

THE ANCHORED MINDSET

TEEN EDITION

FACILITATOR GUIDE

An 8-Session Mini-Course

Gary W. Boyd, PhD

The Anchored Institute

Contents

Part One: Before You Begin

- Welcome to the Facilitator Guide
- Course Overview
- Preparing Your Environment
- Understanding Your Audience
- Handling Tough Questions

Part Two: Session-by-Session Guide

- Session 1: Your Operating System
- Session 2: When America Broke
- Session 3: The Mindset Menu
- Session 4: Growth Mindset—Good But Not Enough
- Session 5: The Anchored Mindset
- Session 6: Why Anchored Wins
- Session 7: Getting Anchored
- Session 8: Living Anchored

Part Three: Additional Resources

- Discussion Question Bank
- Scripture Memory Cards
- Parent Communication Template

PART ONE: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome to the Facilitator Guide

Thank you for investing in the next generation. This guide will help you lead teenagers through *The Anchored Mindset: Teen Edition*—an 8-session mini-course designed to help young people develop a biblical framework for thinking, living, and flourishing.

This isn't a script to read. It's a toolkit to help you facilitate meaningful conversations. The goal isn't to lecture—it's to guide discovery. Teenagers engage best when they're thinking, not just listening.

Course Overview

The Anchored Mindset mini-course follows the structure of the book:

- Sessions 1-2: The Problem — What mindsets are and why America's collective mindset has broken down
- Sessions 3-4: The Options — Survey of mindset theories, focusing on the Growth Mindset
- Sessions 5-6: The Solution — Introduction to the Anchored Mindset and why it's superior
- Sessions 7-8: The Practice — How to get anchored and live it out daily

Each session is designed for 45-60 minutes:

- Opening (5 min): Welcome, prayer, recap
- Teaching (15-20 min): Present key concepts
- Discussion (15-20 min): Process through questions
- Application (10-15 min): Practical takeaways
- Closing (5 min): Prayer, preview next week

Preparing Your Environment

Physical space matters more than you might think. Consider:

- Seating: Circles or semicircles work better than rows. You want eye contact.
- Distractions: Minimize phones if possible. Consider a basket at the door.
- Comfort: Appropriate temperature, good lighting, comfortable seating.
- Materials: Student workbooks, pens, whiteboard or flip chart, Bible.



PRO TIP: Food Helps

Teenagers think better when fed. Even simple snacks create a welcoming atmosphere. Consider a consistent tradition—donuts, chips, whatever fits your context.

Understanding Your Audience

Teenagers ages 13-18 span a huge developmental range. Keep in mind:

- Younger teens (13-15): More concrete thinking, need more examples and activities
- Older teens (16-18): More abstract reasoning, can handle deeper discussion
- Mixed groups: Pair older with younger for some activities; use small groups

Also consider the spiritual backgrounds in your group:

- Some may have grown up in church and know the Bible well
- Some may be exploring faith for the first time
- Some may be skeptical or have been hurt by church experiences

The book is written to work for all these situations—it doesn't assume prior knowledge but doesn't talk down to those who have it.

Handling Tough Questions

Teenagers ask hard questions. That's good—it means they're thinking. Here's how to handle them:



WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER

Say so. "That's a great question. I don't know the answer, but let's find out together."

Never fake expertise you don't have. Teens can smell inauthenticity instantly.

Follow up next week with what you learned.

Common tough questions and approaches:

- "How do you know the Bible is true?" — Acknowledge it's a fair question. Point to manuscript evidence, fulfilled prophecy, changed lives. Recommend the EVIDENCE curriculum for deeper study.
- "Why is there so much suffering?" — Don't give glib answers. Acknowledge the pain is real. Point to the biblical framework: suffering entered through sin, is being redeemed through Christ, will end completely.
- "What about other religions?" — Treat with respect. Acknowledge sincere seekers in other traditions. Explain why Christianity's claims are unique (historical resurrection, grace not works).
- "I've tried this faith stuff and it didn't work." — Listen first. Understand their experience. Distinguish between God and disappointing experiences with Christians or church.

