



THE INSANE S.W.E.A.T CLUB

Five Lessons For Small Groups On Spiritual Disciplines

Get Ready To **S.W.E.A.T**

Hello Leaders,

Here are a series of small group sessions that you can use for Sunday School, Small Group, or break out sessions at your next camp or retreat. Each session can stand alone or you can use it in a series.

If you have the 40 Day S.W.E.A.T work out for students, here are a series of lessons you could use to lead into a commitment to the 40 days or you could have students make their commitment on day one of your small group meeting and use the small groups for accountability.

No matter how you use this material, I pray it will be a blessing in your effort to make strong disciples for Christ.

Praying for you,

Paul Turner

Paul Turner
Disciple Project Ministries

Do You Know How To S.W.E.A.T?

What does your group look like? If it is like mine, it is a cornucopia of spirituality, from couch potatoes who get their spiritual work out two days a week (Wednesday and Sunday); to students looking for something more. Maybe your students are in pretty good shape spiritually, but they are ready to take their walk with God to the next level. These spiritual exercises will challenge your students to get their head out of the video games and into God's Word for a work out that will blow their mind,

What Is S.W.E.A.T?

Study Your Bible

Witness To Your Friends

Encourage One Another

Act On What You Read

Talk It Out With God

These five disciplines are what every Christian needs to do to stay spiritually healthy. Imagine these disciplines are like work out machines in the gym. You can take each devotion and work on a spiritual muscle each day.



“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” I Timothy 4:8

How To Get Your Students S.W.E.A.T.Y

These devotions encourage you to focus on one spiritual discipline a night. I am not going to tell you everything to do and say. You're smart, creative, and in tune with God. I trust you will take the material I have given you, pray about it, and do your best.

The devotions are broken down like this

Our Goal: Just like any physical training, you set your goals up front. Tell your students where this devo is going and what you'd like them to get out of it.

Warm Up: This is a way to get your kids to open up, laugh, and talk.

Opening Questions: These are warm up questions. Feel free to add to it.

Key Scripture: This is the key verse, but feel free to add more.

Exercise: These are scriptures and questions to get your kids to do some heavy spiritual lifting.

Cool Down: This is the closer to your session. This is designed to make an impact on your camper and to draw them closer to God.

Their Goal: Let students respond in the way God is leading them about what they have heard from the scriptures and what kind of goal they need to set for themselves. *Example: I will read one chapter of scripture before I go to bed before I go to sleep.*

Each session should take about 30-45 minutes, but you can adjust the material for your age group. Go longer for high School kids and shorter if you have Jr. High. Use your best judgement.

Session One



Study your Bible

Our Goal: I want to talk to you about why reading and studying the Bible is important. Before we do, let's try something.

Warm Up: Buy a traditional scale that you would weigh yourself with. Have each kid take a turn squeezing the scale and see which one can squeeze the most weight onto the scale. *Option 2:* Have students carry another student around the inside of your room or even an obstacle course you create. How many laps can they do? Limit them to 20 laps.

Opening Questions

For Girls: What is the heaviest thing you have ever lifted?

For Boys: If you lift weights, how much can you bench and how many reps can you do?

The Key Verse: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, *let us strip off every weight that slows us down*, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us." Hebrews 12:1 NLB

Exercise:

What value do you think the Bible offers us today?

What is the image the Hebrew writer is trying to show you in this scripture?

Cool Down: Whether you went with the scale opener or not, the scale makes a great metaphor for the night, and maybe the series. Put the scale in private place. Have a notebook somewhere the students can write in or you can use the response sheets in the back of this devo. Instruct each student to go in and stand on the scale and to think about what is weighing them down in their faith. Ask students to ask Jesus to lift the weight of any sins that are keep them from having the kind of relationship with God they want to have. Have them write down those things that are weighing you down. Each student should write on a different page in the book. Instruct the students not to sign their name. Use what the students have written as a prayer guide for the rest of the series.

Their Goal: Ask students to set a goal this week concerning reading the Bible.

Example: I will read one chapter of scripture before I go to bed before I go to sleep.

