

IN GOD'S IMAGE: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR YOUTH WELLNESS



Youth Booklet

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In God's Image: Spiritual Practices for Youth Wellness

YOUTH BOOKLET

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In God's Image: Spiritual Practices for Youth Wellness Youth Booklet

Introduction:

In God's Image is an exciting new program about habits that will help you live life more fully in God's image. In doing so, you'll become spiritually stronger and feel more joy in your life as God intended for you. By becoming spiritually stronger, you'll also improve your overall wellness and well-being. This lesson will provide you with keys to help you better love and take care of yourself and others, which is what God wants for all of us.



Screening Survey:

To begin, first complete the brief Screening Survey below.

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Spiritual Wellness Behaviors Screening Survey

Directions: This survey will assess your spiritual health behaviors. Your answers are private. Please answer all items honestly. Check the box that best matches your answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Please do not place your name on this survey.

1. One most days of the week, do you take time and place yourself in a quiet environment without distractions to **pray, read or study the Bible, or other holy scripture, or practice deep breathing, meditation, or similar spiritual health or religious activities?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. On most days of the week, do you practice **spiritual virtues** such as **accepting things you can't change, having faith things will turn out okay in your life, looking at challenges as opportunities, forgiving those who may have hurt you, avoiding judging others, focusing on Jesus Christ's life as a model for how you live your life, or showing gratitude for what you've received from God and others?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. On most weeks of the month, do you participate in **religious services or activities with others** that are supportive of you living a spiritually healthy lifestyle?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. On most weeks of the month, do you **reach out to help others** by volunteering your time, sharing your skills or talents, or giving your money to those in need?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. In the next year, how likely are you to...

	Not (none) at all	A little	Some	A lot
a) spend time praying, studying scripture, or meditating on most days of the week?.....1	2	3	4	
b) practice key virtues like showing gratitude for what you've received from God and others on most days of the week?....1	2		3	4
c) attend religious services on most weeks of the month?.....1	2		3	4
d) reach out to help others in need on most weeks of the month?.....1	2		3	4
e) get 60 minutes of physical activity on most days a week?.....1	2		3	4
f) eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables on most days a week?.....1	2		3	4
g) get 8 or hours sleep most nights a week?.....1	2		3	4
h) drink any alcohol?.....1	2		3	4
i) smoke any cigarettes?.....1	2		3	4
j) use any marijuana?.....1	2		3	4
k) use any other illegal drugs?.....1	2		3	4
l) use an e-cigarette?.....1	2		3	4
m) set any spiritual health goals?.....1	2		3	4
n) talk to your parents about spiritual things?.....1	2		3	4

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Spiritual Wellness Behaviors:

Practicing any of these behaviors on a regular basis helps to be a spiritually **strong, happy and calm** young person. The more of these habits you use, and the more often you use them, the greater the spiritual and other health benefits you will experience. For example, take more time to pray, study the Bible or other holy scripture or meditate, practice a key virtue like showing gratitude for what you've received from God and others, attend religious services, or reach out to help others in need.



Benefits of Spiritual Wellness:

Regularly practicing strategies to promote spiritual health will help you be more **focused, peaceful, and relaxed**. Using spiritual health practices leads to feeling more **confident and composed** to friends, family and teachers. Along with regular exercise, a healthy diet and plenty of sleep, spiritual wellness habits can also help prevent mild depression, anxiety, and excessive worries, as well as headaches and acne breakouts. Spiritual health promoting behaviors help you feel more **centered** and close to God, as well as better able to handle life's eventual problems and challenges. Spiritual health habits can give you **peace of mind, a more positive attitude, and a greater sense of happiness**. They can also help you be a **kinder, gentler, and more loving and accepting** person.



Wellness Behaviors Support Spiritual Growth:

Getting 60 minutes of any type of physical activity on most days a week, along with getting 8 or more hours of sleep each night and eating plenty of non-processed foods including 5 or more servings of fresh fruits and vegetables each day will further improve and maintain your spiritual and overall health. These three behaviors, regular physical activity, sleep and healthy eating, are key to being fit enough to help others in need. They also increase **confidence and discipline** to reach your spiritual and other life goals.



Some Behaviors Harm Spiritual Wellness:

However, substance use can harm your spiritual health, just like it can cause physical and mental health problems. Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drug misuse and illegal drugs damage spiritual wellness and cause anxiety and worries, reducing happiness and connectedness to others, and increases feelings of sadness and hopelessness. These can lead to increased mental and spiritual stress, making it more difficult to feel at peace and close to God.



How Risk Behaviors Interfere with Spiritual Wellness:

Alcohol, drugs and other substances can drive a wedge between you and friends and family and rob you of your ability to remain in control, stay positive and solve difficult life problems. Substance use can increase stressful life events, cause outbursts of anger and violence, result in feelings of regret, and reduce your confidence and happiness. Alcohol and drugs can rob you of reaching your goals of being a good person and loving God, yourself and others.



Recommendations for Spiritual Wellness:

1. Take time to pray, read or study the Bible or other holy scripture, or practice deep breathing, meditation, or similar spiritual health or religious activities on most days of the week,
2. Practice spiritual virtues such as accepting things you can't change, having faith things will turn out okay in your life, looking at challenges as opportunities, forgiving those who may have hurt you, avoiding judging others, focusing on Jesus Christ's life as a model for how you live your life, or showing gratitude for what you've received from God and others on most days of the week,
3. Participate in religious services or activities with others on most weeks of the month,
4. Reach out to help others in need by volunteering your time, talents, or money on most weeks of the month, and most importantly,
5. Continue to avoid alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, prescription drug misuse, and other illegal drug use every day, to ensure you reach your goals of looking and feeling **spiritually strong**.



