



WEEK 3 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

CANCELED

THE BIG IDEA

Love the people you envy.

THE BIBLE

Proverbs 27:4; I Samuel 18:6-10, 19:1-12;
Matthew 22:36-39; Philippians 4:12

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Green-Eyed Monsters

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Collect green office or party supplies, like [crepe paper](#), [balloons](#), [construction paper](#), [face paint](#), [garland](#), tape, stickers, and scissors. To play, have two students come to the front – they'll be your monsters. Then choose a few students to be in charge of transforming those students into green monsters in under three minutes. Let them know they're playing for a prize (like green candies, green gift cards, or even a small stack of dollar bills, if your currency is green). When the time is up, have all of your students vote on their favorite monster and declare a winner. If you'd like, you can even have your monsters finish the game by reciting this quote from Shakespeare's *Othello* together in monster voices: "O beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is the **green-eyed monster** which doth mock the meat it feeds on."*

POLL | Raise your hand if you've ever been envious.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask students to raise their hands in response to each question.*
- As you may have guessed, I want to talk about jealousy and envy today. **Have you ever felt envious of . . .**
 - **A friend?**
 - **A sibling?**
 - **Someone on social media?**
 - **Someone famous?**
- Or maybe you're envious right now because you *really* wanted one of those prizes I just gave away.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.*
 - **If you could have something you really wanted for free, what one thing would you choose?**
 - **How would you define “envy”? What do you think most people your age get envious about?**

QUESTION | What have you been envious about?

- Now that we know we can all relate, **name someone or something you’ve envied.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond, encouraging them to give examples that are silly or surface-level – you’ll have plenty of time to get vulnerable later.*
- To get us started, let’s get clear about what we mean when we say “envy.”
 - Today, we’re *not* defining “envy” as looking at someone’s cool new shoes and thinking, “Those are cool shoes. It would be nice to have a pair.”
 - When we talk about “envy” today we’ll be talking about what happens when you stop simply wanting or wishing for something, and you let it turn into something ugly – like frustration, anger, self-pity, or hatred.
- We’ve all had a moment (or maybe a few) when we’ve been a little envious of someone. But today I’m going to ask you to get a little uncomfortable, because I want us to get honest about the times when we’ve allowed a “little” bit of envy prevent us from loving others.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
 - ✳ **Do you think anyone has ever been envious of you? How did that impact your relationship with them?**
 - ✳ **Have you ever seen envy destroy a relationship? What do you think could be done to save a relationship being destroyed by jealousy?**

STORY | Talk about a time envy kept you from loving someone.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when you were so envious of a person, or a group of people, that you began to avoid them or see them as your enemy. Dig deep with this story and model vulnerability. Were you envious of a certain group of people because you weren’t part of their friend group, or of someone who was given an opportunity you really wanted, or of someone who was skilled in an area where you felt insecure? After you share who you were envious of, explain how envy prevented you from loving that person. Did you see them as a threat? Did you avoid them, mock them, talk poorly about them, or dislike them?*
- It’s easy to make excuses for our envy. We might think . . .
 - “I’m not jealous – they’re just a jerk!”
 - “I’m not being judgmental – they really aren’t that talented!”

- “I deserve what they have more than they do!”
- Whether we wish we had someone’s position on a team, their TikTok views, their relationships, their shoes, their “perfect” family, or their full-ride scholarship, it’s easy for envy to creep in, take over, and “cancel” our joy, contentment, and self-worth.
- It might start small, but envy can grow into a monster.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

