

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

We all need to rest our bodies and spirits.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will be encouraged to use their natural time of rest each day - sleep - to spend time with God, by praying or reading their Bible before bed or when they wake up.

KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 2:1-3, The Seventh Day

INTRO:

If anyone ever deserved a day off in the history of the world, it was God. God spent six days making the entire world – not just our world, but the sun, the moon, the stars, everything that goes with it. God split day and night. He divided the waters from the sky and brought dry land out of the sea. He created every plant and tree and flower and algae ever to grow on this planet. He filled the sea with life, and he filled the air with wings. He covered the land with everything from weasels and chipmunks to lions and tigers and bears. (Oh my!) Then God made a man and a woman in his own image. He put them in a lush garden paradise, and he asked them to take care of the world he created.

Phew! That's a full week of work, isn't it? And God didn't stop after five days like most parents work. He worked six days! Gave up half the weekend. Finally, God took a day off. He saw everything He had made and he took a well-deserved, much needed rest.

Wait a minute. This is God we're talking about. We may look at all God did and think it was well-deserved, but much needed? I don't think so. God is all powerful. As we read further into the Bible we discover this is a God who never rests, never ceases watching over his creation, and never stops listening to the prayers of his people. So why on Earth would he stop on day seven and take a chill?

He did it to set an example for us.

God made us in His image, but that does not mean we are exactly like Him. We are creative. We are born with the unique ability to choose who we love. But we are not born with a battery that can run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. God made day and night to teach us to rest our bodies every night.

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He also rested on the seventh day to show us we need more than physical rest. We need a spiritual break as well.

READ GENESIS 2:1-3

MAIN POINT:

God rested on the seventh day to set an example for us. He wants us to make one day a week a special day to gather together and worship Him. God doesn't want us to work on that day like we do the rest of the week. He wants us to recharge our spirit the way we recharge our bodies. He wants us to pray, to spend time in His Word, and to focus on God.

If we are wise, we won't just pause one day a week for the Lord. We will take time every day to spend with Him. We will read our Bibles, write in our journals, pray, and worship. We will take time each day to hit the pause button, find some place quiet, and spend a few moments resting with the Lord.

DRIVE IT HOME:

God doesn't need sleep, but we do. As frustrating as it may be when Mom and Dad say it is bedtime, we need our rest daily. Moms and Dads need that rest as well. In fact you won't see many adults complaining about a mid-day nap because they've learned the power of an afternoon nap. Any time we sleep, we rest and recharge our bodies so that we can get back out there and work, play, and enjoy life.

Our spirits need rest as well. We need it so badly that God created a seventh day just to teach us how to rest. This rest is so important. God wrote it into the Ten Commandments when he said, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." Sabbath was meant to be a day when we set work aside, spend time with the Lord, and reflect on the good things He has done. How many of us – and I'm talking to the grown ups in the room as well as kids – can say we truly keep the Sabbath?

God wants us to make time for Him. He wants us to stop what we are doing and pray. He wants us to read the Bible. He wants us to worship and praise His Name. God wants us to do this so He can revive our spirits. He can give us the energy to continue living and serving Him.

It's important to set one day a week aside for the Lord, but it is equally vital that we set time aside each day for this same rest. Just as an afternoon nap can recharge your physical battery, some quiet time with God can be the key to keeping your spirits up and being ready for the next opportunity to serve God.

I want to challenge all of you to get some rest this week.

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Yes, that means listen to Mom and Dad when they say it's bedtime, but more important, it means taking time to be with God. God made you to need rest so you would learn to rely on Him. Start your restful habit now if you haven't. When bedtime comes this week, give some of that time to God every day. You'll be amazed how a little rest can recharge your body, your mind, and your spirit.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Help us make time to get some good rest!

In Jesus' name,

Amen