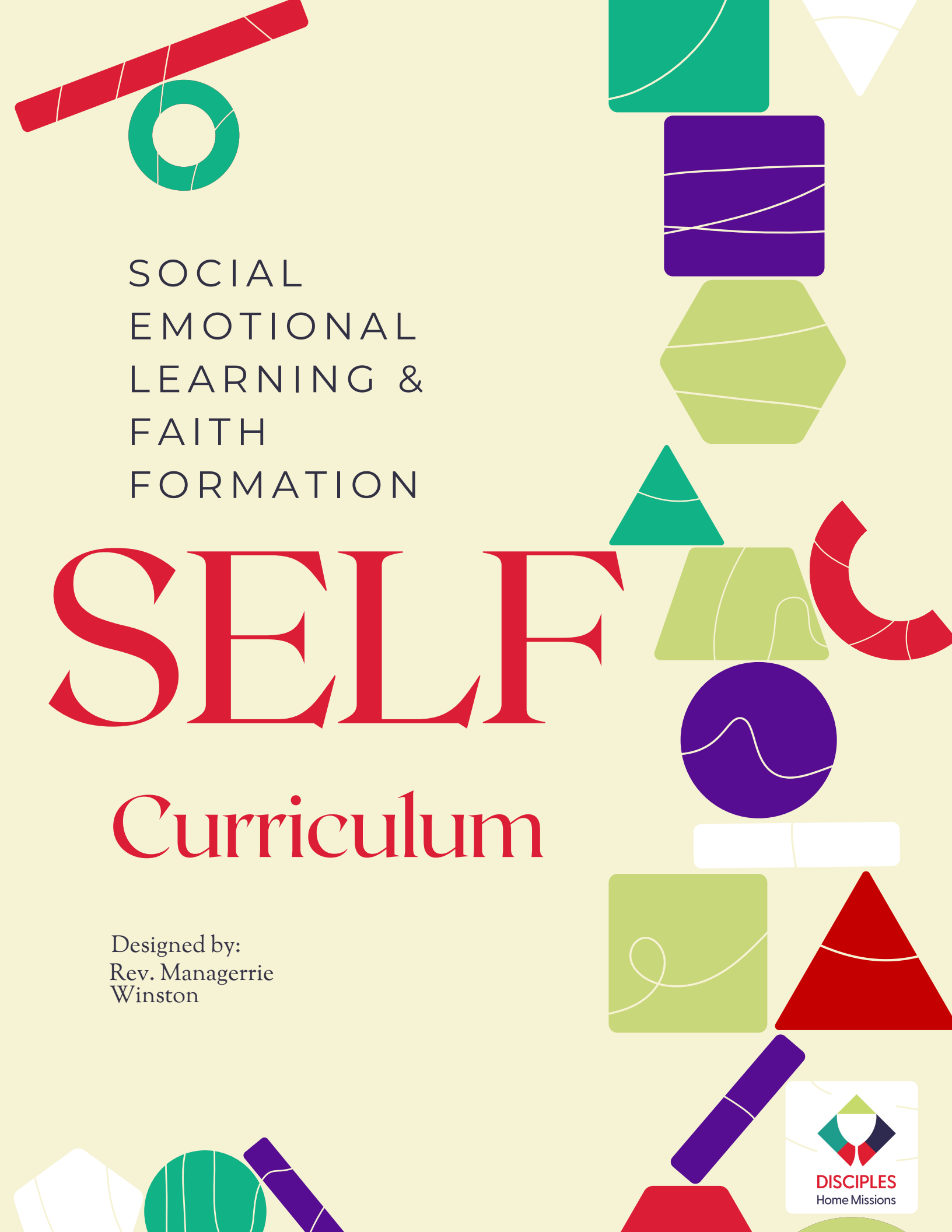


The background of the cover is a light beige color. It is decorated with various geometric shapes in red, green, and purple. In the top left, there is a red diagonal bar and a green circle. In the top right, there is a green square and a white triangle. In the middle right, there is a purple square, a green hexagon, a green triangle, a green trapezoid, a red C-shape, a purple circle, a white rectangle, a green square, and a red triangle. In the bottom left, there is a white triangle, a green circle, and a purple diagonal bar. In the bottom right, there is a purple diagonal bar, a red triangle, and a logo for Disciples Home Missions.

SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING &
FAITH
FORMATION

SELF

Curriculum

Designed by:
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Winston





Purpose and Vision

Welcome! This curriculum brings together Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and faith formation to empower youth to engage deeply with their spirituality while developing the emotional and social skills they need for life's transitions. In today's world, young people are looking for ways to express their faith in ways that are inclusive, compassionate, and just. This curriculum offers a space where everyone no matter their background, experiences, or perspectives can come to the table, be heard, and grow together in faith and love.