Session Two



itnessing to your friends

Our Goal: I want to share with you tonight about why I share my faith and why it's important to every believer to share theirs

Warm Up: *Option 1-* Have a work out planned. Crank up some music and do a 10 minute aerobics work out. The goal is to show how out of shape we are. Our souls are not as in as good a shape as we think either. *Option 2-* Best news ever. Have students fill out The Best News Ever sheet. Tell them to write it down and then turn it in. Do not share it with anyone. Read each Best News Ever sheets our loud and let the other campers guess who received that news. Let the students share about their response to the good news they had received.

Opening Questions

How many different ways did you share The Best News Ever with others?

What is your favorite way to share good news with others? (Facebook? In Person?)

The Key Verse: "Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news."
Mark 1:45a NIV Read the whole story to your group and feel free to use other examples of those who discovered Christ and what their response to Him.

Exercise:

Why was being healed of leprosy a monumental event to him?

How did he share the good news?

Cool Down: Back to the scale. Think about the weight you wrote down last time. What if that weight were gone? How would you respond? Who would you share it with first? Why? How would you spread the news that your weight was gone?

Their Goal: Ask students to set a goal this week concerning sharing their faith.

Example: Make a list of the friends you'd like to share your new found or renewed faith with?

Session Three



Encourage one another daily

Our Goal: Tonight we'll be talking about why the power of encouragement is key to growing in our faith.

Warm Up: *How much does it weigh?* Once again, you can use the scale to get kids talking. Find various objects to place on the scale, but before you do let kids guess how much it weighs. **Transition Statement:** You never know how much weight your words, both positive and negative, can carry.

Opening Questions:

Name something YOU have to have to have every day. (internet, food, etc.)

What is the most encouraging thing someone can say to you? (You're smart, kind, etc.)

What is the most discouraging thing some can say to you? (Ex: Your stupid, etc.)

The Key Verse: When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."
Matthew 8:10 NIV Read the whole passage for context.

Exercise:

What did the Centurion want from Jesus?

How do you think the Centurion felt when Jesus bragged on his faith?

What would you like Jesus or others to say about your faith?

How can you start living that out this week?

Cool Down: Read the story of how North Koreans treated American prisoners for the older kids and read the story of The Painter for the younger kids. Use the stories to talk about the power and the timing of our words and how we can use our words to encourage to others. Share the example of our hearts being buckets. Give each person a styrofoam cup (medium size) and enough Fill the Bucket sheets (found in the back) for each student to fill out for each of the students to stick in the other students cups (buckets). When everyone is done filling each others cups they can read their notes to themselves.

Their Goal: Set a goal of how you will use your words to fill someone's bucket tomorrow.

Session Four Act On What You Read

Your Goal: Tonight we'll be sharing about obedience, and why it is critical to a strong faith in Christ.

Warm Up: Break out the scale again. Let students team up to see to how much weight you can put on the scale. Students can hold another person while on the scale, or a few people on the scale, etc. The goal, as a group, is to see how high you can get the weight. (**Transition:** How much weight does the Word of God have in your life? How important is it to your every day life?)

Opening Questions:

Do you think there are any stupid laws that we should not have to follow? Why or Why not?

What happens if you ignore or break a stupid law?

How is this like deciding what we choose to obey or not obey in Scripture?

The Key Verse: "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Luke 10:27 NIV

Exercise:

Jesus sums up the ten commandments in two. Which of these are the hardest for you to do, loving God or loving people?

Matthew 22:35 says they tried to trap Jesus by asking Him which of the over 600 Jewish laws were most important. How do you decide which of God's laws are important and which are not? This is a trick question, it's all important, The question is, why do we not obey what we already know is right?

Cool Down: Back to the scale. Let students step on the scale and ask the Lord to reveal which commandments they broke today. Once they recognize what the Lord has revealed, ask them to pray a prayer of forgiveness and thank the Lord for lifting this weight of disobedience from them.

Their Goal: How will you become more obedient to what you read in the Scriptures?
Example: I will filter my decisions and actions through these two commandments.



Session Five **T**alk it out with God

Our Goal: Tonight we'll be exploring how we can make our prayer life more powerful by praying in accordance with God's word.

Warm Up: For the last night, why not have a full blown work out, make it a little longer than the last one. Make the work out fun and celebratory. The real "work out" happens when they get out in the world.

Opening Questions:

Prayer is a conversation. When do you find yourself praying most often? Do you ever find yourself listening to what God may say to you?

The Key Verse: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
Matthew 6:10 NIV

Exercise:

Earlier in the week we asked you what value the Bible brings to us today. When you read a verse or chapter in the Bible, do you ever look for ways to do what it says? Explain.

