

L.I.T Youth Ministry

THE Check-In

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Halfway through the school year is the perfect time to pause, breathe, and check in. “The Check-In” is a safe and honest virtual space for teens to talk about how they’re really doing—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Through open discussion, reflection, and prayer, we’ll explore what’s going well, what’s been challenging, and how to stay grounded in faith through the rest of the year.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Summary

This teen talk focused on spiritual and emotional check-ins with teenagers, emphasizing the importance of honesty with God and self-reflection. The pastor led a discussion about school experiences, life batteries (energy levels), and spiritual relationships, encouraging teens to be authentic about their struggles. Key themes included being different from the world, avoiding conformity, and maintaining strong relationships with God through prayer and Bible reading. The discussion also addressed challenges like peer pressure, academic stress, profanity, and confidence issues, while emphasizing that Christians are called to be lights in the world.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You tonight asking for open hearts and minds. Help each person in this group to be receptive to what You want to teach us today. Give us the courage to be honest with ourselves and with You, just as David prayed in Psalm 139. Guide our discussion and help us to grow closer to You and to each other. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

If you could describe your current school year in one word, what would it be and why?

Key Verses

- Psalm 139:23-24
- Romans 12:2
- Matthew 5:14-16
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Isaiah 43:2
- Romans 8:28

Questions

- How would you rate your current 'life battery' on a scale of 1-10, and what's either draining or charging it lately?
- What does it mean to you personally to be 'the light of the world' as mentioned in Matthew 5?
- How has your faith been tested at school this year, and how did you respond?
- What's one area of your spiritual life that you know needs improvement, and what practical step can you take this week?
- How do you handle peer pressure when it conflicts with your Christian values?
- What's the difference between being 'hot,' 'cold,' or 'lukewarm' in your relationship with God?
- How can we show love to others while still standing firm in our beliefs?
- What does it look like practically to 'search me, O God, and know my heart' in your daily life?

Life Application

This week, commit to one specific action that will strengthen your relationship with God - whether it's daily prayer, reading Scripture, or acknowledging God in small

moments throughout your day. Also, look for one opportunity to be a positive light to someone at school without compromising your Christian values.

Key Takeaways

- Christians are called to be different from the world - to be salt and light, not to conform but to stand out
- Honest self-reflection and prayer (like David's prayer in Psalm 139) is essential for spiritual growth
- God knows our hearts, our struggles, and our future - we can trust His plans even when we feel anxious
- Being a Christian means showing love to others while maintaining biblical standards
- Spiritual maturity comes through consistent prayer, Bible reading, and acknowledging God daily

Ending Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this time of honest sharing and reflection. We pray that You would help each person here to grow closer to You this week. Give them strength to be lights in their schools and communities, courage to stand for what's right, and wisdom to handle the challenges they face. Help them to remember that You have good plans for their lives and that You are always with them. Protect their hearts and minds, and help their relationships with You to grow stronger each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DEVOTIONALS

Day 1:

Honest Check-Ins with God

Devotional

Life as a teenager can feel overwhelming. Between school stress, friend drama, and trying to figure out who you are, it's easy to feel like you're drowning. But here's something amazing: God actually wants you to be real with Him about all of it. David, who wrote many of the Psalms, didn't sugarcoat his feelings when he talked to God. He was honest about his fears, his confusion, and his struggles. In Psalm 139, he literally asks God to search his heart and point out anything that needs to change. That takes serious courage! You don't have to pretend everything is fine when you pray. God already knows what's really going on in your heart and mind anyway. He's not shocked by your doubts, your fears about the future, or even your anger about difficult situations. What He wants is your honesty. Think about your closest friendships. The relationships that matter most are the ones where you can be completely yourself, right? It's the same with God. When you stop performing and start being real, that's when genuine spiritual growth happens. That's when you discover that God's love isn't based on having it all together – it's based on His unchanging character. Regular spiritual check-ins aren't about reporting good behavior to God. They're about

staying connected to the One who knows you better than anyone else and loves you completely. When you make space for honest conversation with God, you'll find the strength and clarity you need for whatever you're facing.

Bible Verse

'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' - Psalm 139:23-24

Reflection Question

What's one thing you've been hesitant to be completely honest with God about, and what would it look like to bring that into your prayer time this week?

Quote God knows your heart. You don't have to say anything. He knows what's in your heart. He knows what's in your mind. He knows what you feel.

Prayer

God, thank You that I don't have to pretend with You. Help me to be honest about my struggles, fears, and questions. Search my heart and show me areas where I need Your guidance. Give me the courage to be real in my relationship with You. Amen.

Day 2:

Finding Your True Identity

Devotional

Have you ever noticed how exhausting it can be to try to fit in? You change how you talk around certain friends, laugh at jokes that aren't really funny, or go along with things that don't feel right – all because you want to belong. But here's the truth: the best way to be seen is not to fit in. God made you uniquely you for a reason. When you try to be someone else, you're not just being fake – you're actually robbing the world of what it needs from you. Your authentic self, shaped by your relationship with God, is exactly what your friends and classmates need to see. This doesn't mean you have to be weird or preachy. It means you can be confident in who God created you to be. You don't have to use the same language as everyone else to communicate effectively. You don't have to compromise your values to have meaningful friendships. In fact, people respect authenticity more than they respect conformity. When you stop trying to transform yourself into what you think others want, you create space for God to transform you into who He designed you to be. This transformation happens from the inside out, as your mind is renewed by God's truth rather than shaped by peer pressure. Your identity isn't found in how well you fit in with the crowd. It's found in being God's beloved child, created with purpose and called to make a difference. When you embrace this truth, you'll discover a confidence that doesn't depend on others' approval.

