NAC USA YouTube channel](#) and in the [NAC USA mobile app](#).

If there is time, consider the [NAC USA Midweek Experience Curriculum – October 2018 – Session 1](#) video, which also introduces spiritual disciplines.

Close with the “I Wonder....” questions

- Ask a student to read an “I Wonder...” question, and invite another student to answer with an “I Believe...” statement or an “I Believe...” statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to renounce Satan and surrendering themselves to God in obedience. We gain strength to renounce Satan and surrender to God by deepening our relationship with God through spiritual disciplines and habits.

I wonder...

- What are spiritual disciplines?
- Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?

I believe...

- Spiritual disciplines are behaviors and activities that help us train ourselves to be practically equipped to be sustainably engaged in a deepening relationship with God.
- We want to deepen our relationship with God because we love Him and want to be with Him forever. Our love for Him and desire to connect are motivating factors for our desire to exercise spiritual disciplines.

Point to Ponder....

What are the biggest obstacles that stand in the way of making spiritual disciplines a part of our daily lives? How can we eliminate these obstacles?

A Call to Action....

Over the course of this semester, the discussions will revolve around specific spiritual disciplines. Already now, consider making a ‘spiritual health plan’ that you can develop and commit to, just like someone would make a health plan for their physical body.

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

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References: Matthew 4:2, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, John 4:23-24, John 7:15, 1 Timothy 4:7-8

1. How does someone exercise toward godliness?

2. What are spiritual disciplines?

3. Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?

4. How are physical exercises/disciplines SIMILAR to spiritual exercise/disciplines?

5. How are physical exercises/disciplines DIFFERENT from spiritual exercise/disciplines?

Point to Ponder: What are the biggest obstacles that stand in the way of making spiritual disciplines a part of our daily lives? How can we eliminate these obstacles?

Call to Action: Over the course of this semester, the discussions will revolve around specific spiritual disciplines. Already now, consider making a 'spiritual health plan' that you can develop and commit to, just like someone would make a health plan for their physical body.