OBJECT LESSON | Greener and Greener

- Let me give you an example of how envy can grow over time if we don’t address it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get a [clear container](#) of water and [green food coloring](#). As you give each of the following scenarios, follow the instructions for what to do with the food coloring. And don’t forget you can use your own scenario if you don’t like our example!
 - Let’s say you’re trying out for a position on the basketball team. There’s only one other person trying out for your position. He’s given the starting position, while you become his backup. **[OPEN THE FOOD COLORING.]** Sure, that probably stings a little bit, but you’re fine! You can’t always be the best at everything, right?
 - When your friends ask about it, you tell them what happened and say it’s fine **[ADD ONE DROP OF FOOD COLORING]**, but you can’t help but sneak in a comment about how that guy is just so entitled, or full of himself, or just lucky because your game was a little off that day.
 - At practice a few weeks later, your coach gives you a high five, but spends a full minute telling that guy what a great job he’s doing. **[ADD ANOTHER DROP OR TWO.]** “What a suck up,” you think. “He’s not that good — he’s just popular and his parents are rich, so he gets whatever he wants.”
 - Then, in your first game, he makes an amazing play and the whole team celebrates. He’s yelling and cheering and fist-bumping your teammates when you tell the person next to you **[TAKE OFF THE LID AND ADD THE ENTIRE BOTTLE]**, “He’s so full of himself, it’s disgusting. And did you know his parents basically bought him his spot on the team? This whole school is so messed up.”
- Whoa. That escalated quickly. But this is what envy does! Something small can quickly become something big. It stops being about the thing you envied — it becomes about the person you envy.

SCRIPTURE | Proverbs 27:4

- Here’s how Scripture talks about envy. In the book of Proverbs (which is a book filled with wise sayings), it says . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Proverbs 27:4 together.
- Think back to the last time you were absolutely furious at someone.
 - Do you remember how you felt in the moment?
 - Do you still feel that way right now? Maybe not!
- Anger is a big emotion, but it comes and goes. Jealousy, on the other hand, keeps growing and growing. As it grows, it begins to harm us and our relationships with others.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
 - ★ **Have you ever experienced a negative emotion that grew bigger over time? What was it and how did you deal with it?**
 - **How do you usually deal with jealousy when you experience it? How do you think you could deal with it better?**

SCRIPTURE | I Samuel 18:6-10

- In the Bible, we find a story about a time when envy slowly destroyed a man named King Saul.
- Saul was the king of Israel, but he had a problem. Because Saul had been disobedient to God, God rejected Saul and chose a young shepherd boy named David to be the next king of Israel. Saul knew a new king was coming, but he didn't know who.
 - When Saul first encountered David, he was impressed! David played music for him and even defeated a terrifying enemy for Saul's army.
 - Maybe you've heard the story of David and Goliath. Goliath was a Philistine warrior who David defeated with a simple slingshot and God's help, when no one else in Saul's army was willing to risk it.
 - David became best friends with King Saul's son Jonathan.
 - David even led tons of missions for Saul's army, and always did them well.
- But then Saul let envy creep in. He saw strength and potential in David and didn't like that other people saw it too. While David was being recognized and celebrated, Saul's envy began to grow.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read I Samuel 18:6-10. If you'd like, you can repurpose the Greener and Greener object lesson here to visualize Saul's growing jealousy.
- Whoa, that took a turn at the end there, huh? Saul wasn't interested in celebrating David or recognizing his achievements. He wanted him gone. Saul's jealousy was so great that he decided to "cancel" David, once and for all — with a spear.

SCRIPTURE | I Samuel 19:1-12

- Saul's first attempt to kill David may have failed, but he was eager to try again.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or summarize I Samuel 19:1-12.
- After David escaped, he ran as far away from Saul as he could, with Saul in pursuit. He hunted David from city to city, his envy so great that Saul was ready to do anything in order to see David dead. But some surprising things happened during that pursuit.
 - David had a chance to kill Saul — but he didn't take it.
 - David had a second chance to kill Saul — but he didn't take that change either.
 - David and Saul finally call a truce and promise never to harm each other.
 - They finally part ways and never see each other again.
- I wish I could tell you Saul totally turned his life around and chose to love David instead of jealously hating him, but I can't. Saul stopped trying to kill David, so I guess that was a win, but it doesn't appear that Saul ever stopped hating him.

