



WEEK 3

HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

W A I T L I S T E D

THE BIG IDEA

While we're waiting,
God is listening.

THE BIBLE

Psalms 57:1-5, 66:16-20, 116:1-6;
1 John 5:14-15

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Wait, Walk, Name, Clap, Jump, Dance

- Welcome to Week 3 of *Waitlisted*, where we're talking about waiting . . . and waiting . . . and waiting. Let's kick things off by seeing how good you are at things like waiting, walking, and listening.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This activity can be played with your entire group or with a handful of students at the front. Either way, have all of your participating students spread stand in a cluster with a few feet of space between everyone. For each round, you'll be giving commands, then changing the instructions. If you'd like, eliminate students each round until you have only one or a few winners.*
 - **ROUND 1:** Give students two commands: "wait" (stop in place) and "walk" (walk around). Put 30 seconds on the clock and call out the commands in whatever order or frequency you'd like.
 - **ROUND 2:** Announce you'll be switching the commands. "Wait" now means "walk around," and "walk" now means "stop in place." Put another 30 seconds on the clock and call out the commands in whatever order or frequency you'd like.
 - **ROUND 3:** Warn your students that you'll be going faster this round, and give them two new commands: "name" (say your name out loud) and "clap" (clap once, all together). Put another 30 seconds on the clock and call out all four commands ("wait, walk, name, clap") in whatever order or frequency than you'd like, but be sure to go more quickly than last time.
 - **ROUND 4:** Announce you'll be switching the commands. "Name" now means "clap once, all together," and "clap" now means "say your name out loud." Put another 30

seconds on the clock and call out the commands in whatever order or frequency you'd like.

- **ROUND 5:** Warn your students that you'll be going even faster this round, and give them two new commands: "jump" (jump once) and "dance" (dance in place). Put another 30 seconds on the clock and call out all six commands ("wait, walk, name, clap, jump, dance") in whatever order or frequency than you'd like, but be sure to go more quickly than last time.
- **ROUND 6:** Announce you'll be switching the commands. "Jump" now means "dance in place," and "dance" now means "jump once." Put another 30 seconds on the clock and call out the commands in whatever order or frequency you'd like.
- This game may not seem very difficult, but it really is! It's not easy to listen, think, and react all at the same time. Some of you got so focused on *doing* (or *thinking* about doing) the right thing that you didn't hear the next command.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share.
 - **What's something you've been listening to recently?**
 - **When do you struggle to listen or pay attention?**

QUESTION | When do you struggle to listen or pay attention?

- Can anyone relate? **Do you ever struggle to listen or pay attention? When?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

POLL | Have you ever . . .

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** By a show of hands, ask students to share if they can relate to the scenarios below.
- We're all guilty of failing to listen sometimes, and I'm guessing we all know the feeling of not being heard too.
 - **Have you ever been listening to someone tell a story or make a point, but suddenly realized you hadn't heard a thing they said for several minutes?**
 - **Have you ever been telling a story or making a point, but suddenly realized, "Hey! No one's listening to me anymore"?**
- We all want to be listened to, right? We want to know . . .
 - Our voices matter.
 - People care what we have to say.
 - Someone is listening.
- That's always true, but I think it's especially true during difficult moments. When we're feeling frustrated, afraid, confused, or anxious, it means a lot to know we have someone to talk to and that someone is listening.
- Today, we're going to talk about listening and being heard — especially during the difficult moments.

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

STORY | Talk about a time when you struggled to believe God was listening (Part 1).