Inspired by Jesus' example of welcoming all, this curriculum builds skills that help youth live out their faith with empathy, resilience, and a commitment to justice. Each lesson is an invitation to explore who they are, understand how they relate to others, and discern how they can make a difference in the world around them.

Why Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Faith Formation Matter

The components of SEL are **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making** which align with core Christian values and are essential for creating a community where every voice is respected, and everyone is welcome. Each SEL component is an opportunity to bring faith into everyday life, equipping youth to connect with others meaningfully and live in ways that reflect the justice and compassion of the Gospel:

1. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the foundation of spiritual and emotional growth. When youth understand their emotions, strengths, and beliefs, they can connect more authentically with God and others.

- **Faith Connection:** Self-awareness allows youth to embrace their identity as children of God, uniquely created and deeply loved. This understanding fosters confidence and purpose, empowering them to bring their whole selves to the table and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

2. Self-Management

Managing emotions and stress is essential for building resilience, especially in a world filled with challenges. Self-management teaches youth to navigate difficult moments with grace and patience.

- **Faith Connection:** Through self-management, youth learn to rely on spiritual practices like prayer and meditation to stay grounded, even when facing adversity. This skill allows them to respond to life's ups and downs with faith and stability.

3. Social Awareness

Social awareness encourages empathy, respect for diversity, and an understanding of systemic issues that impact others. By developing social awareness, youth learn to see others through a lens of compassion and justice.

- **Faith Connection:** Jesus modeled radical inclusivity, welcoming everyone to the table regardless of status or background. Social awareness helps youth follow his example, recognizing the inherent dignity in all people and working to create a world where everyone feels valued and heard.

4. Relationship Skills

Strong, respectful relationships are the heart of a healthy community. Relationship skills help youth build connections based on trust, open communication, and support.

- **Faith Connection:** In faith communities, relationships are places to practice love, forgiveness, and encouragement. By building relationship skills, youth create supportive networks where all can grow together, reflect God's love, and lift each other up.

5. Responsible Decision-Making

Making responsible, ethical decisions is essential for living a life aligned with Christian values. Responsible decision-making teaches youth to consider how their actions impact others and to choose paths that reflect love, justice, and integrity.

- **Faith Connection:** By grounding decisions in prayer and reflection, youth learn to act with intention and compassion, knowing that their choices can bring about positive change. This practice of thoughtful decision-making reflects the commitment to justice and kindness that Jesus taught.

The Role of Spirituality and Social Justice

This curriculum includes special units on Spirituality and Social Justice, which deepen youth's understanding of how their faith connects to personal and societal transformation:

- **Spirituality:** Spirituality goes beyond belief; it's about cultivating a close, ongoing relationship with God. This unit encourages youth to explore practices that foster inner peace, purpose, and a sense of belonging with God. Embracing spirituality provides a secure foundation, helping youth bring their whole selves to every space they enter and reminding them of their inherent worth.
- **Social Justice:** Social justice is an extension of faith into the world, challenging youth to recognize and act against systems of inequality and oppression. In this unit, youth learn to see justice work as essential to living out the Gospel, understanding that their faith calls them to stand with the marginalized and to advocate for a fair and loving world where everyone is valued and included.

S.E.L.F. Curriculum Goals

- **Prepare Youth for Life's Transitions:** By combining SEL skills with faith, this curriculum equips youth to make thoughtful, grounded choices as they navigate major life changes.
- **Affirm Identity in Christ:** Through self-awareness and spirituality, youth develop a deep understanding of their unique identity in God's eyes, empowering them to approach life with confidence and a sense of purpose.
- **Build Compassionate Community:** Social awareness and relationship skills help youth form inclusive, supportive communities where all are valued, making the church a welcoming space for everyone.
- **Live Out Faith Through Action:** The S.E.L.F. curriculum inspires youth to bring their faith to life through action, empowering them to engage in social justice and to make compassionate, responsible choices that benefit their communities.





What to Expect Each Week

Each weekly session includes scripture, SEL activities, and discussions that foster reflection and growth. Youth are encouraged to apply these lessons in their daily lives, creating a cycle of continual learning and spiritual development:

- **Scripture and Reflection:** Weekly scripture passages ground each SEL theme in God's teachings, highlighting how these skills reflect God's love and justice.
- **Interactive Activities:** Engaging activities help youth practice SEL skills in real-life scenarios, bringing faith and emotional growth together in a hands-on way.
- **Guided Discussions:** Group discussions create a safe space for youth to share, listen, and build community, welcoming diverse perspectives and encouraging mutual respect.
- **Faith in Daily Life Practices:** Each week includes small, practical steps to help youth integrate SEL skills with faith, fostering habits that reflect compassion, integrity, and justice.