Jesus prayed that His father's will would be done. That meant he had to lay down his life so that God's will would be done, the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus prayed this again in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42). What do you think you need to lay down in your life so God can work in you and through you?

Cool Down: There is good weight and bad weight. Good weight is muscle. Bad weight is fat. Take this last night of your series and have students step on the scale and think about the bad weight they have lost or are committed to losing, and the good weight they have gained, in spiritual muscle. Have each student fill out the before and after photo boxes. Can you see how far they have come? Tell them so.

Their Goal: You are never too young to talk to God, hear his voice, or make sacrifices for the greater good. Use the Gethsemane prayer sheet to write out your prayer to God.



Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”

Hebrews 12:1 NLB

Write down some things that are weighing you down spiritually and keeping you from having a relationship with God or pulling down the relationship you already have with God.



My Best News Ever!!



My Best News Ever!!



My Best News Ever!!

**An Example of Death by Discouragement
From The Book: How Full Is Your Bucket
by Tom Rath and Donald D. Clifton**

Read this story to your older groups who you think can understand it.

Following the Korean War, Major (Dr.) William E. Mayer, who would later become the U.S. Army's chief psychiatrist, studied 1,000 American prisoners of war who had been detained in a North Korean camp. He was particularly interested in examining one of the most extremely and perversely effective cases of psychological warfare on record – one that had a devastating impact on its subjects.

American soldiers had been detained in camps that were not considered especially cruel or unusual by conventional standards. The captives had adequate food, water, and shelter. They weren't subjected to common physical torture tactics. In fact, fewer cases of physical abuse were reported in the North Korean POW camps than in prison camps from any other major military conflict throughout history.

Why, then, did so many American soldiers die in these camps? They weren't hemmed in with barbed wire. Armed guards didn't surround the camps. Yet no soldier ever tried to escape. Furthermore, these men regularly broke rank and turned against each other, sometimes forming close relationships with their North Korean captors. When the survivors were released to a Red Cross group in Japan, they were given the chance to phone loved ones to let them know they were alive. Very few bothered to make the call. Upon returning home, these soldiers maintained no friendships or relationships with each other.

Mayer had discovered a new disease in the POW Camps – a disease of extreme hopelessness. It was not uncommon for a soldier to wander into his hut and look despairingly about, deciding there was no use in trying to participate in his own survival. He would go into a corner alone, sit down, and pull a blanket over his head. And he would be dead within two days.

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The soldiers actually called it “give-up-it is.” The doctors labeled it “mirasmus,” meaning a lack of resistance, a passivity. If the soldiers had been hit, spat upon, or slapped, they would have become angry. Their anger would have given them the motivation to survive. But in the absence of motivation, they simply died, even though there was no medical justification for their deaths.

Despite relatively minimal physical torture, “mirasmus” raised the overall death rate in the North Korean POW camps to an incredible 38% - the highest POW death rate in U.S. military history. Even more astounding was that half of these soldiers died

simply because they had given up. They had completely surrendered, both mentally and physically.

How could this have happened? The answers were found in the extreme mental tactics that the North Korean captors used. They employed what Mayer described as the “ultimate weapon” of war. The North Koreans denied the soldiers the emotional support that comes from interpersonal relationships. To do this, the captors used four primary tactics:

1. Informing – By rewarding the prisoners for informing on one another they were able to break the relationships between the men. The captors understood that the soldiers could actually harm each other if they were encouraged to dip from their comrades’ buckets every day.
2. Self-criticism – The captors would require each prisoner to stand up in front of the other prisoners and confess all the bad things he had done. By subtly eroding the caring, trust, respect, and social acceptance among the American soldiers, the North Koreans created an environment in which buckets of goodwill were constantly and ruthlessly drained.
3. Breaking loyalty to leadership and country – The primary way they did this was by slowly and relentlessly undermining a soldier’s allegiance to his superiors. Over time, the relationships were broken; the soldiers simply didn’t care about each other anymore.
4. Withholding all positive emotional support – This was perhaps “bucket dipping in its purest and most malicious form.” Soldiers were denied all positive reinforcement. Only negative news and reinforcements were allowed.

Mayer said that the North Koreans had put the American soldiers “into a kind of emotional and psychological isolation, the likes of which we had never seen.

