



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Haters / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Assume the best, and trust God with the rest.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To challenge students not to label someone as a lost cause, but instead to believe the potential God could have for them.

SCRIPTURE

But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land." Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them." (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) (Joshua 2:2-6 NLT).

So the two men [the spies] set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night (Joshua 2:1b NLT).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Rahab, a prostitute, was an unlikely hero as the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land. Rahab didn't fit the Bible hero stereotype, and her poor life choices could have easily disqualified her from being used by God. Yet, despite her poor choices, God used her in a big way. This affirms the truth that what we assume God will or won't do in the lives of certain people might be way off. The truth is, it's tempting to look at a person's actions and reputation and pass judgment. However, just as God used Rahab despite her actions and reputation, God can use the people around us. And since we don't know a person's entire story, nor what God might have planned for a person, we should be careful not to rely on our assumptions and pass judgment.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

If you've watched more than a few movies, you've probably seen all kinds of tropes.

TENSION

We look at someone or observe what they say and do, and we immediately categorize who they are.

Interestingly, our assumptions about people tend to lean toward the negative.

And why do we assume the worst? I think we do this for two reasons.

1. Classifying people makes things easier.
2. We've seen this movie before, right?



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TEACHING OUTLINE

When we automatically assume that someone is bad, we might just be in the process of becoming a type of villain ourselves. We might be becoming haters.

That's the problem with a trope—it isn't always true.

TRUTH

That's exactly what happens in the life-story of a woman named Rahab in the Old Testament. God had promised the Israelites freedom in this new land, they referred to it as "The Promised Land."

The trip to get to the Promised Land was epic, and it took about 40 years. Once they arrived in the Promised Land, they discovered there was one small problem: Seven entire nations already lived there!

Joshua, the new leader of the Israelites after Moses, sent a couple of spies across the border to do some recon work in the city of Jericho, located in the land God had promised them.

A resident of the city, a woman named Rahab, offered her home as a place to hide until the spies could sneak out.

Rahab was a prostitute. Not exactly the kind of person you'd expect to be a Bible hero.

Later we learn the Hebrews eventually conquered the city of Jericho, and because of Rahab's brave act, Joshua spared her land and her family's lives.

More than a thousand years later, Rahab's name appears in the Bible. Why wouldn't Matthew just skip over her name and hope that no one noticed?

To show that what we assume about others isn't always true. God doesn't judge people by appearances. He doesn't determine our value based on what we do or say.

There's so much more to who you are than the assumptions others make about you.

APPLICATION

Assume the best, and trust God with the rest.

LANDING

As you leave today, think about some people you've put in a category, and then think about what it would look like to assume the best in them.

INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this week happens during the Introduction. For this Interactive, you'll play a quick game with three rounds. Give each small group a piece of paper and a pen. In the introduction we talk about tropes (recurring themes) in movies. For each round, give small groups 30 seconds to come up with as many movie examples of the trope mentioned.

- Round one: Hero gets the girl
- Round two: Ticking time bomb
- Round three: Bad guy turns out to be a good guy

After each round, the small group with the most correct answers wins (on their honor).



TEACHING SCRIPT

Haters / Week 2

PRELUDE

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BOTTOM LINE

ASSUME THE BEST, AND TRUST GOD WITH THE REST.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES + INTERACTIVE

If you've watched more than a few movies, you've probably seen all kinds of tropes. And what is a trope? Glad you asked. A trope is basically a concept or stereotype that the audience automatically understands. For example . . .

The hero gets the girl. Uh, duh, right? This is how the story always goes. We've seen it happen so many times that we just assume it'll happen every time. And if the hero doesn't *actually* get the girl, then it's considered a huge plot twist, right? That's what makes it a trope.

Another trope? **The bomb with the countdown timer.** Do bad guys ever leave a bomb somewhere *without* a timer counting down to doom? I guess not, because the good guys always seem to have that timer, letting them know how long they have to cut the blue wire. Or is it the green wire? See? Another trope.