PART TWO: SESSION-BY-SESSION GUIDE

SESSION 1: Your Operating System

Book Reference: Introduction + Chapter 1

Key Concepts:

- Everyone has a mindset—a mental operating system running in the background
- Your mindset affects goals, emotions, relationships, performance, adaptability, satisfaction
- You didn't choose your current mindset, but you can change it
- There's a superior mindset available—the Anchored Mindset

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "When your phone or computer starts running slow or acting weird, what's usually the problem?" (Lead toward: software issues, too many apps running, needs an update, etc.)
"Today we're talking about the software running in your brain."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

- Define mindset: set of attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that shape perception
- Walk through the 6 areas mindset affects (use examples from students' lives)
- Discuss where mindsets come from: family, experiences, culture, media, peers
- Introduce the book's premise: there's a superior mindset available

Discussion Questions:

- If you had to describe your current mindset in three words, what would they be?
- Which of the six areas (goals, emotions, etc.) is most affected by how you think?
- Where do you think your current mindset came from?
- What would change if you could upgrade your mental operating system?

Application:

This week, notice your automatic thoughts. When something happens—good or bad—pay attention to what you think immediately. Write down 3-5 of these automatic thoughts in your workbook.



FACILITATOR NOTE

This session sets the tone for the whole course. Don't rush it.

Make sure students understand what a mindset IS before moving to what's wrong with America's mindset next week.

SESSION 2: When America Broke

Book Reference: Chapter 2

Key Concepts:

- Pete's truck looked strong but collapsed under real weight
- America's collective mindset looked strong but collapsed under COVID pressure
- The statistics on mental health decline—especially for teens—are devastating
- The crisis wasn't created by COVID; it was exposed by COVID

Opening Activity (5 min):

Show (or describe) a picture of something that looks sturdy but isn't. Ask: "Have you ever had something break that you thought was strong?" Let a few students share examples.

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

- Tell Pete's truck story (it's in the book—read it or summarize it)
- Make the connection: Pete's truck = America's mindset
- Walk through the mental health statistics (use the Real Talk box from the book)
- Discuss the "race to the bottomless"—distraction, declining skills, influencer worship

SENSITIVE CONTENT

This session includes suicide statistics. Be aware that students may have personal connections to these issues.

Watch for students who seem withdrawn or distressed.

Have resources available (counselor contact, crisis line numbers) just in case.

Discussion Questions:

- Did any of those statistics surprise you? Which ones felt most true to your experience?
- What do you think caused America's mental health to decline so sharply?
- Do you think your generation is equipped to handle pressure? Why or why not?
- What gives you hope that things could be different?

Application:

This week, evaluate one area of your life where you might be "polished on the outside but weak underneath." Write honestly in your workbook about where you might be more fragile than you appear.

SESSION 3: The Mindset Menu

Book Reference: Chapter 3

Key Concepts:

- There are 165+ published mindset theories—lots of smart people working on this
- Top 10 theories each capture something true about how the mind works
- None of them can answer life's ultimate questions
- The best secular options are helpful but incomplete

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "If you could get advice about life from any expert—psychologist, philosopher, influencer, anyone—who would you choose and why?" Let a few share.

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

- Explain that 165+ mindset theories exist (emphasize: smart people care about this)
- Walk through the Top 10 briefly (don't spend too long on each)
- Highlight what they get right: growth is possible, beliefs matter, emotions are important, etc.
- Highlight what they all miss: ultimate purpose, meaning, death, forgiveness, hope

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the 10 mindset theories have you heard of before?
- Which one resonates most with your own experience?
- What questions about life do you have that none of these theories seem to answer?
- Why do you think so many smart people are working on this topic?

Application:

This week, pay attention to mindset advice you receive—from teachers, social media, friends, wherever. Note in your workbook: What worldview is behind this advice? What questions does it leave unanswered?