Too Little Too Late: The Power of Encouragement

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous 19th-century poet and artist, was once approached by an elderly man. The old fellow had some sketches and drawings that he wanted Rossetti to look at and tell him if they were any good, or if they at least showed potential talent.

Rossetti looked them over carefully. After the first few, he knew that they were worthless, showing not the least sign of artistic talent. But Rossetti was a kind man, and he told the elderly man as gently as possible that the pictures were without much value and showed little talent. He was sorry, but he could not lie to the man.

The visitor was disappointed, but seemed to expect Rossetti's judgment. He then apologized for taking up Rossetti's time, but would he just look at a few more drawings - these done by a young art student?

Rossetti looked over the second batch of sketches and immediately became enthusiastic over the talent they revealed. "These," he said, "oh, these are good. This young student has great talent. He should be given every help and encouragement in his career as an artist. He has a great future if he will work hard and stick to it." Rossetti could see that the old fellow was deeply moved. "Who is this fine young artist?" he asked. "Your son?"

"No," said the old man sadly. "It is me - 40 years ago. If only I had heard your praise then! For you see, I got discouraged and gave up - too soon."

Encouragement is important and sometimes it is given too late. As Christians we should encourage each other and build our faith.

Each of us has a bucket in our heart. That bucket is where encouragements go. When a person's bucket is empty, from people saying negative things about us or to us, it is like they are emptying our bucket, with every negative word they say. It is hard to fill the buckets of others, when our bucket is empty? How full is your bucket.



Fill The Bucket



Fill The Bucket



Fill The Bucket



Fill The Bucket

Before and After

Before

After

You know the drill. These exercise programs always ask for a before and after picture, so they can show you the results of their hard work. We want you to do the same. What condition was your soul in on Sunday? Be honest, it's the only way to see progress.

You did it! You made it through the week. What do you look like on the inside? Are you spiritually ripped? Are you able to handle life better? Are you closer to God? Do you love and appreciate His Word more? Do you see others the way God sees them? Be honest, what have you gained during these past five days? The Bible says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* You are transformed, though not completely. God is always working in us until we get to heaven. You are off to a great start! Don't give up.



My Gethsemane Prayer

Pray this out loud first “Not my will, but yours be done”

Lord, here are the things that I have been involved in that I sense in my heart, and I have discovered in Your Word, that are probably not good for me and are in conflict with your best for my life

Finish your prayer with “Not my will, but yours be done. Amen”

S.W.E.A.T Resources

Here are a few ideas and some resources to use in conjunction with this tool. I think every curriculum should have a soundtrack. I found this album, and it makes a great background to the teaching. The album even has a song called [Sweat It Out](#).

For even more ways to use this material check out [The Sweaty Bible Study](#)



1. Bodybuilders
2. Holistic
3. Get Your Weight Up
4. Slim Down
5. Gotta Run
6. You Doing Too Much (feat. Yung Hayte)
7. Sweat It Out
8. This Waste
9. Spot Me (feat. Matthew Bracey)
10. Don't Look Down On Me (feat. Pastor AD3 & Sean Slaughter)
11. DIE-IT (feat. Humble Tip)
12. Hope They Ain't Lying (feat. Isaiah Freeman IV)
13. More Than I Can Bear (feat. Charde Jones)
14. The Power Team (feat. D-MAUB, Atia Evans, Deacon Das, Soulja K & Lesun)
15. Bar (feat. Willie Will)
16. Win or Lose
17. Stronger On My Knees (feat. CMO)
18. ABnormal (feat. Nue Breed, JMartyr, C-Micah, Adalid & Eric Cross)



Paul Turner has been ministering to students for over 25 years. He is an author, speaker, blogger, and youth pastor. He is currently youth pastoring in Birmingham, Al. His most important accomplishment is being married for 20 years to his wife Kim and raising three great kids.

You can catch up with Paul on his blog at www.thediscipleproject.net. There is a free resource page where you can download

- E-books
- Youth Devotionals
- Tips and Tricks
- Forms
- Curriculum and more



Stop by the website and sign up for the Get It First Newsletter. Get free youth ministry resources every month. When I create it for my youth group, I'll pdf it and send it to you.

From my mind, to your inbox,
you Get it First!

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Don't Forget to download the 40 Day S.W.E.A.T Challenge for students to do individually.