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a story (or ask a volunteer or student to share a story) about a time when you struggled to believe anyone (including God) was listening. This might be a time when you were wrestling with doubt, or experiencing a tragedy, or walking through difficult circumstances. As you share your story, be sure to emphasize how much you wanted your prayers to be heard and to be assured that God really was listening. Don't resolve your story just yet — you'll come back to this later. For now, simply focus on how difficult it was to trust God was listening and why.
- I don't know if you have a story like mine or not. If you do, I hope you know you're not alone. If you don't have a story like mine, that's okay, but remember: even if you've never questioned whether God is listening to you . . .
 - Someday you might.
 - You probably know someone who has.
- Whether it's because you're wrestling with doubt, or experiencing a tragedy, or walking through difficult circumstances, it's understandable if you sometimes wonder, "Is God really listening to me?"

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 do you feel most heard or listened to? When do you not feel heard or listened to?**
 - **Why do you think some people struggle to believe God is listening to them?**

ACTIVITY | King David: The Biography

- There's someone in Scripture who asked that question too. His name is David, and he's one of the most famous figures from the Old Testament of the Bible.
- You've heard of David and Goliath, right? It's the David from that story. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's start from the beginning.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time (or on the spot, if you're feeling daring!) invite a few students or volunteers to act out some of the key scenes from the life of David. Let them know they won't need to speak — they'll just need to act and maybe dress up with some props. The same person can play David in each scene, or you can have several Davids. Just make sure it's clear it's the same person by having each David hand a prop, crown, or other costume element to the next David when their scene is finished.
- **SCENE 1: David is Chosen as King**
 - When David was a young boy in the land of Israel, a man named Saul was king. Although God had originally chosen Saul to be king of Israel, Saul's actions had caused him to lose God's blessing and favor. God was on the lookout for a new king, and God found the new king in David, a young shepherd boy.

- Because David was so young, small, and unassuming, he was almost overlooked. But God saw him.
- God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David with oil, symbolizing that David would one day become king.
- That's a pretty awesome promise, but what God didn't tell David at the time was that David would need to wait for that promise to be fulfilled — and the waiting would be really difficult.
- **SCENE 2: David Defeats Goliath**
 - Later, King Saul's armies were being attacked by their enemies, the Philistines — including a giant of a man named Goliath.
 - No one wanted to fight Goliath, but David was up for the challenge. Trusting God would be with him, David faced off against this Philistine warrior holding only a slingshot and a few rocks — and David won!
- **SCENE 3: Saul Gets Jealous**
 - At King Saul's request, David begins hanging around Saul. David was a talented musician, so Saul would ask David to play him some songs on his harp.
 - But this relationship didn't last. Soon, Saul began growing jealous of David. He couldn't stand how much everyone loved David, how talented he was, or how he seemed to have God's favor.
 - Saul grew so angry that he tried to kill David by throwing spears at him!
- **SCENE 4: Saul vs. David**
 - Things got so bad that David fled the kingdom while Saul and his men hunted and continued trying to kill him.
 - Saul's men chased David from city to city. There were a few close encounters, but David stayed safe from Saul's attacks.
- **SCENE 5: David Becomes King**
 - It's a long and dramatic story, and you can read it in the book of I Samuel in the Bible, but let's fast forward to the fulfillment of God's promise to make David king.
 - Saul eventually died in battle. When he did, David was made king, and was no longer waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled.
- David's path to the throne wasn't what he had wanted or planned, but here's what's amazing: during more than fifteen years of waiting on that promise (which is longer than some of you have been alive), David never stopped talking to God.
 - He talked to God when he was lonely.
 - He talked to God when he was surrounded by enemies.
 - He talked to God when he was discouraged.
 - He talked to God when he was angry and desperate.
- And this isn't even where David's story ends. Even after he became king, there were so many moments in David's life when he cried out to God, and God heard him every single time.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 57:1-5

- I told you David was a talented musician. Throughout his life, David wrote plenty of songs for God that can now be found in the biblical book of Psalms.