SESSION 4: Growth Mindset—Good But Not Enough

Book Reference: Chapter 4

Key Concepts:

- Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset is the best secular option available
- Fixed vs. growth: believing abilities can develop through effort
- Six genuine benefits of growth mindset
- Five limitations: can't tell you what to grow toward, why growth matters, ultimate questions, forgiveness, subject to revision

Opening Activity (5 min):

Quick poll: "Raise your hand if you've ever been told 'you're just not a math person' or 'you're not athletic' or something similar." Then: "Raise your hand if you've ever proven one of those labels wrong."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

- Explain fixed vs. growth mindset with concrete examples
- Walk through the 6 benefits (embracing challenges, persistence, etc.)
- Acknowledge: this is genuinely helpful—don't dismiss it
- Then explain the 5 limitations—especially: it can't tell you what to grow toward



BALANCE IS KEY

Don't trash the Growth Mindset. It's genuinely valuable.

The goal is to show its limitations, not to dismiss it entirely.

Students who've benefited from growth mindset thinking should feel validated, not attacked.

Discussion Questions:

- In what areas of your life do you have more of a fixed mindset?
- Where have you seen growth mindset make a real difference?
- What questions do you have that the Growth Mindset can't answer?
- If you could grow in any direction, what would you want to grow toward? Why?

Application:

This week, identify one area where you've had a fixed mindset and try applying growth mindset thinking. Note what happens. Also note: does growth mindset give you purpose, or just skills?

SESSION 5: The Anchored Mindset

Book Reference: Chapter 5

Key Concepts:

- "Anchored" doesn't mean stuck—think USS Zumwalt, not a little boat
- The Anchored Mindset = a biblical mindset = having the mind of Christ
- Foundation: God as Creator, Christ as Advocate, Spirit as Teacher, Bible as Guidebook
- This addresses everything the secular theories miss

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "When you hear the word 'anchored,' what image comes to mind?" (Most will say a boat.) Then describe the USS Zumwalt. "An anchor doesn't limit a ship—it stabilizes it to go anywhere."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

- Reframe "anchored" with the warship illustration
- Define the Anchored Mindset: biblical mindset, mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16)
- Walk through the four foundation elements
- Show how this addresses what Growth Mindset can't: purpose, meaning, forgiveness, hope

Discussion Questions:

- What's your reaction to the idea of a "biblical mindset"? Interest? Skepticism? Both?
- What would change if you had access to real forgiveness, guidance, and hope?
- What questions would you need answered before you could seriously consider this?
- How is the USS Zumwalt image different from how you usually think about being "anchored"?

Application:

This week, read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of the Gospel of John. Note in your workbook: What claims does Jesus make about himself? What questions does this raise?

SESSION 6: Why Anchored Wins

Book Reference: Chapter 6

Key Concepts:

- 8 dimensions where Anchored Mindset proves superior
- Foundation, Answers, Relationship, Mental Health, Character, Relationships, Thinking, Practical Living
- This isn't just opinion—it can be evaluated on evidence
- Teen-specific applications for each dimension

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "How do you usually decide if something is true or good? What criteria do you use?" Get a few answers. "Today we're going to evaluate two mindsets on 8 specific criteria."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

Walk through the 8 dimensions, spending more time on the ones most relevant to your group. For teens, these usually hit hardest:

- Answers — Purpose, meaning, death, hope (teens wrestle with these)
- Mental Health — Real peace vs. coping strategies
- Relationships — Freedom from approval addiction, ability to forgive
- Practical Living — Clear priorities when everything feels urgent

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the 8 dimensions is most relevant to what you're facing right now?
- Where have you seen secular mindsets fall short in your own experience?
- What would it look like if you had access to all 8 of these benefits?
- What's still holding you back from taking this seriously?

Application:

This week, pick one of the 8 dimensions where you're struggling most. Write about it honestly in your workbook. What would change if the Anchored Mindset claims were true?