A Pathway to Lifelong Growth

This curriculum is a journey of growth and self-discovery, guiding youth to live out their faith with courage and love in a world that needs their voices. By combining SEL with a commitment to social justice and inclusivity, we create a space where every youth can come as they are, share their unique perspectives, and be part of a movement for a just and compassionate world. Embracing the values of Jesus, this curriculum empowers youth to be agents of change who welcome all, honor diversity, and work to build a world that reflects God's love and justice for everyone.



WEEK 1

Introduction to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
and Integrating Faith in Daily Life

Objective:

In this introductory session, youth will explore how social-emotional learning (SEL) skills — like self-awareness, empathy, and resilience — help them deepen their connection to faith and spirituality. The focus will be on understanding how these skills empower them to navigate daily life with grace, compassion, and purpose, while reflecting core Christian values.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

This passage encourages youth to think of social-emotional skills as fruits of a Spirit-led life. By practicing these qualities in daily life, they can live out their faith in a way that’s impactful and authentic.

Materials Needed

- Journals and pens (for reflection)
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Markers
- A large sheet of paper or whiteboard for group brainstorming
- Optional: Small items like stones, crosses, or candles for a personal reflection table.

Session Structure**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

- Begin with a brief, centering prayer, inviting God’s presence. Encourage each participant to silently ask for openness and courage to explore the connection between faith and SEL.

2. Introduction to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) (10 minutes)

- Explain that SEL involves developing self-awareness, empathy, resilience, and decision-making skills. Just as the “fruit of the Spirit” reflects qualities that help us live in alignment with God’s love, SEL skills help us live out our values, stay true to ourselves, and build strong relationships.
- Emphasize that growing in SEL skills is a lifelong process that enhances their faith by making it practical, relational, and transformative.

3. Activity: “What Do These Qualities Mean to Me?” (10 minutes)

- Pass out sticky notes or index cards. Have each participant write one or two qualities (like empathy, resilience, self-control) they admire and wish to strengthen in themselves. These might be qualities they associate with living a faithful, Spirit-led life.
- Ask volunteers to place their sticky notes on a large sheet or whiteboard and briefly share why they chose each quality.
- As a group, create a “qualities of faith” list to revisit in future weeks.

4. Connecting SEL and Faith in Daily Life (10 minutes)

- **Self-Awareness:** Explain that self-awareness involves understanding our emotions, motivations, and reactions. This allows us to better understand how God created us uniquely and to find meaning in our daily lives.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to take a few moments each morning to check in with themselves (e.g., “How am I feeling today? What do I need?”) and to invite God into those feelings with a short prayer.
- **Empathy:** Empathy is the ability to understand and share others’ feelings, which deepens our relationships and allows us to embody Jesus’ compassion.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to take a few seconds before responding to someone, thinking, “What might they be going through?” This small pause can help them respond with kindness, even in tense situations.
- **Resilience:** Resilience is the ability to navigate difficult emotions and situations with faith and perseverance. It’s about finding strength in God and believing in your ability to overcome challenges.
 - **Example Practice:** In moments of stress or frustration, take a deep breath, recite a favorite verse, or say a short prayer (e.g., “God, give me strength”).

5. Group Reflection and Sharing (10 minutes)

- Ask each youth to pick one SEL skill they feel drawn to strengthen in their life (e.g., empathy, resilience, self-awareness) and share one specific way they plan to practice it during the week.

Use these guiding questions:

- How does understanding our own emotions help us connect more deeply with God and others?
- What situations in our lives call for empathy or resilience, and how can faith help us respond?
- How does being intentional about these qualities bring us closer to living a Christ-centered life?

6. Activity: “Faith Footprints” (15 minutes)

- Hand out journals or sheets of paper. Ask each youth to draw a large footprint and write in it one way they can walk with intention this week, incorporating an SEL skill into their daily life.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Empathy:** “This week, I will listen to a friend without interrupting.”
 - **Resilience:** “When I feel anxious, I will remember Philippians 4:6-7 and breathe.”
 - **Self-Awareness:** “I will journal each evening to reflect on how I felt during the day and why.”

Allow a few minutes for youth to write and decorate their footprints, then invite them to share if they feel comfortable.

7. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

- Close by inviting each youth to silently ask for God’s help in living out their faith through these qualities this week. Emphasize that these are practices they can revisit daily, drawing on God’s strength and guidance.
- Lead a prayer that acknowledges each person’s unique strengths, asking for courage to act with empathy, self-awareness, and resilience in all they do.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **SEL Skills as Faith in Action:** The SEL skills we develop are practical ways to live out our faith every day, showing love, compassion, and understanding.
- **Daily Faith Practices:** Simple habits, like setting intentions, reflecting, or pausing to pray, allow us to stay grounded and present with God throughout the day.
- **Building Lasting Qualities:** By intentionally practicing empathy, resilience, and self-awareness, we are nurturing qualities that bring us closer to God’s vision for our lives.

Journaling Prompts for the Week

Encourage youth to reflect on these questions in their journals throughout the week:

- How did I feel when I practiced empathy, resilience, or self-awareness today?
- What emotions or situations were challenging for me, and how did my faith help me navigate them?
- How did these practices help me see God in myself and others?

This week lays the foundation for integrating SEL with faith, showing youth that practicing self-awareness, empathy, and resilience is both a spiritual and emotional journey. By embracing these skills, they begin to see their daily lives as opportunities to grow closer to God and reflect Christ’s love in their interactions and decisions.



WEEK 2

Self-Awareness – Embracing Identity & Culture

Objective:

Help youth explore and affirm their unique identities and cultural backgrounds as a vital part of their spiritual journey. By nurturing self-awareness, youth gain a stronger understanding of who they are and can embrace their God-given uniqueness, seeing their identity as a powerful contribution to their faith and the community.

Scripture: Psalm 139:13-14

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

This scripture reminds each of us that we are God’s intentional creation, celebrated and known fully. Recognizing our own identity is not just about self-acceptance; it’s about realizing that our uniqueness adds value to the world and our shared journey.

Materials Needed:

- Journals, pens, colored markers
- Magazines, scissors, glue, and paper (for collage activity)
- Mirror (optional) for self-reflection

Session Structure:**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

Begin with a prayer, inviting each person to embrace who they are and celebrate the diversity that enriches our community. Ask for God’s guidance in helping each of us see the beauty and purpose in our individuality.

2. Introduction to Self-Awareness and Identity (10 minutes)

Discuss how self-awareness involves recognizing and valuing our own emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Emphasize that our cultures, backgrounds, and stories are all part of who God created us to be. Encourage each youth to see their identity as an important part of God’s love and vision for the world.

3. Activity: “Identity Collage” (15 minutes)

Provide magazines, scissors, glue, and paper. Invite each participant to create a collage that reflects their personality, culture, and values. Encourage them to add words, colors, and images that resonate with their beliefs and experiences. This is a space for creative self-expression and a chance to celebrate what makes each person unique in God’s eyes.

4. Reflection and Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Encourage everyone to share one or two elements of their collage, explaining why they chose these symbols.

Reflective Questions:

- How does understanding our identity help us feel closer to God?
- In what ways can our culture, background, and unique qualities help us reflect God's image in the world?
- Discuss how being fully ourselves allows us to connect with God and with each other in more meaningful ways.

5. Faith in Daily Life Practice: "Mirror Reflection" (10 minutes)

Encourage youth to spend a few moments each day looking in a mirror and affirming their worth with words like, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," or "God created me with purpose." Invite them to notice moments throughout the week where they feel proud of who they are and how they bring that into the world.

6. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

End with a prayer, affirming that each person's identity is a gift from God. Pray for courage to live authentically, celebrating the qualities that make each person a reflection of God's diverse creation.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Self-Awareness as a Gift:** Recognizing our identity is a form of honoring God's creation and celebrating the value we each bring.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Every culture, background, and life experience adds richness to our community and strengthens our collective faith.
- **Daily Self-Awareness Practices:** Small acts, like affirming our worth, help us connect more deeply with God and live out our purpose.

Journaling Prompts:

- What part of my identity makes me feel proud?
- How does knowing I am "wonderfully made" affect how I see myself?
- How can I use my unique qualities to support others and show God's love?



WEEK 3

Social Awareness – Practicing Empathy & Understanding Others

Objective:

Develop empathy and help youth appreciate others' experiences, especially those who may be different. Social awareness teaches us to see others with compassion, listen deeply, and respect one another's stories, creating a more just and loving world.

Scripture: Romans 12:15-16

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another."

This passage reminds us that empathy—celebrating with others and supporting them in hard times—is at the heart of our faith. Understanding others' stories allows us to reflect Christ's love and create a community where everyone feels valued.

Materials Needed:

- Printed empathy scenarios or stories (real-life or fictional)
- Poster boards and markers
- Journals and pens

Session Structure:**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

Begin with a prayer for open hearts to better understand others, especially those who may feel unseen or misunderstood.