- These songs are prayers to God. They are often very raw and honest, and many of them are written about some of the moments in David's life you just watched unfold.
- Psalm 57 is about one of David's close encounters with Saul when he was on the run.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 57:1-5.*
- When David was being hunted and eventually cornered by Saul and his men, it made sense that David would be terrified, right? I mean, his life was being threatened!
- So why did David choose to cry out to God in his darkest moment? Probably because he trusted God was actually listening, despite his terrifying circumstances.
- God heard David's cries when he was in a "pit" of despair, and God hears us in our "pits" of fear, anxiety, discouragement, or doubt.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 66:16-20

- Here's another song he wrote about God hearing our prayers.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 66:16-20.*
- Despite everything David had experienced, he was certain God heard his prayers.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 116:1-6

- In response to the many times God listened to David's cries, David also wrote this psalm.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 62:1-6.*
- God made a promise that David would one day become king. While David was waiting for that promise to be fulfilled . . .
 - He fought a gigantic enemy.
 - He dodged spears.
 - He was hunted.
 - He faced loneliness, terror, despair, anger, and discouragement.
 - He prayed.
 - And God never stopped listening.
- While David waited for God to fulfill that promise, he chose to trust in God's faithfulness. While he waited, David never stopped talking to God because David knew that, **while we're waiting, God is listening.**

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

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 you heard David's story, what stood out to you or surprised you and why?**
 - ☆ **How do you think David developed the confidence to write so many psalms about God listening to his prayers?**
 - **Have you ever struggled to believe God heard your prayers? Tell us about it!**

STORY | Finish your story about a time when you struggled to believe God was listening (Part 2).

- I can tell you God is listening, not just because David said so, but because I've seen it to be true in my own life as well.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Finish your story about a time when you struggled to believe God was listening to you. If you have any specific examples of how God answered your prayers during this time, now is the time to share those examples! If you don't have any specific examples of answered prayer, share why you believe God was listening to your prayers all along.*
- While I was waiting, God was listening to me. While David was waiting, God was listening to him. And while you're waiting, God is listening to you too.

KEEP TALKING BECAUSE GOD IS LISTENING

- So why are you waiting on God? Like David . . .
 - Are you waiting for God to fulfill a promise?
 - Are you waiting for a prayer to be answered?
 - Do you feel like you're surrounded by enemies?
 - Do you need guidance about what step to take next?
 - Are you feeling lonely? Afraid? Overwhelmed? Angry? Discouraged?
- When you're waiting on God, God never stops listening — so just keep talking.
- In Psalm 116, David said God's ears turn toward us when we pray. Imagine that! So here are two things you can do when you've got God's ear.
 - **SHARE YOUR SITUATION:** God knows exactly what you're going through right now, but that doesn't mean God doesn't want to talk with you about it. When you pray, tell God what's happening. No matter why you have been waiting on God, this week, practice praying about it.
 - **SHARE YOUR FEELINGS:** My favorite part of David's psalms are how honest they are. He poured out all of his emotions to God, and you can do the same. Your feelings (even the ones you think might be ugly or embarrassing) don't intimidate or surprise God, so don't be afraid to express them.

REFLECTION | The Listening Board

- In the time we have left, I want to encourage you to take time to act on the things we've talked about today. How? Easy. I just want you to talk to God and trust you're being heard.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, prepare a large white board, chalk board, or pad of paper. If you'd like, you can draw a large hourglass on it and encourage students to write inside of the hourglass. Play or perform some worship or instrumental music as students reflect on the truth that God is listening. Invite them to pray as they write one of the following things on your Listening Board:*
 - A passage of Scripture about God hearing or answering prayers.
 - A prayer God has answered.
 - A prayer they are waiting for God to answer.
 - A declaration of faith that God is listening.

- While David waited on God, God never stopped listening, and David never stopped praying. So let's keep praying, because **while we're waiting, God is listening to us too.**

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 a friend said they weren't sure God heard their prayers, how would you encourage them? Did you need to hear any of the advice we just shared?**
 - **Read I John 5:14-15. God hears every prayer, but do you think God answers every prayer? Why or why not?**
 - **This week, what's something you're going to talk to God about more often?**