

Tiny Holy Things for Teens

Finding Sacred in our Ordinary Lives

6 Week Series

Welcome to the 12 Tiny Things Study Series!

Below you will find six weeks of content you can use with youth or teens in your life or congregation. Each week includes a theme, Bible verse, discussion questions and tiny spiritual practices to try.

Consider asking one member of your congregation to share a 5-10 minute story or personal reflection based on the theme and Bible verse. Part of the time can be working through the theme in large group. Part of the time can be spent in small groups reflecting on how the micro-spiritual practices went from the week prior and working through the discussion questions from the current theme. It will work well online or in person.

This packet is a starting point. Take these elements and craft a series that works for you.

You can find additional resources, including meditations, daily calendars, and additional small group questions at 12tinythings.com/resources. There are also discussion questions at the end of every chapter in 12 Tiny Things the book.

If you'd like to order multiple copies of 12 Tiny Things for your participants, or your church library, please contact 1517 media at 877-373-0706 or booksales@1517.media.

The most urgent question of the time: How much is enough?

—Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land*

Maybe you are searching in the branches for what only exists in the roots.

—Rumi

Week 1

Space

An invitation to enough

Theme: Saying no to one thing is saying yes to the possibility of another.

Bible Verse: Matthew 8:18

Jesus was fully human. He took time away. As his reputation as a healer grew, so did the crowds and their demands of him. There are moments in the Gospels we see him carve out space to be alone and to be with his disciples to recharge so that he could be effective in his ministry.

Tell a story about a time when you felt like you were enough.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the lies you tell yourself about not being enough? Fill in the blank:

I'm not [blank] enough.

Now replace that with a mantra that is true. Fill in the blank:

I am [blank].

2. What do you need to give up to feel more rested? Take some time to really chart how you spend your time in a week. What do you notice?
3. Where in your life do you want more space? What do you have to say no to in order to get it? What possibility does that open up for you?

Tiny Things

- Do a one-day social media detox.
- Massage a part of your body you struggle to love.

Body Practices

- Turn your hands facing palms up.
- Find the fetal position and rest.

Week 2

Spirituality

An invitation to attention

Themes: Tend to the things you want to grow.

There is no keeping score.

Spirituality is in the noticing.

Bible Verse: Ephesians 3:14-19

Living as a spiritual being means being comfortable with the things that surpass our understanding. We can dwell in mystery. We can leave room for the unexplainable. We can be enchanted by that which is not of this world. We can be awed by the height and depth of God's love being far bigger than our minds can imagine. Rooted in love, paying attention to the vast universe, our spiritual being can thrive.

Tell a story about a time when you saw a person, place or idea with new eyes.

Discussion Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you catch yourself keeping score?
What are you doing?
Who are you with?
Where are you?
2. When you feel most connected to yourself, to others and to the earth?
3. Choose one of your five senses that you underutilize: _____
4. What or who gets too much of your attention? Where could you choose to place that attention instead? What might that shift?
5. What are you doing when you are able to live in the here and now?

Tiny Things

- Charge your phone away from your bedroom.
- Close your eyes and take three conscious breaths.

Body Practices

- Light a candle and watch the flame.
- Pull your chin one inch toward your throat and reach the crown of your head toward the sky.

Week 3

Nature

An invitation to wildness

Theme: Look to wildness. There is healing there.

Bible Verse: Genesis 1:24-31

We are creatures. We are created in the context of the web of life. God looks at us and tells us we are very good. When we engage with God's good creation, we can remember we, too, are creatures being held in a vast universe. Our relationship to God's creation invites us to live out of a sense of who we are and whose we are.

Tell a story about feeling truly alive outside.

Discussion Questions

1. Name a few beautiful things.
2. Where are when you appreciate the wild of nature?
Where are you?
Who are you with?
What are you doing?
When you are filled with a sense of wonder?
3. How does engaging in the healing of nature feed your faith journey?

Tiny Things

- Go outside and touch something wild.
- Look all the way up to the sky.

Body Practices

- Dance.
- Close your eyes and allow your eyeballs to relax.

Week 4

Communication

An invitation to see

Theme: Healthy communication fosters seeing and being seen.

Bible Verse: Mark 8:22-25

Jesus heals the blind man with great compassion. He takes him away from the crowd, leading him by the hand. He uses his own spit, a sign of deep intimacy. He asks the man for feedback, and the man was honest in saying he couldn't see clearly quite yet. The second time worked. Seeing clearly takes time, back and forth, communication, and mutuality. It takes a commitment to relationship and compassionate communication.

Being listened to is so closely connected to being loved that most of us feel like they are one in the same. Tell a story about a time when you felt heard.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you help those around you feel heard?
2. Who in society are you taught not to see? What problems are you taught to ignore?
3. List five people who see you clearly, with one word they would use to describe you.
4. Who is someone you want to communicate with better? What are three things you could change to set you up for success?
5. How do you use technology to enhance and deepen intimacy that is already established? How are you leaning on it too hard, instead of doing the hard work of sacred communication?

Tiny Things

- Hand write a letter to someone you care about.
- Make eye contact.

Body Practices

- Pick your toes up and place them back down on purpose.
- Lay on your back on the floor and put your legs up the wall.

Week 5

Home

An invitation to gratitude

Theme: Gratitude, embodied, is to find home within.

Bible Verse: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Part of gratitude is being at peace with what is instead of longing for what isn't. How can we dwell in the moment without trying to manipulate it? How can we find a home in the season we find ourselves knowing that the only constant is change?

Tell a story about when you felt, literally or figuratively, far away from home.

Discussion Questions

1. What people, places, words represent home for you?
2. What is one thing you can do to feel more at home in your body? More grateful for your body so you will have a sense of home wherever you go?
3. When do you feel the alignment of your inner life and outer life?
4. What is a tiny thing you can do to bring a sense of home to the place you live?
5. How does cultivating gratitude feed your faith journey?

Tiny Things

- Write down three things for which you are grateful.
- Smell your food before you taste it.

Body Practices

- Pick your shoulders up to your ears and roll them back down your back.
- Notice where your tongue is in your mouth and relax it.

Week 6

Community

An invitation to vulnerability

Theme: In vulnerability, we find community.

Bible Verse: Genesis 2: 18-25

God takes time forming a suitable partner for Adam. God asks for Adam's input. Adam can recognize when he sees his companion. This part of the creation story shows us that the health of our relationships matters to God. God creates as a social beings and wants our relationships to thrive. Taking time to build community is a worthy investment.

Tell a story about a time when you allowed yourself to feel vulnerable in community.

Discussion Questions

1. Where are you, and who are you with when you feel like you belong?
2. List five people who see you clearly with one word they would use to describe you.
3. What groups are you a part of? What role do you play? Which forms of intimacy – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual – come naturally to you? Who in your life provides that intimacy – a safe space to explore your desires?
4. What are three ways you can invest more fully in your local community?
5. How can building community feed your faith journey?

Tiny Things

- Introduce yourself to a neighbor, whom you don't yet know.
- Look into where your food came from.

Body Practices

- Hum.
- Lotion your hands mindfully.