2. Introduction to Social Awareness and Empathy (10 minutes)

Explain that social awareness is about respecting others' emotions and perspectives. Empathy means stepping into others' experiences and responding with kindness. Share examples of how Jesus practiced empathy by uplifting those who felt alone or marginalized.

3. Activity: "Walk in Their Shoes" (15 minutes)

Distribute empathy scenarios to each participant, covering situations like bullying, family struggles, or feeling excluded. Ask them to reflect on how that person might feel and to consider how they would respond with empathy in that situation.

4. Reflection and Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Encourage each youth to share their scenario, what emotions came up for them, and how empathy might change their response.

Reflective Questions:

- What did you feel when putting yourself in this person's shoes?
- How can empathy change the way we interact in daily life?
- Discuss how empathy strengthens our community by teaching us to honor each person's story.

5. Faith in Daily Life Practice: "Pause for Empathy" (10 minutes)

Encourage youth to take a moment before responding to others and silently ask, "What might this person be going through?" Remind them to look for chances to practice empathy, listen deeply, and offer support.

6. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

Close by praying for compassionate hearts that welcome everyone's stories with empathy and understanding, honoring God's love for all.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Empathy as Connection:** Seeing others with empathy allows us to connect and support each other as Christ would.
- **Social Awareness as Daily Practice:** Taking time to consider others' feelings helps us respond with grace, patience, and kindness.
- **Living Faith Through Empathy:** True compassion involves sharing in others' experiences, both joyful and difficult.

Journaling Prompts:

- How did practicing empathy change my perspective?
- What situations this week reminded me to be more understanding?
- How does empathy bring me closer to following Jesus' example?



WEEK 4

Relationship Skills – Building Supportive and
Loving Connections

Objective:

Help youth build strong, supportive relationships based on respect, compassion, and communication. Developing these skills enables them to create a loving, inclusive community that reflects Christ's love for all.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..."

This scripture is a guide to forming meaningful, Christ-centered relationships. True love is selfless, supportive, and enduring, creating a space where everyone feels seen and supported.

Materials Needed:

- Rope or yarn
- Index cards and markers
- Journals

Session Structure:**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

Start with a prayer for open hearts, asking God to help each person build supportive, loving connections that reflect His love.

2. Introduction to Relationship Skills (10 minutes)

Talk about relationship skills like active listening, expressing care, and resolving conflicts with respect. Building relationships rooted in Christ's love means treating others with kindness and patience.

3. Activity: "Web of Connection" (15 minutes)

Sit in a circle. Using a ball of yarn, each person shares something they appreciate about another and tosses the yarn to them. This continues, creating a web that symbolizes our interconnectedness and the strength of our community.

4. Reflection and Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Ask the group:

- How does showing love and respect strengthen our community?
- What does a God & Faith centered friendship look like?

Share reflections on how these skills help us support each other.

5. Faith in Daily Life Practice: “Intentional Support” (10 minutes)

Encourage each person to perform one intentional act of kindness or support daily, reminding them that simple gestures reflect Christ’s love.

6. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

End with a prayer, asking God to guide each person in building relationships that are patient, kind, and inclusive, creating a loving community where everyone is welcomed.

This reimagined approach makes each session a time to honor individual identities, listen with empathy, and build loving connections that foster a space for everyone. It’s all about creating a just, inclusive world.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Love in Action:** Real love is shown through kindness, patience, and respect. Building relationships rooted in Christ’s love means actively supporting and caring for each other.
- **Strength in Community:** Just like the web we created with yarn, each connection adds to the strength of our community. When we appreciate and respect each other, everyone feels valued and included.
- **Handling Conflicts with Care:** Challenges in relationships are natural. With respect and open communication, we can work through disagreements in ways that strengthen our bonds and foster growth.

Journal Prompts

- How did I show love and respect in my relationships this week?
- How do I feel when someone listens to me or appreciates me?
- What does an inclusive, Christ-centered community mean to me?



WEEK 5

Self-Management – Cultivating Inner Strength and
Peace

Objective:

This week, we'll explore the power of self-management, which involves managing emotions, handling stress, and staying grounded in the face of challenges. Self-management is about creating inner peace so we can respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. By developing this skill, we become more resilient and can face life's ups and downs with a steady, compassionate heart rooted in faith.

Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

This scripture reminds us that, even in tough moments, we can turn to God to find a sense of peace and strength that goes beyond what the world offers.

Materials Needed

- Journals and pens
- Sticky notes
- Markers
- A list of grounding practices (deep breathing, mindfulness, prayer)
- A large sheet of paper or whiteboard for group brainstorming

Session Structure**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

- Begin with a grounding prayer, asking for calmness and an open heart. Invite each person to take a deep breath, letting go of any stress and opening themselves to a peaceful and centered space.

