

# Rest & Renew

For teens ages **12–14** · about **45–60 minutes** · Moral Issues for Teens · Personal Integrity & Character · game **Rest or Wreck** · built on **Mark 6:31, Philippians 4:8, and Ecclesiastes 11:9**

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Your students live in a world that never powers down. School, sports, group chats, streams, and side hobbies stack until "rest" means collapsing on a screen. Some are burned out by twelve; some escape into games and feeds until homework, sleep, and prayer get pushed to the edges. This session isn't anti-fun — it's pro-wisdom. God built rest into creation. Recreation should refresh body, mind, and spirit for His work. When a good gift starts mastering you, it becomes wreck-reation.

## Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students are exhausted, some are addicted to screens, some feel guilty every time they enjoy something. Ask the Spirit for balance — joy without denial, boundaries without shame. You are teaching stewardship of time and mind, not launching a war on hobbies.

## The heart of the lesson

Recreation — literally re-creation — is meant to renew you. God rested after creation (Genesis 2:2–3). Jesus told worn-out disciples to come away and rest (Mark 6:31). Elijah's burnout was met with sleep and food before a sermon (1 Kings 19). The root issue underneath wreck-reation is often trying to fill God-shaped needs with endless input: significance from likes, escape from stress, identity from a game rank or fandom.

*Recreation should refresh you — don't let it become wreck-reation.*

Symptoms in a 12–14 life: sleep sacrificed for "one more," irritability when a device is taken away, grades slipping, family conversations replaced by headphones, choosing content you'd be ashamed to watch with a grandparent, and fun that leaves you emptier than before. The worldly pattern says you deserve to numb out. God's pattern says rejoice in youth *and* remember judgment (Eccl. 11:9) — enjoy life without letting it master you (1 Cor. 6:12).

# *Philippians 4:8 is a filter for your mind — not a kill switch for joy.*

## **MARK 6:31**

"And he said to them, **Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.**"

## **PHILIPPIANS 4:8**

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable... **think about these things.**"

## **How the session flows**

- 1 Name the pace.** Where does rest get lost? ~8 min
- 2 Teach renew vs. wreck.** Scripture on rest, joy, and self-control. ~12 min
- 3 Play the game.** "Rest or Wreck" on screen. ~12–15 min
- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, private reflection. ~5 min
- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home practice. ~15 min
- 6 Close with a plan.** Prayer and one renew habit for the week. ~8 min

Screen for the game, printed cards and worksheets, pens. No need to shame specific games or platforms — teach principles students can apply anywhere.

# Leading it, part by part

## Name the pace

Ask: when do you feel most tired — body, brain, or soul? What do you reach for to "rest" — phone, snack, game, show, sleep you never get? Let them answer honestly without turning it into a confession circle. Land this: modern life trains us to confuse stimulation with rest. Scrolling is input, not recovery. God's rest is intentional — come away on purpose.

## Teach renew vs. wreck

Define recreation biblically: gifts for joy that refill you for worship, school, family, and service. Walk through Mark 6:31 — even Jesus' team needed withdrawal. Teach Philippians 4:8 as a content filter: true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable. Not everything trending passes the list. Teach Ecclesiastes 11:9 without killing joy — young people *should* enjoy life, but God will bring judgment into account; mature fun keeps eternity in view.

Name wreck-reaction: when a lawful thing masters you (1 Cor. 6:12). Habits form in small repeats — decide ahead of time what renews you this week (walk, sport, music, reading, time with believers) and what wrecks you (endless scroll, rage-quit nights, content that dirties your mind). God's way out: Spirit-empowered self-control, Scripture renewal (Rom. 12:2), community that doesn't mock rest, and repentance when fun became escape.

## Play the game

Run "Rest or Wreck" twelve to fifteen minutes. Round 1 sorts renewals from wrecks; Round 2 anchors Bible rest stories; Round 3 tackles schedules and FOMO; Round 4 drills verses. Bridge afterward: winning points is fun; winning a sustainable rhythm is the actual goal.

## Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card. Promise plainly that nobody is collecting it. Give five quiet minutes for students to name what wrecks them — without saying it aloud to the room. Protect the silence.

## Worksheet

Reinforce verses, T/F on wreck-reaction, one Philippians 4:8 application, one weekly habit. Pairs or homework both work.

## Close with a plan

Invite each student to pick one *renew* habit and cut one *wreck* pattern before Friday. Pray for sleep, for parents negotiating screen limits, and for wisdom to enjoy God's gifts without being owned by them. Offer leaders for students whose hobbies already feel compulsive.

## Take it further

- Why did God rest after creation, and what does that teach us? (Gen. 2:2–3)
- Why did Jesus tell the disciples to come away and rest? (Mark 6:31)
- What is the Philippians 4:8 filter, and how would you use it for music, shows, or games?
- What does Ecclesiastes 11:9 teach about enjoying youth and accountability?
- What does 1 Corinthians 6:12 mean when Paul says he will not be mastered by anything?
- How is wreck-reaction different from healthy recreation?
- What are signs that a hobby or screen habit is wrecking you?
- What is one renew habit you will practice this week?

## A final word

Teens need permission to rest and courage to set limits. Give them both. The goal isn't a joyless schedule — it's a life where recreation actually re-creates them to love God and people better. When they learn the difference between renew and wreck, they'll still have fun — but fun won't have them.