And here's another one: **The bad person is actually a good person.** It basically goes like this: There's a character who's clearly villain. They're shady, and it seems like they're working against the hero. Villain. Case closed. But then there's a twist and we find out that, all along, this person was actually someone else entirely. You know these characters . . .

- Severus Snape from the *Harry Potter* series.
- The Grinch. Turns out, dude was just misunderstood and lonely.
- Steve, the bully from *Stranger Things* who turns out to be a nice guy.

These people fit a stereotype. Then they bust that stereotype.



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.

TENSION

2 MINUTES

This kind of stereotyping doesn't just happen in movies. In fact, we do it all the time. **We look at someone or observe what they say and do, and we immediately categorize who they are.** We see . . .

- The nerdy, awkward guy who slays at Calculus. So we naturally assume he gets a fail when it comes to sports.
- The guy who lives at the gym. He probably does *not* slay at Calculus.
- The girl with the perfect clothes, perfect Instagram, and perfect everything. Because she has everything going for her, she's probably a mean girl, right?

Whether it's the guy who constantly plays video games, the girl who parties every weekend, or the guy who seems to be a player, we see certain behaviors or characteristics and think we have someone totally figured out.

Interestingly, our assumptions about people tend to lean toward the negative.

Think about it. When we see that girl with the perfect Instagram, we don't typically think, *Wow, she's probably a really nice person. I bet she volunteers for charities in her free time.* Or the gym dude. We don't see him and think, *I bet he has 4.0 average and plays a mean violin.* No way.

And why do we assume the worst? I think we do this for two reasons.

1. **Classifying people makes things easier.** It's difficult to know someone right away. So our brain puts people in categories as a way of keeping things neat and organized.
2. **We've seen this movie before, right?** We know how this story goes because many times before, that's exactly how it has gone with the same kind of characters.

But when we automatically assume that someone is bad, we might just be in the process of becoming a type of villain ourselves. **We might be becoming haters.**

Putting people in categories has been going on since . . . forever. And you've seen the problem with it, right? You've seen assumptions be wrong, or you've experienced people making wrong judgments about you.

That's the problem with a trope—it isn't always true. The characters aren't always who you think they are.

TRUTH

6 MINUTES

That's exactly what happens in the life-story of a woman named Rahab in the Old Testament.

But before we tell her story, let's set the scene:

TEACHING SCRIPT

Thousands of years ago, God's people, the Hebrews, were slaves to the Egyptians. Through Moses, their leader, God set the Israelites free and sent them on a journey to a new land that would become their new home. And because God had promised the Israelites freedom in this new land, they referred to it as "The Promised Land."

The trip to get to the Promised Land was epic. They were chased by the Egyptian army, they received the Ten Commandments, God miraculously gave them food and water, just to name a few of the crazy amazing things that happened.

Oh yeah, the journey also took forty years. (Personally, I don't like driving more than two hours, so props to the Israelites for hanging in there.) So needless to say, this was not your typical road trip. With all they experienced, the Israelites were ready to finally be home.

But once they arrived in the Promised Land, they discovered there was one small problem: Seven entire nations already lived there!

So Joshua, the new leader of the Israelites after Moses, sent a couple of spies across the border to do some recon work in the city of Jericho, located in the land God had promised them.

But the spies were discovered and had to go with Plan B, which was to hide.

A resident of the city, a woman named Rahab, offered her home as a place to hide until the spies could sneak out. That's where we're going to pick up.

But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land." Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them." (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) (Joshua 2:2-6 NLT).

So Rahab not only hid the Israelite spies, but also lied to protect them, probably risking her life. This was an incredibly brave and generous thing to do for people she met five minutes ago.

And this noble act instantly made her a hero in this story. Great, right?

But the Bible also provides another detail about Rahab. Let's back up a few verses.

So the two men [the spies] set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night (Joshua 2:1b NLT).

Did you catch that? Rahab was a prostitute. Not exactly the kind of person you'd expect to be a Bible hero. And yet, that's exactly what she was. **The author makes it a point to tell us how she made a living.** And her story didn't end there.

