



WEEK 1

HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

Jesus can redeem what's gone wrong.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 1:31, 3:17-18; Colossians 1:13-20;
Psalm 13:1-2

ACTIVITY | M&M Movie Mingle

- Over the next four weeks, we're going to be exploring some true stories from Scripture and some not-so-true stories from our favorite movies.
- Since we'll be watching a bunch of movie clips together, I thought we'd kick things off with my favorite thing about the movies — movie candy.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your program, grab some [M&Ms](#) (a handful for every student) and put the image provided in your Week 1 folder on your screen. To play this get-to-know-you game, students will need to find a partner, grab five random M&Ms, and share facts about themselves based on the colors of the M&Ms in their hands. If they draw more than one of the same color, they must give multiple answers to the prompt represented by that color. Play as many rounds as you'd like, instructing students to choose a new partner (and new candy) each round. You can use any color code you'd like, but here's our suggestion of what to share . . .
 - **RED:** Something you love.
 - **ORANGE:** Something you can't stand.
 - **YELLOW:** A word that describes you.
 - **GREEN:** A fact about your family.
 - **BLUE:** A favorite memory.
 - **BROWN:** Something funny or embarrassing about you.

QUESTION | What did you discover about each other?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** While students return to their seats, let a few of them respond to each of the following questions.

- Let's hear what you discovered about each other!
 - **Did anyone talk to someone you've never talked to before? What did you learn about each other?**
 - **Did anyone discover something new about someone you know well?**
 - **Did anyone discover something new they have in common with someone else?**
 - **Did anyone realize something new about *themselves* during these conversations?**
- Look around this room! From our favorite foods, to our families, to our personalities, we are all so unique. There is no one in this room (or in all of history) who is just like you. That's a good thing, but it can also be a challenge.

POLL | Identity Problems

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Conduct a brief poll live or before your program begins. If you'd like to conduct your poll live, ask students to stand or raise their hands when you ask each question or text their responses with a service like polleverywhere.com. If you'd like to conduct your poll in advance, you can do so when students walk through the door and share the results at this point in your message.*
- Let's see how our group really feels about being unique.
 - **Would you rather stand out or blend in?**
 - **Have you ever felt pressured to hide or change who you are?**
 - **Have you ever felt like who you are isn't good enough?**
 - **On most days, do you like who you are?**
 - **Do you know exactly who you are or are you still figuring it out?**
- In our game a few moments ago, we learned things about each other that surprised us — things we couldn't know just from looking at each other. As you look at the results of this poll, I hope it's clear that there is actually a *lot* we don't know about each other.
- Most of us don't walk around announcing our biggest questions and insecurities, but we all have them. This is especially true when it comes to our identities.

KNOW GOD, KNOW OURSELVES

- For the next few weeks, we're going to talk about two things: who we are and who God is.
 - **We're talking about who we are** because many of us have questions and struggles related to who we are and who we're becoming.
 - **We're going to talk about who God is** because you and I are made in the image of God, our Creator. To understand who we are, we must understand who our Creator is.
- To guide us through these conversations, each week we're going to look at a different true story from Scripture to discover who God is and who we are too.

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

VIDEO | "Strange Things are Happening to Me," from Toy Story

- But before we get to that *true* story, let's take a look at one not-so-true story I think we can all relate to.
- Have you ever seen *Toy Story*? If you have, you know Woody, a cowboy who is the favorite toy of his owner Andy. Or at least, Woody was Andy's favorite, before Buzz Lightyear showed up.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show a [portion of this scene](#) from *Toy Story*. (Disney+ timestamp: 00:20:07–00:22:10.)
- Before Buzz, Woody knew exactly who he was. He was Andy's favorite toy! He was special! Important! A leader! But Woody began to doubt himself when Andy's attention shifted to Buzz, a guy with skills, qualities, and areas of expertise Woody didn't have.
 - How did Woody react to Andy's new toy? Insecurity. Fear. Self-doubt. Jealousy.
 - As time went on, these feelings didn't go away. They kept growing until Woody found himself filled with so much hatred for Buzz that he was even plotting how to get rid of Buzz forever!
- Maybe this story sounds far-fetched, but it's not! (The jealousy-turning-into-hatred thing, I mean. The part about the talking toys is definitely fictional.)

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.
- **If you could be a character from a movie or TV show, who would you pick? What does that character have that you wish you had?**
- **We all want to imitate people we like or admire, but does that count as jealousy? Why or why not?**

STORY | Talk about a time you were jealous of someone.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a personal story (or ask a volunteer or student to share a story) about a time when fear or insecurity made you jealous of someone. Try to choose an example where your jealousy eventually became dislike or hatred for that person, or where you found yourself hoping for their failure. As you share, be vulnerable and honest. Talk about how you felt, what you feared, and what you regret.
- If you, like me and Woody, have ever felt yourself filled with insecurity, fear, or jealousy, you are not alone. This is a problem that goes way back.

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 4:1-8

- The book of Genesis (the first book of the Bible) is filled with stories about the very beginning of humanity, including a story about two brothers named Cain and Abel.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or summarize Genesis 4:1-8.

- We don't know why God wasn't happy with Cain's offering, but if I had to guess, maybe it's because Cain had an attitude problem. If he didn't have one before he made his offering, he sure did afterward.
- Cain was so angry with God, so jealous, and so afraid of not being seen as important or worthy of love, that he killed his own brother.