2. Introduction to Self-Management (10 minutes)

- Discuss how self-management involves managing our feelings, especially when life gets overwhelming. Explain that self-management doesn't mean ignoring difficult emotions but instead finding ways to understand and work through them. This is how we bring God's peace into our everyday lives.
- Emphasize that, as part of our faith journey, self-management helps us stay aligned with our values, respond thoughtfully to others, and bring a calming presence to our community.

3. Activity: “Naming Our Tools for Peace” (10 minutes)

- Hand out sticky notes. Ask each participant to write down a few practices or tools they currently use to stay calm, grounded, or manage their emotions (e.g., praying, breathing exercises, going for a walk).
- Invite youth to share their ideas, then add them to a large sheet or whiteboard. Discuss how each of these practices can help them stay centered in God’s love and respond to challenges with a steady heart.

4. Connecting Self-Management and Faith in Daily Life (10 minutes)

- **Deep Breathing:** Explain that deep breathing is a simple way to calm the mind and connect with God’s peace. It helps us to be present and pause before reacting.
 - **Example Practice:** In moments of stress, take a few deep breaths, inviting God into that space with a short prayer like, “God, help me find peace.”
- **Gratitude Practice:** Gratitude helps us reframe difficult situations and stay connected to God’s blessings.
 - **Example Practice:** Each evening, list three things you’re grateful for, thanking God for them. This helps shift focus away from stress and toward hope and appreciation.
- **Scripture Reflection:** Reading a comforting scripture helps ground us and reminds us of God’s presence.
 - **Example Practice:** When feeling anxious, repeat a favorite verse like Philippians 4:6-7 or another that brings peace.

5. Group Reflection and Sharing (10 minutes)

- Ask each participant to choose one self-management technique they’d like to practice this week.
- Use these guiding questions:
 - How does managing our emotions help us stay connected to God and others?
 - How can faith give us strength and calm in times of stress?
 - How does practicing self-management allow us to show up more fully in our lives?

6. Activity: “Peace in Practice” (15 minutes)

- Ask each youth to write down one self-management goal for the week (e.g., “I will pause and breathe when I feel stressed” or “I will practice gratitude daily”).
- Encourage them to decorate this as a reminder of their goal. If they feel comfortable, invite them to share their goal with the group.

7. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

- Close by praying for calm, resilience, and courage as they practice self-management. Remind everyone that managing emotions is a skill they can grow over time with God’s guidance.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Faith and Self-Management:** Managing our emotions is an act of faith, allowing us to navigate life’s challenges with peace and purpose.
- **Daily Faith Practices:** Simple practices like deep breathing, gratitude, and scripture reflection help us stay connected to God.
- **Building Resilience:** Practicing self-management strengthens our ability to stay grounded, especially during difficult times.

Journaling Prompts

- How did I feel when I practiced self-management today?
- What emotions or situations were challenging, and how did my faith help me navigate them?
- How did this practice help me feel more connected to God’s peace?



WEEK 6

Responsible Decision-Making – Choosing Wisely
and Compassionately

Objective:

This week, we'll explore responsible decision-making, which involves choosing actions that reflect our faith and values. Responsible decision-making helps us consider how our choices affect others, aligning our actions with our calling to bring love, compassion, and justice into the world.

Scripture: Matthew 7:12

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

This scripture reminds us that responsible choices are grounded in empathy and consideration for others. Every decision we make is a chance to reflect God's love.

Materials Needed

- Journals and pens
- Scenario cards with real-life decision-making situations
- Markers and index cards
- A large sheet of paper or whiteboard for group reflection

Session Structure**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection (5 minutes)**

- Open with a prayer, asking for wisdom, empathy, and courage as we explore decision-making. Encourage everyone to invite God's guidance in every choice they face.

2. Introduction to Responsible Decision-Making (10 minutes)

- Discuss how responsible decision-making involves thinking carefully about our actions and their impact on others. It's about aligning our choices with our faith and values, considering how we can serve, love, and bring justice through what we do.
- Emphasize that, by making mindful choices, we create a world that's more just, compassionate, and in line with God's love for everyone.

3. Activity: "What Would You Do?" (10 minutes)

- Hand out scenario cards with situations like standing up for someone being bullied, choosing honesty in a tough situation, or helping a friend in need.
- Invite each person to share how they would handle their scenario, considering the values they'd like to bring into the situation.

4. Connecting Decision-Making and Faith in Daily Life (10 minutes)

- **Pausing for Reflection:** Before making a decision, take a moment to consider how it aligns with God's call to love and justice.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to ask themselves, "Does this choice reflect kindness and respect?"
- **Seeking Wisdom:** Scripture and prayer help us discern what aligns with our faith and purpose.
 - **Example Practice:** When faced with a hard decision, invite God's guidance through prayer and reflect on a scripture that aligns with the situation.
- **Checking with Community:** Sometimes, responsible decision-making means seeking input from trusted friends or mentors.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to talk to someone they trust before making a difficult choice, considering how their advice can help.

