

# **Breathe**

## **Module: INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

### **Lesson 1: INTRO TO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will discuss their current knowledge of Spiritual Disciplines/be introduced to the idea of disciplines.
- Students will consider how spiritual disciplines build and strengthen your faith.
- Students will discover new spiritual disciplines and ways to incorporate them into their life.

#### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens, Markers, Pencil Crayons, Crayons
- ☐ White board and dry erase marker (optional)

## Minds On

Start your youth group night off with a game. It doesn't really matter which game, although basketball or dodge ball are good options. If your church doesn't have a gym, something like a push-up contest (can be really funny) or some kind of relay race outside would work.

After the game, **ask:**

What did you need to do to play well?

What habits do you always need to do to play (whatever game was played)?

What does a proper stance (e.g. in basketball, there is the ready position) look like?

How do we know if what we're doing is correct?

## Action

**Prompt:** We're going to start talking about Spiritual Disciplines. What are some things that come to mind when you think of discipline?

**Leader's Note:** While you'll get some positive answers, it is very possible that most, if not all, will be negative answers.

**Prompt:** Often times we think of discipline as a negative word, but today's Bible passages are going to show us how discipline can play a very important and positive role in our spiritual life.

Read aloud: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 1 Timothy 4:8.

**Ask:** What does a successful athlete look like?

If you have students who are athletes, ask what they do to succeed. The concept of discipline is also very relevant in music, so if your students play musical instruments, ask what kind of activities help them improve as musicians.

**Prompt:** A good athlete or musician has really strong discipline because they practice and work hard to improve, because they value what they are doing and want to learn more and develop their skills further. Paul tells Timothy that spiritual training exceeds physical training.

Have your students brainstorm some key differences and similarities between sports/music training and spiritual training. Similarities could include:

- practice (the more you pray out loud, the more comfortable you get with it)
- consistency
- accountability
- coaching
- structure

Differences could include: Intense physical exertion.

Next, brainstorm a list of spiritual disciplines that students are familiar with. If the list is short, help your students out and explain what each practice involves. A basic list of spiritual disciplines would include: prayer, reading scripture, silence and solitude, confession, worship, fasting etc.

**Ask:** What do you think of spiritual disciplines?

Why do you think it's important for us to talk about spiritual disciplines?

**Think/Pair/Share:** Give them a moment to think on their own. Then have them get in pairs and invite them to share their thoughts. Use the follow questions:

What do you think of spiritual disciplines?

Do you think they would have a positive impact on your relationship with God if you practiced them consistently?

Have the pairs join into groups of 4-6 to discuss the following questions. It may be helpful to have the questions written on a piece of chart paper or printed out for each group.

What, if any, spiritual disciplines have you tried before?

What are some of the challenges that get in the way of these disciplines?

Are any of these common with the people in your group?

If you are comfortable, share about some personal experiences that affect how you approach God

**Leader's Note:** Pay close attention to these answers! You may need to address them individually with each youth and a later time to help them grow in their walk with God.

Have the groups come back together and use the white board to write down answers from groups and brainstorm any further activities for spiritual disciplines.

**Ask:** So, what are the benefits of spiritual disciplines?

Some answers might include:

Spiritual disciplines are how we incorporate God into our daily life.

It's a very personal thing that helps you be more deeply connected with God.

It's pushing everything in the world aside, to say this is where I am spiritually.

To be a great Christian athlete, you have to practice day in and day out .

**Prompt:** The goal of spiritual disciplines, whether it is prayer, meditation, fasting, silence, or reading the Bible, is to give you a time to put aside things that distract you and focus on spending time with God. Let those things be, and pay attention to what God is saying to you in that moment.

**Leader's Note:** This is different from community orientated disciplines, so you may want to explain that point further to your students.

## **Consolidate**

End in prayer; mention how they are separated from God specifically and personally, and ask that God speak to each one as you explore the spiritual disciplines.

**Breathe in:** Read and memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17 over the next week.

**Breathe out:** Over the next week, ask each student try to spend between 5-10 minutes in silence and see what happens! (It doesn't even need to be "prayer," but just keeping silent. If students are worried about getting distracted, setting a timer can help prevent constantly checking the clock, and focusing on a simple phrase or Scripture passage can also help.)