- Not every story in the Bible has a happy ending or comes with a clear lesson or practical takeaway. But here's what we can do with stories like Saul's:
 - Reflect on his life and choices.
 - Consider how his actions line up with what we know about God.
 - Look to the words of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 22:36-39

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 22:36-39.*
- When you're not sure what to do, come back to these words from Jesus. Whether we're feeling the first hints of envy, or we're so jealous we're ready to throw a spear at someone, Jesus words can always guide us. **Love the people you envy.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Who Are You?

- So who in this story do you relate to?
 - **Are you like David?** Do you feel like someone (or a group of people) are always out to get you because they're jealous of you? Do you feel alone, confused, or like you've been "canceled"?
 - **Are you like Saul?** You've probably never thrown a spear at someone, but is there someone you thought about while hearing Saul's story? Someone you really dislike because (if you're honest) you're a little bit jealous of them?
 - **Are you like both?** Chances are, you have things in common with both Saul and David. I know I do.
- No matter how you relate to David and Saul, I think we can all agree that envy destroys our relationships because you can't love and let envy grow at the same time.
- **But how do we stop being envious?** It starts by finding contentment, fulfillment, and peace in the God who made us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play or perform the song "Nothing Else," by Cody Carnes, or something similar. You may want to have adult volunteers available for any students who need someone to talk to or pray with. As students reflect, ask them these questions . . .*
 - **Do you ever find yourself wanting, obsessing over, or comparing what someone else has to what you have?**
 - **Are you envious of someone?**
 - **What do they have that you envy?**
 - **Is Jesus your source of contentment? If not, ask Him to change your heart.**
- If we want to replace envy with love, this is where we have to start. When our contentment is found in Jesus, it becomes so much easier to love others — including those who have things we wish we had.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
 - ✪ **In the passage of Scripture we read today, could you relate more to David, Saul, or both? Why?**
 - **Read Philippians 4:12. What do you think it means to find contentment in Jesus?**

ACTIVITY | Call-Out

- But getting our hearts right is only the first step in replacing envy with love. If we really want to love the people we envy, we have to do something more.
 - Instead of envying people who have something we want, what if we decided to **celebrate them?**
 - Instead of imitating the "call-out culture" of the world around us, what if we chose to **call-out others' greatness?**
 - And here's one more idea. When we are the people who are being envied, instead of keeping all of our good things to ourselves, what if we decided to share what we have?
- Let's start practicing this right now. Let's start changing our culture for the better by celebrating each other, calling out the greatness we see in others, and thinking of ways we can **share what we have.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Depending on the size and dynamics of your group, you'll need to decide just how vulnerable you want to challenge students to get during this moment. Model this activity at the front first, and then (if you'd like) have students participate in groups of friends.
 - **AT THE FRONT:** Before your program, ask a handful of students and volunteers if they'd like to join you for this exercise. Have them stand with you in a circle and take turns celebrating or calling each other out for the good things they have, are, or have done. Talk about what you'll share beforehand to make sure you're giving students helpful examples to follow. If possible, try to incorporate at least one person who **confesses their envy** for someone in the group ("I wish I could sing like you," or "Your family seems perfect – I wish mine was more like yours.") and someone who **offers to share what they have** ("You're a great singer! Let's sing together sometime," or "My family's not perfect, but you can come to my house and hang out with us if you want!").
 - **IN GROUPS:** Have students split into groups and repeat the exercise for five minutes. Be sure to group students with people they know, and don't pressure everyone to speak – especially new students who don't know many people.
- So how did that go?
 - If this activity was easy for you, that's great! Keep doing it outside these four walls.
 - If you decided not to share anything because you're just not ready yet, that's okay. I'm glad you're being real and not faking it.

- If you decided to say something even though you weren't sure you meant it, that's okay too. I'm proud of you for loving others with your actions.
- What I'm challenging you to do isn't easy. Loving people we envy isn't natural. But with God's help, and Jesus' example, I think we can learn how to do it well. If you want to love like Jesus loves (and I hope you do), **love the people you envy.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.*
 - **Don't name names, but do you envy anyone right now? What do they have that you want?**
 - **What's something you can do this week to love someone you envy?**