5. Group Reflection and Sharing (10 minutes)

- Ask youth to reflect on a recent choice they made and how it aligned (or didn't) with their values. Discuss how responsible decision-making connects to living a Christ-centered life.
- **Guiding Questions:**
 - How does thoughtful decision-making allow us to reflect God's love?
 - How can we invite God into our choices, big and small?
 - How can our decisions serve others and make the world more just?

6. Activity: "Intentional Choices" (15 minutes)

- Ask each youth to write down one choice they want to make with intention this week, reflecting their values. Decorate these as reminders of how they can choose to serve others.
- Encourage them to share if they feel comfortable.

7. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

- Close by praying for wisdom, compassion, and strength to make choices that reflect God's love. Remind everyone that every decision is a chance to bring more kindness and justice into the world.

Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Faith and Decision-Making:** Responsible decisions are grounded in faith, love, and empathy.
- **Daily Faith Practices:** Pausing, seeking wisdom, and checking with community help us make choices that align with our values.
- **Creating Positive Change:** Thoughtful decisions bring justice and compassion to our relationships and communities.

Journal Prompts

- Think about a recent decision. Did it reflect your values of kindness and fairness? How might inviting God into the choice have influenced it?
- Describe a situation where you could make a compassionate choice. How might this choice impact others around you?
- What helps you pause and make thoughtful decisions? How can you bring more faith and intentionality into your choices this week?



WEEK 7 **OPTIONAL**

Embracing Spirituality, Social Justice, and
Responding to Oppression

Objective:

In this final week, we'll journey deeply into the heart of our faith's call to stand with and uplift all people, especially those who are marginalized or facing oppression. This week we explore spirituality as a source of inner strength, purpose, and resilience, and social justice as an expression of that spirituality. Together, we'll examine how faith calls us to actively create a world where love, fairness, and dignity are at the center, welcoming everyone as beloved and equal.

Scripture: Micah 6:8

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

This powerful verse calls us to live justly, embrace compassion, and walk humbly with God. It is a reminder that our faith is both an inward journey and an outward commitment to building a more just world.

Materials Needed

- Journals and pens
- Poster boards and markers
- Candles or a quiet space for reflection
- List of social justice issues for discussion (e.g., racism, poverty, discrimination, environmental justice)

Session Structure**1. Opening Prayer and Centering Reflection (5 minutes)**

- Begin with a grounding prayer, inviting everyone to open their hearts to God's presence and to one another. Ask for courage, wisdom, and compassion as we explore how spirituality and social justice are woven together in our lives.

2. Introduction to Spirituality as Inner Strength and Purpose (10 minutes)

- Discussion: Share that spirituality is about nurturing a deep connection with God that gives us peace, direction, and resilience. When we stay spiritually connected, we're better equipped to face life's challenges, stand against injustice, and embody the compassion and love that Jesus modeled.
- Explain that our spiritual practices—prayer, meditation, scripture reading, or simply being still in God's presence—help us cultivate a strong foundation. This foundation allows us to be steadfast allies for justice, using our faith as a source of strength in the face of adversity.

3. Understanding Social Justice as Faith in Action (10 minutes)

- Discussion: Discuss how social justice is the outward expression of our spirituality. It's not just about having faith but acting on it by working for a world where everyone is respected and treated fairly. Social justice means standing against systems that harm or exclude, and uplifting voices that often go unheard.
- Emphasize that social justice aligns with the teachings of Jesus, who welcomed the marginalized, spoke out against injustice, and showed compassion to all. Our faith invites us to carry on this work today by seeking fairness, peace, and dignity for all people.

4. Activity: "Creating Our Vision for Justice" (15 minutes)

- Provide poster boards and markers. Invite each person to create a "Vision for Justice" poster, using images, words, and symbols that represent their dreams for a world where everyone feels seen, valued, and loved. Encourage them to think about what justice looks like to them, in their communities and beyond.
- **Reflection Questions:**
 - What does a just world look like to you?
 - Who are the people or groups that inspire you to work for fairness?
 - How can our faith community support justice in tangible ways?

5. Faith as Strength for Facing Oppression and Lifting Others (10 minutes)

- **Discussion:** Discuss how our spirituality gives us resilience to face the injustice we see in the world and the strength to help lift those who experience oppression. Whether it's racism, poverty, gender discrimination, or environmental injustice, God calls us to stand against all forms of oppression and to actively work for freedom and dignity for everyone.
- Explore how faith equips us to see injustice clearly, to hold ourselves accountable, and to actively seek change, knowing that God is with us. When we face situations where people are marginalized or harmed by unjust systems, our faith reminds us that love calls us to action.