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 37:5-11, 18-36

- Cain isn't the only person in Scripture who attacked their brother out of jealousy. Later in the book of Genesis, we meet a seventeen-year-old guy named Joseph, his eleven brothers, and their father Jacob.
- We all know parents aren't supposed to have favorite kids, but Jacob never got that message. Joseph was Jacob's favorite, and he didn't even try to hide it.
 - Joseph got the bulk of his father's attention and affection. He even got a fancy new coat!
 - The brothers all knew Joseph was their dad's favorite, and they weren't happy about it — especially when Joseph started having dreams that he would someday rule over his brothers, and bragged about it!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Genesis 37:5-11, 18-36.
- Just like Woody and Cain, these men allowed their fears and insecurity turn into jealousy, which turned into anger and hatred.
 - Like Woody and like Cain, Joseph's brothers came up with a plan to get rid of the person who made them feel insecure and insignificant.
 - The only reason Joseph didn't end up like Abel is because one of Joseph's brothers wanted to spare his life. Instead, Joseph was sold into slavery and the remaining brothers told their father Joseph died.
- We might think jealousy is pretty harmless — something we all experience from time to time. But these stories show us how destructive jealousy can be.

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.
- **When is the last time you felt jealous of someone else? Why were you jealous of them? What fears or insecurities were at the root of your jealousy?**
- ☆ **When Cain and Joseph's brothers felt insecure, they became angry and cruel. How do you usually act when you feel insecure?**

SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 12:4-12

- Many years after Cain, Abel, Joseph, and Joseph's brothers, some of the first Jesus-followers wrestled with jealousy too. They didn't attack or throw anyone into a well, but they were getting pretty worked up fighting and comparing themselves to each other.
- Here's what Paul, the early church leader and author of the letter we now call I Corinthians, wrote to help them work through their jealousy.

- **WHO IS GOD?** What is God like? For starters, God is generous (v. 4), trustworthy (v. 5-6), caring (v. 7), just, and fair (v. 11). If I had to sum it up, I would say **God is good.**
- **WHO ARE YOU?**
 - God is with you (v. 4-6).
 - You have a purpose, and part of your purpose is to let God use you for the good of others (v. 7).
 - Your gifts are unique to you (v. 8-10).
 - God didn't make mistakes when you were created (v. 11).
 - Your identity isn't just about you — it's found in community with others, in Jesus (v. 12).
- Jealousy, Paul shows us, isn't just destructive. It's illogical!
 - You were created by a God who is good (generous, trustworthy, caring, just, and fair).
 - You are known and carefully designed by your Creator, who is always with you. You have a unique purpose that only you can fulfill, and a whole community of people to surround and support you.
- If you've ever struggled with jealousy, or you've ever felt insecure or unimportant, I want you to remember this: we can have confidence in who we are because of who our Creator is. **Because of who God is, we can trust how God has made us.**

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

REFLECTION | God Is & I Am

- It's easy to focus on what we don't have, or what we don't like about ourselves, but today I want to challenge you to think differently. In your own words, write some ideas about who God is and what God (your Creator) would say about who you are and what your purpose is.
- Let me give you a couple tips about brainstorming:
 - **Be real.** No one will see this but you, so don't try to fool or impress anyone with what you write.
 - **Look for the good.** You were made by a loving Creator, and there is so much to love about you.
 - **Dream big.** There is no limit to what God can do through you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print the handouts provided in your Week 1 folder and place one under each seat, along with a pen and a pad of sticky notes. Give students a few moments to reflect and write some words that describe God, followed by some words that describe themselves. Encourage them to include words that describe all aspects of who they are, like their personality, skills, passions, family, values, and experiences.*

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.*
- **If I were feeling jealous or insecure right now, what do you think God would want to tell me?**
- ☆ **Do you think we can always trust our own opinions of ourselves? Why or why not?**
- ☆ **How can other people help us see ourselves more clearly? How do we discern between helpful and unhelpful feedback or opinions?**

- ✧ **How can other people help us see ourselves more clearly? How do we discern between helpful and unhelpful feedback or opinions?**

RESPONSE | You Are

- It can be hard to see ourselves clearly. That might be because we're still figuring out who we are, but it's also part of God's design. One of the reasons we were created to be in community with others is because we often need others to help us see ourselves clearly.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In small groups or pairs, ask students to write affirmations for each other on sticky notes. Challenge them to write phrases that point out one another's best qualities, unique gifts, or identity as a child of God. Have students deliver their sticky notes to each other and place the notes they've received in the "I Am" column of their handouts. Encourage them to take and post pictures of their handouts on social media.*
- When you know who God is, you can be more confident in who God has created you to be. And when you're confident in who God has created you to be, it's easier to help others be confident in who God has created them to be.
- Insecurity makes us fearful, angry, and jealous, but confidence in God allows us to be courageous, compassionate, and generous toward others. Isn't that the kind of person you'd like to be?
- Over the next few weeks . . .
 - We're going to spend a lot more time talking about who God is and who we are.
 - You'll begin to see more of the ways you've been uniquely designed.
 - As you discover more about who God is, you'll come to love your Creator even more than you do right now.
- This week, I challenge you to remember, to pray, and to trust this truth: **because of who God is, we can trust how God has made us.**

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.*
- **Read Proverbs 14:30. When we're experiencing jealousy, what are some things we can do to find peace?**
- ✧ **What's one thing you believe about who God is? If that's true about the God who made you, what's true about you?**
- **This week, what's one way you're going to get to know God better? And what's one way you can thank God for how you're made?**