

# Habits that Stick

## Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Distribute about 5 wooden sticks to each person.
2. Discuss with the group the idea of “habits.” Ask them how something becomes a habit.
3. Instruct everyone to pick up one stick and think of something they do once in a while that they would not want to become a habit. A good example is “eat a big piece of chocolate cake.” Use yourself as an example: “I eat a piece of cake once in a while but I don’t expect to do it every day. So if I eat a piece today, I would probably skip the piece tomorrow.” To demonstrate this, have everyone break one wooden stick in half. Because it is not ingrained, it is an easy habit to break!
4. Then ask, “But what if I had a piece of cake today, tomorrow and the next day? It may become part of the routine, like a habit.” Instruct participants to pick up three sticks and stack them. Then ask them to try to break all three sticks at once. It is impossible for most people to accomplish this.

**Group Size:** 1 to 10

**Time Needed:** 11 to 20 minutes

**Goal:** To help groups examine how something becomes a habit and how difficult habits can be to break

**Audience:** Couples, Teens, Parents, Children, Singles

**Special Considerations:** None

## Resources Needed:

- ✓ Large quantity of small wooden sticks, about 5 per person (These can be purchased inexpensively at a craft store.)

## Tips for Discussion and Processing

This can lead to a good discussion about how habits start and how we end up mindlessly doing things we do not really want to do. Be sure to expand the topic and go beyond chocolate cake, to those little habits that really make the difference in family life, both good and bad. For example, many couples get into the habit of speaking very negatively to each other or not at all. On the other hand, some couples get into the habit of always kissing each other goodbye or drinking a cup of coffee together before work. The major emphasis in this exercise is that the best way to break a habit is to do it before it starts. Also discuss how the habits in our relationships really do make a difference.