6. Connecting Spirituality, Social Justice, and Daily Life (15 minutes)

- **Discussion of Practices:**

- **Prayer as Fuel for Justice:** Share that prayer is a way to renew our spirit, ask for courage, and align ourselves with God's love and justice.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to create a daily prayer for justice, such as "God, help me to see the world through a lens of compassion and fairness. Show me where I can be of service."
- **Listening as an Act of Solidarity:** Listening deeply to others, especially those who have faced oppression, helps us understand how we can be allies and advocates.
 - **Example Practice:** Set aside time to listen to others' stories without judgment, asking, "How can I show up for you?"
- **Community Building:** Forming inclusive spaces where everyone feels welcome and supported is a powerful act of social justice.
 - **Example Practice:** Encourage youth to invite others into conversations about faith and justice, especially people who may feel excluded or unseen.

7. Group Reflection and Sharing (10 minutes)

- **Reflection Questions:**

- How does your faith encourage you to stand against oppression?
- In what ways does spirituality give you strength to show up for justice?
- How can we, as a faith community, work together to create a world that reflects God's love for all people?

8. Closing Reflection and Prayer (5 minutes)

- Close with a prayer for unity, strength, and a shared commitment to justice. Invite everyone to reflect on how they can carry forward the lessons of this week, holding in their hearts a commitment to compassion, equity, and faith in action.

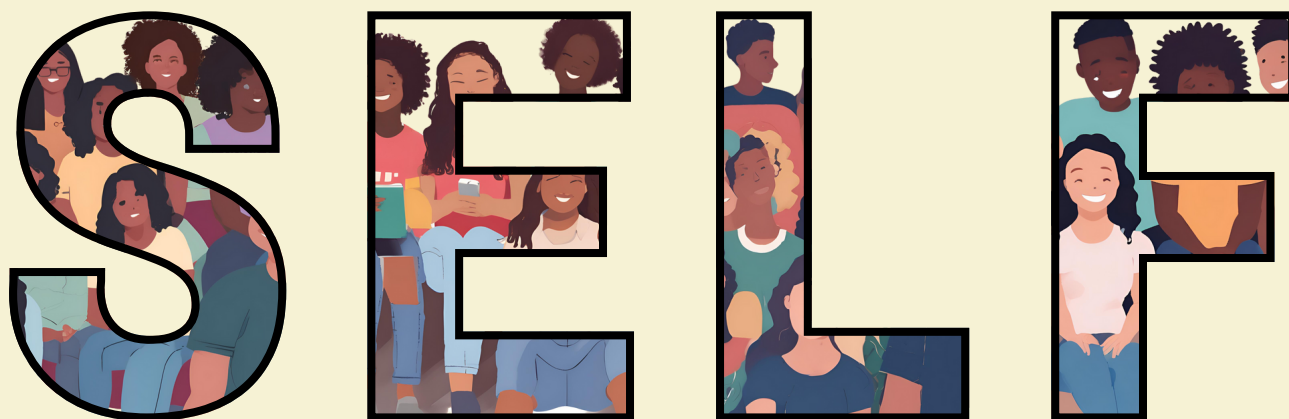
Key Takeaways for Youth

- **Spirituality as a Foundation for Justice:** Our connection to God grounds us and fuels our commitment to stand for justice, resilience, and love.
- **Justice as a Living Faith:** True faith is active, calling us to lift others up, speak out against injustice, and create inclusive spaces where everyone is honored.
- **Building a World that Reflects God's Love:** Every small act of justice and compassion brings us closer to a world that values everyone's dignity and worth.

Journaling Prompts

- How has spirituality helped me feel stronger in the face of challenges or unfairness?
- How can I support others who may experience oppression or marginalization?
- What steps can I take to make my community a more inclusive, welcoming place?

This final week invites us to see our faith not just as a personal journey but as a call to act. When spirituality and social justice come together, they empower us to build a world that mirrors God's radical love—a world where everyone is truly welcome, valued, and uplifted. Each of us has a unique role to play, and every small act of love and justice can create ripples of change. As we leave this series, let's carry forward a commitment to live out our faith in ways that honor everyone at the table and make room for those who have yet to feel included.



Thank you for using the SELF Curriculum for youth and young adults. Suggested donation of \$100 to support this ministry would be greatly appreciated. For more information related to this ministry contact Rev. Managerrie Winston @ mwinston@dhm.disciples.org