



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Hello, My Name Is / Week 1

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

What God says about you is the most important thing about you.

## GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to elevate God's view of them over other people's view of them.

## SCRIPTURE

*See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him (1 John 3:1 NLT).*

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV).*

### CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

The first half of the verse from 1 John 3 reminds us just how much God loves us—so much so that He calls us His children.

Often times we think God isn't a big fan of us, because we see everything that's wrong with ourselves. But nothing could be further from the truth. God loves us so much, He has *chosen* to call us His children.

The second half of the verse from 1 John 3 reminds us that the people in our culture today don't always see the whole picture. They don't know God, so they aren't good judges of His children. So, we shouldn't rely on what they—the people and culture around us—say about who we are.

## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

So here's a random question: How did you write your bio on Instagram or Facebook?

Have you ever been somewhere new with people you don't know, and someone asks you to wear one of those "Hello, My Name Is \_\_\_\_\_" stickers and fill in your name?

Your name is what people call you. But your identity, the real you, is something else entirely.

### TENSION

But who is the real you? That's a strange question, but it's actually a very important one.

The bottom line is this: Your view of you affects the quality of your present and future!

Many of us identify ourselves with labels—labels that were given to us by other people!



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## TEACHING OUTLINE

See, we often don't know how to fill in the blank about who we are. So we let other people fill in the blank.

So you and I have work to do: We have to figure out which messages can stay, and which messages need to go.

### TRUTH

We're going to look a letter in the New Testament written by one of Jesus' friends, John.

It's generally believed that when John wrote the letter we're going to look at today, he was an old man.

John knew that time was running short, and he was desperate to make sure that people knew what God thought of them before the memory of Jesus faded.

John basically says that God is crazy about you.

Unlike teachers and advertisers, even close friends and family, God actually *knows* who you are. He *knows* the real you!

The truth is this: No one knows us better than the One who created us.

John is also saying that the people in our culture don't always see the whole picture. They don't know God, so they aren't good judges of His children.

The people around you cannot be a good judge of the real you because they didn't make you and they don't even know who you are.

What God says about you is the most important thing about you.

According to John, God says you are loved and you are His.

### APPLICATION

What would it look like for you to allow what God says about you to shape you in the same way?

I'm guessing that you'd feel different, make different decisions, treat yourself differently, and treat others differently.

### LANDING

I want you to remember this: What God says about you is the most important thing about you.

## INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens during the Introduction. For this interactive, play the week one game found in your series download. This game is a fun way to get

students thinking about our identities and the words we use to describe who we are.



# TEACHING SCRIPT

Hello, My Name Is / Week 1

PRELUDE

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## BOTTOM LINE

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT YOU IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT YOU.

## INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE (+ TIME TO PLAY THE GAME MENTIONED)

Let's start with a game.



### INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

So here's a random question to kick things off: How did you write your bio on Instagram or Facebook? You know, that little About Me section in your profile. If you're like me, you probably spent more time on it than you're willing to admit. I mean, how do you summarize your whole life in a few words? Did you talk about sports or musical instruments you play? Your dog? Your family? Your collection of Happy Meal toys from third grade?

And this is an interesting challenge, right? **Because how exactly do you explain who you are to somebody else in a couple of sentences?**

Have you ever been somewhere new with people you don't know, and someone asks you to wear one of those "Hello, My Name Is \_\_\_\_\_" stickers and fill in your name?

If you're not familiar with what I'm talking about, here's a visual.

*(Communicator Note: Show a picture or two of the Hello My Name Is stickers with names filled out.)*

The reason people want you to wear the sticker is to let everyone else know who you are. And that's great—people knowing your name is powerful. But we all know that there's so much more to who we are than our name, right? Your name is what people call you. But your identity, the real you, is something else entirely.

## TENSION

4 MINUTES

### But who is the real you?

That's a strange question, but it's actually a very important one. Because who you are, and who you *think* you are, will decide a lot about your life. It'll impact . . .