Bible Verse

'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.' - Romans 12:2

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life do you feel the most pressure to conform, and how might God be calling you to stand out in those situations?

Quote The best way to be seen is not to fit in.

Prayer

Lord, help me to embrace who You created me to be instead of trying to fit into everyone else's expectations. Transform my mind with Your truth and give me the confidence to be authentic. Show me how to stand out in ways that honor You. Amen.

Day 3:

Being Salt and Light

Devotional

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. These aren't just nice-sounding words – they're your actual identity as a follower of Jesus. But what does that mean in real life, especially at school? Salt preserves and adds flavor. Light pushes back darkness and helps people see clearly. When you walk into your classroom, your cafeteria, or your friend group, you bring something the world desperately needs: hope, authenticity, and the love of God. This doesn't mean you have to be perfect or preach at everyone. It means you get to be different in the best possible way. When everyone else is tearing each other down, you can build people up. When others are spreading gossip, you can speak truth with kindness. When your friends are stressed about the future, you can remind them that God has good plans. Sometimes people will notice this difference and ask questions. They might wonder why you don't talk like everyone else or why you seem to have peace in stressful situations. These moments are opportunities to let your light shine even brighter by sharing about the hope you have in Jesus. Remember, those people around you actually need you to be different. They need the salt and light that only you can bring. Your authentic faith might be exactly what someone needs to see to believe that God is real and that He cares about them too. Don't hide your light under a basket. Let it shine so others can see God's goodness through your life.

Bible Verse

'You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.' - Matthew 5:13-14

Reflection Question

How can you practically be 'salt and light' in your school or friend group this week, and what specific opportunities do you have to let your faith shine through your actions?

Quote You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. You bring the light. You bring the light when you go to school, you are the light.

Prayer

God, thank You for calling me to be salt and light in this world. Help me to bring Your hope and love wherever I go. Give me courage to be different in ways that point others to You. Use my life to make a positive impact on those around me. Amen.

Day 4:

Trusting God's Good Plans

Devotional

The future can feel scary when you're a teenager. College decisions, career choices, relationships – there are so many unknowns. It's easy to lie awake at night wondering if you're making the right choices or if everything will work out okay. But here's what you need to know: God has good plans for your life. Jeremiah 29:11 isn't just a pretty verse for graduation cards. It's a promise from God that He knows exactly what He's doing with your life. His plans aren't just okay plans or backup plans – they're plans to prosper you and give you hope and a future. Even when you can't see the next step clearly, you can trust that God sees the whole picture. This doesn't mean life will always be easy or that you won't face challenges. But it does mean that even the difficult seasons are part of God's good plan for your growth and His glory. Romans 8:28 reminds us that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose – even the things that don't make sense right now. When anxiety about the future starts to creep in, remember that you serve a God who loves you deeply. You're His child, and good parents don't make harmful plans for their children. God's love for you is perfect, and His plans flow from that love. You don't have to have it all figured out right now. You just need to trust the One who does have it all figured out and take the next faithful step He puts in front of you.

Bible Verse

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

Reflection Question

What specific worry about your future can you surrender to God today, and how might trusting His good plans change the way you approach that situation?

Quote God knows the plans that he has for you and his plans to prosper you and not to harm you. And he's going to give you a hope in the future.

Prayer

Father, thank You that You have good plans for my life even when I can't see them clearly. Help me to trust You with my future and to find peace in knowing that You love me and want what's best for me. Give me wisdom for the decisions I need to make today. Amen.

Day 5:

Finding Strength in God's Joy

Devotional

Some days you wake up feeling ready to conquer the world. Other days, you can barely drag yourself out of bed. The pressures of teenage life – school stress, social drama, family expectations – can leave your emotional and spiritual batteries completely drained. But here's an incredible truth: God's joy can be your strength even on the hardest days. The joy of the Lord isn't the same as happiness. Happiness depends on circumstances, but God's joy is rooted in who He is and what He's done for you. It's the deep confidence that you are loved, that you have purpose, and that your story isn't over yet. This joy becomes your strength when everything else feels overwhelming. When you don't feel like pushing forward, when you're tired of trying, when the weight of expectations feels too heavy – that's exactly when God's strength shows up through His joy. It's not about forcing yourself to feel happy. It's about remembering the truth of who God is and who you are in Him. This strength doesn't come from trying harder or being more positive. It comes from spending time with God, reading His Word, and letting His truth fill your mind and heart. When you open your Bible, God opens His mouth to speak encouragement, wisdom, and hope into your life. As you've learned this week about being honest with God, embracing your identity, shining your light, and trusting His plans, remember that all of this is possible because of the strength

that comes from His joy. You don't have to do any of this in your own power. His joy is your strength.

Bible Verse

'Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.' - Nehemiah 8:10

Reflection Question

When you feel emotionally or spiritually drained, what practical steps can you take to reconnect with God's joy and find the strength you need to keep going?

Quote The joy of the Lord is my strength. When I don't feel like it, when I'm tired, when I feel overwhelmed, God still gives me the energy to keep pushing and moving forward.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that Your joy can be my strength even when I feel weak or overwhelmed. Help me to find my confidence in who You are rather than in my circumstances. Fill me with Your joy and give me the energy I need to live faithfully for You. Amen.