Later we learn the Hebrews eventually conquered the city of Jericho, and because of Rahab's brave act, Joshua spared her land and her family's lives (which was crazy because she was a resident of Jericho, belonging to a people group that was an enemy of the Hebrews). It was typical back then, when conquering a land, to kill every one of your enemies. But Rahab was an exceptional hero.

TEACHING SCRIPT

But that's not the last we hear of her.

More than a thousand years later, Rahab's name appears in the Bible. This time in a genealogy, which is kind of like a family tree. And this isn't just *any* family tree; it's a list of names that documents *the lineage of Jesus!*

The book of *Matthew* is one of four books in the Bible that retells the life of Jesus. And Matthew starts his story of Jesus' life in a unique way: He traces Jesus' family origins.

Genealogies were a huge deal in this culture. So much of your social standing was connected to your family line. Matthew was writing with a Jewish audience in mind and trying to show them Jesus' Jewish roots and connection to King David (basically to prove He really was the Savior they'd been promised).

And do you know whose name you'll find on the list? *Rahab*. That's right, a prostitute is in the family line of Jesus! A woman with a bad reputation and a long list of haters. Why wouldn't Matthew just skip over her name and hope that no one noticed?

Simply put, to shatter our categories. **To show that what we assume about others isn't always true.** That what we think God will or won't do in the life of certain people might be way off.

The truth is, we don't know where someone's story started, or what will happen next. We can't rely on our assumptions about who they are. A non-Jewish prostitute was in the Jewish family history of Jesus! NO ONE saw that happening because no one else knew her story.

This holds such a big truth for us: **God doesn't judge people by appearances. He doesn't determine our value based on what we do or say.** He doesn't limit our potential to our worst choices. Instead, He looks at who we truly are—who He made us to be. He sees what is possible in our whole story, not just our "now."

This is great news because no matter what your reputation is, it doesn't tell your whole story. **There's so much more to who you are than the assumptions others make about you.**

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

The same is true of every person around you. They also have a bigger story than just what you observe during your third period class. Their reputation doesn't even begin to tell you who they really are.

Because of that, I want to challenge you to embrace two big ideas in one single phrase:

Assume the best, and trust God with the rest.

- 1. Assume the best.** Not all judgments have to be negative. You can choose to look at people—even people who make decisions you disagree with—and choose to assume good things about them. Just like you, they are so much more than what you see. Like you, they have a story with a background.

TEACHING SCRIPT

And besides just being a nice thing to do, assuming the best about people can also keep us from growing cynical and having a bad attitude about people in general. Being cynical is a miserable, unhappy, and lonely way of life. It's like professional hater-ism!

Being cynical doesn't happen overnight. It grows over time. **One of the best ways to avoid becoming a lifetime hater is to choose, over and over again, to assume the best in people around you.**

- 2. Trust God with the rest.** This is the part where you get to hand over your hater membership card and let God be God. Because when you assume the best about someone, it doesn't mean that they *won't* let you down. It *doesn't* mean they'll magically make great decisions. They're people, so odds are good that they're going to mess up. But remember: What you see is just a part of their story. And **your job isn't to manage the 10% of their story you can see. Your job is to let God manage the 90% you can't see.**

God knows a person's past, He knows what they're going through today, and He knows what can happen in their future. All you know is that they were annoying you at lunch! **So doesn't it make sense to trust the One who knows the entire story?**

Trusting God lets you move from being a hater to knowing it's handled. It allows you to believe that there may be more to their future story than you could possibly know.

I bet the people who knew Rahab in Jericho thought she was a lost cause. But God envisioned something *bigger and better*, and He used her past to communicate a powerful message to a group of 1st century readers of the book of *Matthew*—but also to millions of others in the thousands of years since. And that was a message of hope and possibility, no matter what your past looks like!

LANDING

1 MINUTE

As you leave today, think about some people you've put in a category.

And then think about what it would look like to assume the best in them. How would a positive assumption change how you treat them? What impact could that have on their life? And what would it be like to realize that, while you don't know their entire story, you can trust the One who does?

So make a choice this week to **assume the best, and trust God with the rest.**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS