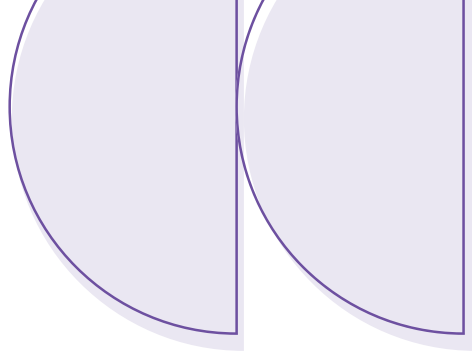


DAY 6

Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9 NLT

In middle school, you've probably been stressed out at some point. Maybe in a fight with a friend, or having too much homework, or because your mom and stepdad have been arguing a lot at home. No matter why you're stressed, the more we experience it, the more we want to feel the complete opposite. We want to feel peace! The truth is that peace is always available to us. A real, lasting peace. The kind of peace that only comes from God. In fact, the more we get to know God, the more our faith—and the peace it brings—will grow.

The next time you find yourself stressed, ask God to remind you of what you know to be true: that peace is possible for all of us when we're growing in faith and relationship with God.



DAY 7

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7 NLT

One of the best ways we can connect the dots and grow in our faith is through memorizing God's Word. After all, we can't actually do what we've learned if we haven't learned it, right? So this week, commit to memorizing this verse as the first step in not just learning about God, but applying the truth you learn to your life.

To start, reach out to your small group leader. Text or DM this verse to them as a way to help you memorize it and talk about what stands out to you about it, too.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

CONNECT THE DOTS / WEEK 1

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

James 2:17 NLT

Have you ever planted a seed in a garden only to find that nothing grows? After a while, you probably figured out that something happened to stop the growth. No matter what caused it, it probably felt like the seed became pretty much useless after that. Why? Because it didn't do what it was supposed to do: grow. Just like a seed is supposed to produce a plant, God wants your faith to grow into something, too. God wants the faith you have to produce action—specifically things that are good! That is how others will see your faith in your life.

Today, talk with your small group, an adult you trust, or a friend about how you are going to put your faith in action this week.

DAY 2

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:16 NLT

Have you ever done something good hoping that you'd get recognized for it? If we're being honest, we'd all admit we've done a good thing or two hoping that someone else would notice, appreciate it, and maybe even thank us for it. But as followers of Jesus, we're encouraged to do good things for others for a different reason: so that the praise will be given to God. One of the quickest ways we can see both our faith and the faith of those around us grow is not to take credit for something good, but to instead, give God the credit. We don't do good things so people think we're good; we do good things to show the world that God is good.

Brainstorm ways you can do good this week as a way to show others more of who God is.

DAY 3

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever! Amen.

2 Peter 3:18 NIV

Part of becoming more like Jesus means that we should always be growing. We should always be growing in our faith and growing to be more like Jesus in our lives. But it's one thing to know all the right things we can do in order to grow; it's another to actually try and do them. The more we learn about Jesus as our Savior, the more we should be inspired to act like Him. And in acting like Jesus, we'll grow to become more like Him.

Pray this week that as you learn about Jesus' love toward you, you will be inspired to live more like Jesus did and grow deeper in your faith.

DAY 4

It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.

1 Corinthians 3:7 NLT

It can be easy to think that growing our faith is completely up to us. If we just keep learning, and trying, and doing, then we'll finally get it right . . . right? As this verse reminds us, there's more to it than that. Of course, God wants us to do our part—to take what we've learned and apply it to our lives. But we can't forget that it's ultimately God who grows our faith. In other words, we can't do it on our own! When we trust God to help us grow, we'll develop a stronger faith as we go.

Take a walk this week and look for plants you see blooming to remind you that God is the One who helps you grow in your faith in the same way. If you have a phone, snap a picture and send it to your group!

DAY 5

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

James 1:22 NLT

Written by Peyton, age 13 from Altoona, Iowa, USA

Have you ever read instructions that were so confusing that they offered you no help at all? Those are just the worst, aren't they!? Luckily for us, God gave the church a very clear and helpful instruction manual: God's Word, the Bible. It tells us exactly what we need to do in order to fully experience God and help others experience God. But what good is reading an instruction manual if you never bother to follow the instructions in it? God doesn't want us to know what we should do, God wants us to actually do it! Following God doesn't mean just sitting around all day, praying and reading the Bible (although those are important things to do). It means using what you learn about what God says in your own life! God wants us to show the rest of the world God's love through our actions.

So look around today.

**Do you see someone sitting alone at lunch?
Invite them to sit with you and your friends!**

**Is there someone you are friends with who doesn't know Jesus yet?
Invite them to your youth group!**

Challenge yourself today to show someone else God's love through your actions.