

WEEK FOUR
YOUTH GROUP: CHILDLIKE MATURITY
 LEADER GUIDE

THEME: Verse 2 compares our soul to a weaned child. As God’s children, we find comfort and contentment in Jesus, but when we are weaned through trials, we grow in maturity and develop a long-lasting trust.

ACTIVITIES: Baby Shower Games

Bottle Chug: Select 2-4 people to chug a liquid from a baby bottle through the nipple. whoever finishes first wins. Make sure no one tries to cheat by unscrewing the top!

Quiz: Name that song with Baby in the title. (Use the printable from theeverymom.com)

Playdoh Baby: Using clay create the cutest baby they can. Have everyone introduce their baby and do their best to keep their baby safe through the entire night.

ICEBREAKER: Each week the discussion begins with a question that allows the group to share from their own personal experiences.

Icebreaker Question: What are two-three things that you want to be/do when you grow up?

Follow up: What would you need to do to reach that goal.

PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don’t concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

Psalm 131 “is one of the shortest Psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn. It speaks of a young child, but it contains the experience of a person in Christ.”

SAY: This week we are going to examine our journey through faith, through the metaphor of a person growing from a baby to maturity.

READ PSALM 131:2

I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child.

THE WEANED CHILD

DEFINE: What does weaning mean?

- acclimatize someone to managing without something on which they have become dependent or of which they have become excessively fond.
- to withdraw one's dependency from some object, habit, form of enjoyment, or the like:

Question: *What is something that you would have a difficult time giving up?*

Say: This passage speaks of a weaned child. The concept of a weaned child, which is symbolic of our journey into maturity. A child must learn to move from milk to solid food. Weaning is a sign of maturity, leaving behind childish ways and developing trust. This process of growth is important if we are to fully live into calm, quiet, hope, and trust.

Discuss:

- Why is weaning important, as opposed to cold turkey?
- Why do people fear or reject the weaning process?
- What would be the consequence on not being weaned?

QUOTE: *David Guzik*

The process of weaning may seem strange and terrible to the child, but it is necessary for the child's development. The **weaned child** comes to realize that the denial of one of the mother's gifts does not mean denial of the mother's presence. He comes to love the mother herself instead of the gift received from her.¹

DISCUSS:

- Why would the process of weaning seem "strange and terrible" to a child?
- How does this weaning process reshape the relationship between child and mother?

SAY: As a child grows, they move from milk to solid food (meat), this is a process of maturity. As Christians we are in a process of growing in our faith. We are on a process to become more like Christ and less like our sinful selves.

MILK:**READ: 1 Peter 2: 2-3 (NIV)**

Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, 3 now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

QUOTE: Helen Pocock

Peter describes the word of God as 'pure *spiritual milk'... A Christian should want God's word as much as a baby wants milk. Milk makes a baby grow big and strong. A Christian should be eager to read and listen to God's word. This will help them to become mature.²

DISCUSS:

- What is it important to crave "pure spiritual milk?"
- How does spending time in God's Word help us grow and mature in faith and life?
- Is there a danger in only having milk?
- When might "milk" become a deterrent to a person's spiritual growth?

SOLID FOOD:**1 Corinthians 3:1-2 (NLT)**

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you, I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. 2 I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready.

DISCUSS:

- What is Paul's frustration with the Christians on Corinth?
- Paul, as opposed to Peter, says being fed only spiritual milk is immaturity; why is that?
- Do we as Christians need more than God's word to grow in our faith. If so, then what?

READ 2 Peter 1:5-9 (MSG)

So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness,

¹ *Enduring Word Bible Commentary* by David Guzik

² Pocock, Helen. Easy English Commentary www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/1peter-lbw.htm

and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others. With these qualities active and growing in your lives, no grass will grow under your feet, no day will pass without its reward as you mature in your experience of our Master Jesus. Without these qualities you can't see what's right before you, oblivious that your old sinful life has been wiped off the books.

DISCUSS:

- What are some things that help compliment, or build, a maturing faith? (good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love)
- What are ways that a person can add good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love
- How do these qualities lead to maturity?
- How would rejecting these things lead immaturity?

MATURITY

SAY: Much like being on a pilgrimage, maturity is a process, not a destination. It is not a simple process, but one that is developed over time through a process of spiritual practice and experience.

READ: 1 Corinthians 13:11-12

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.

Discuss:

- Is it wrong for a child to behave like a child? Is it OK for an adult to be overly childish?
- What might be considered "childish" things of our faith that we must "put aside?" What are some ways that people are childish in faith, ways they decide to not grow or mature, refuse to practice what they believe?

READ: Continue to Grow (adapted by Dave Reiss base off 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 & Psalm 131)

I was like a newborn baby; my heart was proud and my eyes haughty
 I craved pure spiritual milk of salvation, crying out for nourishment
 I was a child. I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
 But I needed to grow, I needed solid food.
 My soul was weaned, and I put aside childish things.
 I am learning to calm and quiet my soul, to place my hope in Him.
 I see only a small part, a dim reflection, but I continue to grow.
 I do not get involved with things too great or wondrous
 I don't know fully, but in him, I am fully known.
 I will put my hope in the Lord,
 for in him there is faithful love and redemption in abundance.
 Trust in Him, o my soul, continue to grow, both now and forever.

MAKE IT PERSONAL:

- What are some ways that you are living a childish faith?
- How will getting rid of these childish things lead you to calm, quiet, hope, trust?
- What are some ways that you can continue to grow in your faith? How can you develop good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love?

CLOSING TIME:

QUOTE: by David Baker

We curb our pride, our concern for the strong, the powerful and heroic, and we remain quiet and content in God as a child who has been weaned from its mother, and who has begun to live freed from infantile demands and dependencies. We then call ourselves back to the real source of hope - God, and not ourselves.³

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

³ Baker, David. *Voices for the Pilgrimage: A Study in the Psalms of Ascent*, pg. 125