

# LEADER REFLECTION

*\*Be sure to read the “**Leaders Start Here**” guide in advance of Session 1. If you haven’t read it yet, set this aside and do it now!*

We all have anxiety.

Saying it out loud can take away some of its power. This week you’ll be introducing anxiety and teaching students how to see it and name it.

Naming is critical because when we ignore our symptoms or feelings of anxiety, the result can be depression or unhealthy habits of coping. However, anxiety doesn’t have to lead us down a dangerous path. In Mark 6:45–51, Mark 4:35–41, and many other stories throughout the Bible, we notice that while God doesn’t usually place the anxiety on people’s shoulders, God is present and stays with them in their most anxious moments. In these two passages, Jesus actually *gets in the boat* and then *stays in the boat* with the anxious disciples.

And here’s more good news: Anxiety can become one of God’s greatest growth tools—changing the way we view ourselves and the world around us—as we ask ourselves two questions:

*Where is God at work in the midst of my anxious moments?*

*What might God—or anxiety—be trying to tell me?*

## Practice for healthy leadership

This week and throughout this series, make space to practice the Daily Replay you'll be teaching students. There is no substitution for personal experience, especially when it comes to prayer.

The Daily Replay is based on the Ignatian Prayer of Examen, and adapted for teenagers. Find out more about this prayer practice at [www.ignatianspirituality.com](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com).

If you find apps helpful to remind and guide you through your own practice of the prayer, search your app store for Ignatian Spirituality's "[Reimagining the Examen](#)," or "[Examen](#)" from FULLER studio.

## How to help a student in crisis:

1. If a student is in physical danger or might be a danger to others, let them know that it is your desire and responsibility to help keep them safe. Don't hesitate to call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(1-800-273-8255\)](#) for advice or 911 in an emergency.
2. Ask the student to practice slow breathing for a few moments to calm down. Try "box breathing," meaning breathing in for 3 counts, holding 3 counts, breathing out 3 counts, and pausing 3 counts.
3. Listen first. Act second. Unless the student is in immediate danger (see #1), don't respond too soon without hearing more about what's going on.
4. Collaborate with the student to identify one or two helpful and doable next steps they can take.
5. Follow up. Don't assume everything has gone smoothly and is resolved. Check in within a few days, and withhold judgment if everything hasn't gone according to plan. Take the student's lead before offering more help. Sometimes listening in a crisis moment is all someone needs to move out of crisis.
6. If a student's crisis is becoming overwhelming, unending, or appears to be worsening, it is probably time for additional help. Work together with the student to identify how they can access more help. A licensed counselor or therapist may be a good next step to consider.

Visit [fulleryouthinstitute.org/anxiousworld](http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/anxiousworld) for more information and practical advice on young people and anxiety.

## How you can help your students grow this week:

- If you use texts or social media with students to encourage participation, let them know this series is coming and give them a preview of the week's topic. We've provided premade social media images in the folder of resources for Session 1.
- A few days after your group meeting, you might want to send out a reminder about the Daily Replay and how to practice it.
- Communicate with parents ahead of time about the series and about this week's content. We've provided a suggested parent communication that corresponds to each session, and we've also produced podcast episodes you can share with parents via email, social media, or text.
- Listen to this week's [Faith in an Anxious World Parenting Podcast](#) yourself! Find [Episode 1](#) to hear Kara Powell and Aaron Rosales talk on the themes of this session.

## Final prep for this week:

- Read carefully through the script and make any needed adjustments based on your context and timeframe.
- Practice using the slide deck and make any needed changes.
- Watch the video and decide how you'll use it.
- Print enough **Look inside** small group discussion guides for each leader to have one (email it out in advance if possible and ask them to review ahead of time).
- If your students struggle to bring their Bibles to your meetings, print the Bible passage sheets for each small group leader. Find these at the end of each **Look up** session.
- Print enough **Look around** student take-home sheets for each student to have one.
- Check out the "You'll need" list at the start of the **Look up** large group teaching guide and at the top of the **Look inside** small group discussion guide (note they are separate lists).