- **Who you hang out with.** Almost all of us choose to hang out with people that we think are like us. So who you think you are—in some ways—picks your friends.
- **What decisions you make.** Will you work hard, cheat, play sports, party your brains out, create a fake social media account, or run for president? So many of your choices will be based on the categories you put yourself in.
- **How you treat your body.** What you think about you will influence your approach to things like alcohol, exercise, food, or drugs.
- **How you treat others.** What you think about you—good or bad—will influence how you treat other people. People who view themselves in a healthy way typically treat others well. The opposite is true though, too.

The bottom line is this: **Your view of you affects the quality of your present and future!**

And here's what's crazy. Even though most of us don't know who we are, we still get tons of messages every day that are trying to fill in the blank for us. **Without realizing it, many of us identify ourselves with labels—labels that were given to us by other people!**

We get messages from . . .

- Parents.
- Classmates.
- Coaches.
- Teammates.
- Friends.
- People we don't even know on social media.

Not to mention the 17 billion dollars<sup>1</sup> that's spent each year on ads trying to convince you of who you are or should be (if you buy their product, of course).

It seems like everywhere we look, there's some type of message about who we are, who we're not, and who we should be. But here's the thing: We tend to place more value on negative messages than positive messages. In fact, not only do the negative messages outweigh the positive, we usually remember them longer. Without realizing it, we are collecting messages that somehow form our identity.

And these collected messages can become who we think we are.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/resource/marketing-children-overview>

Can you remember a time in the past when someone said something negative or hurtful to you about who you are, and now—months or even years later—it has shaped the way you think about yourself?

**See, we often don't know how to fill in the blank about who we are. So we let other people fill in the blank.** When they talk, we listen.

And this is totally normal. Because you don't have a lot of available time in your schedule each day to figure out who you are. You're worrying about Algebra, Snapchat, what's for lunch, your crush, video game hacks, baseball practice, and annoying siblings. Figuring out your identity is not on top of your priority list. I totally get it.

But, if we understand how much the answer to that question—the question of who we are—impacts our lives, we might spend more time thinking about it. Who YOU THINK you are will impact nearly every other decision you make.

So you and I have work to do: We have to figure out which messages can stay, and which messages need to go. We have to test and question the labels that have been placed on us. And we have to decide who gets input into our identity, and who doesn't.

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## TRUTH

5 MINUTES

Now, chances are, because we're in church, you've already figured out where this is going, haven't you? Any time someone on stage asks you a question, "God" is always the answer, right? Or Jesus, prayer, read your Bible . . . all the Sunday School answers.

But don't turn your brains off yet. Because if we really get this right, it can not only help us figure out who we are, but also help us figure out who we're *not* supposed to be.

In fact, what we're talking about today has the power to change how we see ourselves forever.

We're going to look a letter in the New Testament written by one of Jesus' friends, John. John was one of the famous twelve disciples, and was most likely one of the youngest of the twelve when he started following Jesus. He also lived the longest.

In the first several years following Jesus' death and resurrection, when Christianity was actually illegal, almost all of the disciples were killed for their faith. But somehow John managed to stay alive, making it to old age (although he was exiled from his country and imprisoned).

It's generally believed that when John wrote the letter we're going to look at today, he was an old man. And John knew that he was one of the last people alive who had actually walked and talked with Jesus. John knew that time was running short, and he was desperate to make sure that people knew what God thought of them before the memory of Jesus faded.



# TEACHING SCRIPT

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So John wrote this:

*See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! (1 John 3:1a NLT).*

**John basically says that God is crazy about you.** Other translations say that God “lavishes” His love on us. It’s like an overflow of love, unable to be contained!

And that’s a big deal, because so often, you and I aren’t big fans of ourselves. We see everything that’s wrong with us and think, *I’m not great at all*. But John is saying, “God doesn’t see it that way. He’s a fan of you! He adores you, loves you, and likes you!”