Goal Plan & Contract:

Complete the Goal Plan below. Then, have your teacher, youth leader, parent or someone else you trust read and co-sign the plan. Don't forget to read and follow the concluding statement at the end of the Goal Plan.

Spiritual Wellness Goal Plan & Contract

Think about the habits that promote your being **spiritually strong** and **healthy** as well as those that **interfere** with reaching your spiritual wellness goals. To become a **better, happier and more stress-free** person, select **at least one** goal.

In selecting goals to work on **next week/month**, consider those that will help you become more like the type of person you want to be in the future, or how you want to be seen by God and others.

To be more spiritually strong, healthy and happy, I _____ (Print name) will avoid alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and other drug use every day this week/month, and I will also (Choose at least one):

1. Take time and place myself in a quiet environment without distractions to **pray, read or study the Bible or other holy scripture, or practice deep breathing, meditation, or similar spiritual health or religious activities** on most days this week/month.
2. Practice **spiritual virtues** such as **accepting things I can't change, having faith things will turn out okay in my life, looking at challenges as opportunities, forgiving those who may have hurt me, avoiding judging others, focusing on Jesus Christ's life as a model for how you live your life, or showing gratitude for what I've received from God and others** on most days this week/month.
3. Participate in **religious services or activities with others** that are supportive of me living a **spiritually healthy lifestyle** on most weeks next month.
4. **Reach out to help others** by volunteering my time, sharing my skills or talents, or giving my money to those in need on most weeks next month.
5. Increase my **physical activity, sleep or healthy eating** most days of the next week/month.

Answer the following questions for each spiritual wellness-promoting behavior checked off above:

1. Type of activity (e.g., praying for others):

2. Which days this/each week (e.g., M, W, F):

3. How long each time (minutes):

4. Where (location):

5. With whom (e.g., a friend):

Youth's signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor's signature: _____ Date: _____

Congratulations! You've taken the first and most important step toward improving your spiritual wellness. Post your plan where you will see and track it each day (e.g., wall, mirror or desk) as a reminder of the goals you've set to achieve this week/month.

Improving yourself is a life-long process. It takes committing to small changes. You must be willing to keep working toward improving yourself. Focus on and celebrate the small gains you make each day, week and month. You can do it! Keep trying. Never quit!

Also never forget that God loves you, is always with you, and smiles on you in every effort to make the best YOU possible! Have faith in God. Ask Him for strength and perseverance to keep trying and be successful. And always give thanks to Jesus Christ and show your love of God, yourself and others in the world!

Spiritual Wellness Resources

Faith Connections: Spiritual Tools: <http://www.faithconnections.ca/spirituality>

How Can I Pray?: The Daily Examen: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray>

Life Teen: <https://lifeteen.com/blog/tag/spirituality/>

Our Daily Bread: Growing Closer to God: Spiritual Growth:
<https://odb.org/tag/spiritual-growth/>

Quest for Meaning: Spiritual Themes: <https://www.questformeaning.org/spiritual-reflections/spiritual-themes/>

Salesian Youth Spirituality: <http://www.salesianym.com/salesian-youth-spirituality.html>

Spiritual Development: <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/youth-development-research/spiritual-development/>

Spiritual Growth for Teens (Books): <https://www.cristianbook.com/page/teens/teen-christian-living/teen-books-on-spiritual-growth>

Spiritual Growth Workshop: <https://www.thoughtco.com/spiritual-growth-workshop-701025>

Spiritual Growth: <https://www.allaboutgod.com/spiritual-growth.htm>

Spiritual Practice Toolkit:
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/27713/spiritual-practice-toolkit>

Spiritual Reflections for Young People:
https://www.yinjes.org.au/icms_docs/167972_High_School_Conference_Resource.pdf

Ten Simple Spiritual Practice Ideas for Children & Youth: https://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/kintera-files/about-gbod/UR_10SimpleSpiritualPractices.pdf

The Spiritual Life of American Teenagers:
<https://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201607/spiritual-life-american-teenagers-30714>

Youth Spirituality: How Young People Change: <https://cra.org.au/youth-spirituality-how-young-people-change/>

In God's Image (IGI) Youth Feedback Survey

CODE: _____

Directions: Please circle one answer for each question below. We really want to know what you think about the In God's Image program. Please answer honestly. Thank you for your help!

	Not (none) at all	A little	Some	A lot
1) Did you like the IGI lesson?	1	2	3	4
2) Do you think this IGI lesson will help youth make better spiritual choices?	1	2	3	4
3) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your time praying, studying scripture, or meditating next month?	1	2	3	4
4) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your practicing key virtues like showing gratitude for what you've received from God and others next month?	1	2	3	4
5) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your attending religious services next month?	1	2	3	4
6) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your reaching out to help others in need next month?	1	2	3	4
7) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your physical activity next month?	1	2	3	4
8) Will this IGI lesson help you avoid alcohol use next month?	1	2	3	4
9) Will this IGI lesson help you avoid marijuana use next month?	1	2	3	4

10) Will this IGI lesson help you avoid cigarette smoking next month? 1 2 3 4

11) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your healthy eating next month? 1 2 3 4

12) Will this IGI lesson help you increase your sleep next month? 1 2 3 4

13) Will this IGI lesson help you avoid e-cigarettes next month? 1 2 3 4

14) What did you like BEST about the IGI lesson?

15) What did you like LEAST about the IGI lesson?

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