SESSION 7: Getting Anchored

Book Reference: Chapter 7

Key Concepts:

- The Anchored Mindset isn't achieved by trying harder—it starts with a relationship
- 7 Movements: New Birth, Scripture Saturation, Prayer, Community, Cognitive Discipline, Daily Practices, Perseverance
- Each movement has practical starting points for teens
- You don't have to master all 7—start where you are

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "If someone wanted to get physically fit, what would you tell them to do?" (Exercise, eat well, rest, etc.) "Getting mentally and spiritually fit follows similar principles—regular practices over time."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

Walk through all 7 movements, with emphasis on:

- Movement 1 (New Birth) — This is the starting point. Everything else flows from relationship with Christ.
- Movement 2 (Scripture) — Practical: one chapter a day from a Gospel
- Movement 4 (Community) — Why church matters even when it's imperfect
- Movement 5 (Cognitive Discipline) — Taking thoughts captive—very relevant for anxiety

GOSPEL MOMENT

This session may be the first time some students hear a clear invitation to trust Christ. Don't rush past Movement 1. Make sure students understand what it means to receive the New Birth. Offer to talk privately with anyone who wants to explore this further.

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the 7 movements are you already practicing, even partially?
- Which one feels most needed right now?
- What obstacles do you face in practicing these movements?
- Who could you partner with to help each other stay on track?

Application:

Choose ONE movement to focus on this week. Write a specific, measurable goal in your workbook. Share it with one other person in the group for accountability.

SESSION 8: Living Anchored

Book Reference: Chapter 8 + Conclusion

Key Concepts:

- The Anchored Mindset shows up most clearly under pressure
- Real scenarios: anxiety, social media, friend drama, school stress, failure, family, future
- Direction matters more than perfection
- Your mind, your choice—the anchor is available

Opening Activity (5 min):

Ask: "What's the most stressful thing you've faced in the last month?" Let a few share (keep it brief). "Today we're going to see what it looks like to respond to real pressure from an anchored position."

Teaching Points (15-20 min):

Walk through the scenarios from Chapter 8, asking students which ones resonate:

- Anxiety — Typical vs. anchored response
- Social Media inadequacy — Typical vs. anchored response
- Friend disappointment — Typical vs. anchored response
- Failure — Typical vs. anchored response

Emphasize: This isn't about perfection. It's about direction. Some days you'll nail it. Some days you won't. Grace covers both.

Discussion Questions:

- Which scenario from Chapter 8 is most relevant to your life right now?
- What would change if you responded from an anchored position?
- Where did you see growth during these 8 weeks?
- What's your commitment going forward?

Application:

Complete the commitment page in your workbook. Share one takeaway with the group. Pray for each other as you continue the journey.



This is your last session—make it count.
Give students time to process, share, and commit.
Pray specifically for each student if possible.
Exchange contact info if appropriate for ongoing encouragement.

PART THREE: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Discussion Question Bank

Extra questions if conversation stalls or you have more time:

Identity Questions:

- How do you usually define yourself? What labels do you use?
- Where do you feel most pressure to be someone you're not?
- What would change if your worth came from God rather than performance?

Doubt Questions:

- What's your biggest intellectual objection to Christianity?
- Have you ever felt like you couldn't ask questions about faith?
- What would you need to see or experience to take faith more seriously?

Application Questions:

- What's one thing you could change this week based on what we discussed?
- Who in your life demonstrates an anchored mindset?
- What's holding you back from going deeper?

Key Scripture Memory Verses

- Romans 12:2 — "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."
- Hebrews 6:19 — "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."
- Philippians 4:8 — "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable... think about these things."
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 — "We take every thought captive to obey Christ."
- 1 Corinthians 2:16 — "But we have the mind of Christ."

Parent Communication Template

Consider sending parents a brief update each week. Sample email:

Subject: Anchored Mindset Week [X] Update

Dear Parents,

This week in The Anchored Mindset course, we discussed [topic]. Your student explored [key concept]. You can continue the conversation by asking: [suggested question].

The weekly challenge was [challenge]. Consider checking in about how it went.

Thank you for partnering with us!

FINAL WORD

Thank you for leading this course. What you're doing matters more than you know.

These teenagers face pressures previous generations never imagined. They need adults who will take them seriously, answer their questions honestly, and point them to truth that holds.

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to show up, be real, and trust that God works through imperfect vessels.

The anchor is available. Help them find it.

To Him be the glory.