But there’s one other thing that makes this an even bigger deal . . .

**Unlike teachers and advertisers, even close friends and family, God actually knows who you are. He knows the real you!**

Yep, God knows the real you, and He STILL likes and loves you!

Thousands of years before John wrote this letter, God spoke to a kid named Jeremiah—a kid who didn’t think super highly of himself—and said this:

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV).*

In fact, all throughout Scripture, God said similar things to people. And they were all people He knew very well. Why? Because He created them!

See, the truth is this: **No one knows us better than the One who created us.** And no one should be able to fill in the identity blank for us other than the One who made us.

So when John says that God loves you, that’s a message that should have more power. Why? Because God actually knows you—the *real you*—better than anyone else. And that’s why what John says next makes so much sense. He says this:

*But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him (1 John 3:1b NLT).*

John is saying that the people in our culture don’t always see the whole picture. They don’t know God, so they aren’t good judges of His children. John is giving this message to Christians, but this is true even if you aren’t a Christian. God is still the best judge of who you are. And the people around you cannot be a good judge of the real you. Think about it . . .

- 1. They didn’t make you.**
- 2. They don’t even know who they are.** All the times you’ve been told that you are something you don’t want to be, or *aren’t* something you do want to be, remember: those messages came from people—teenager or adult—who are still trying to figure out who they are and feel better about themselves.



# TEACHING SCRIPT

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Think of it this way. If you wanted to know how tall you are, you wouldn't ask a random person what they think. If you asked an 8-year old kid, they'd say, "Tall!" If you asked an NBA basketball player, they'd say, "Super-short, bro!" People simply see things from their biased perspective and worldview.

In reality, if you want to know how tall you are, you get a measuring tape. At that point, it's not based on perspective or opinion—it's based on accuracy.

And that's true of your identity, too. **If you want to know who you are and who you should be, you can't rely on the people around you, because their perspective is biased and always changing.**

God, on the other hand, is constant. He isn't trying to sell you anything. He doesn't need you in order to feel better about Himself. He doesn't have a perspective problem. His view of you is based on His creation of you.

Which means that if you want to know who you are, trust what God says. Because here's the thing:

**What God says about you is the most important thing about you.**

And what does He say? Well, according to John, a couple of things.

1. **You are loved.** We hear that in church all the time, but most of us don't let it shape who we are. We don't make decisions based on this. We don't let it sink in to the point that we feel loved even when no human around us is showing it.
2. **You are His.** Every human being was made in His image and is wildly loved. If you're a Jesus-follower, that means you've been adopted into His family. You're His child! To know who you are, you have to understand whose you are.

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## APPLICATION

1 MINUTE

So what does that mean for you? Earlier we talked about how most of us have heard negative comments that have, in some ways, shaped how we view ourselves.

**Well, what would it look like for you to allow what God says about you to shape you in the same way?** What if you stopped filling in the blank with "Hello, My Name Is Stupid, or Ugly, Invisible, or Worthless," and you began to fill in that blank with "Loved Child Of God"?

I'm guessing that you'd feel different, make different decisions, treat yourself differently, and treat others differently.



# TEACHING SCRIPT

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And look, you can't stop people from making comments about who you are. You can't force the world around you to stop advertising products trying to convince you that there's something wrong with you. You'll never control how often or how loudly the messages come in about you.

But you can drown them out. **You can continuously remind yourself what God thinks about you.** You can stay so connected to Him that His voice is louder than anyone else's. And you can surround yourself with friends and Small Group Leaders who will repeat what's true about you over and over. You also have the privilege to do the same to those in your life.

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

As you head out today, I want you to know that the minute you step outside these doors, you'll encounter a message about who you are. It'll come from billboards, friends, family, and social media. And whether that message is good or bad, I want you to remember this: **What God says about you is the most important thing about you.** Nothing you hear is truer than His opinion of you, because He made you and He knows you best.

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TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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