



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## Be Humble / Week 1

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### SERIES OVERVIEW

#### SERIES SUMMARY

Is it possible to be humble like Jesus and be confident at the same time? This series encourages middle schoolers to explore what it means to follow the example of Jesus by being brave, being confident, deflating comparison, and to keep growing, all while being humble.

#### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

Be confident. Be brave. Be you. Be growing.

#### WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: Be confident, be humble.

WEEK 2: Be brave, be humble.

WEEK 3: Be you, be humble.

WEEK 4: Be growing, be humble.

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### SCRIPTURE

*God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God... Come near to God and he will come near to you (James 4:6b; 7a; 8a NIV).*

*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:10 NIV).*

*Come near to God... (James 4:8 NIV).*

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### NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

This series centers on what it means to choose humility, not necessarily in the way the world might suggest but rather, in the way God calls us to live. Because this may be a new or abstract thought for your students, be sure to define that term to get on the same page. For our purposes, humility simply means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance. With that, it's important to note to students the difference in being prideful and taking pride in something. We aren't asking students not to be proud of what they're good at, or show off their talents, or celebrate their hard work. In fact, it's the opposite! God created those things in them and gave them the very skills they're proud of. That's certainly something to take pride in, and we want to encourage students to not shrink from that under an obligation toward humility. Rather, we want them to see that they can take pride in things with both confidence and humility when they recognize that God, their Creator, is the reason those things are possible in them.

#### NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

For middle schoolers, it might be tricky for them to grasp how being humble and confident is different than being self-deprecating and prideful. Expect varying reactions from students and help your Small Group

Leaders remember that some students may not fully grasp this tension. You are purposefully pressing into these concepts so that middle schoolers can begin to develop that faith skill.

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## INTERACTIVE 1: WHAT SOCIETY SAYS VS. WHAT GOD SAYS

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll move between two signs that say "God" and "Society" to help bring some interest to the Truth section of your talk. For the remainder of your message, anytime you mention what society or God says, motion or interact with the signs.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 large posterboards
- A bold permanent marker
- A way to display the two posterboards on stage, like chairs with high backs, string suspended from the ceiling, or easels.

### PREP

1. Create two signs: One with the word "God" in bold letters and one with the word "Society."
  2. Display them on stage where everyone can see them clearly.
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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- We're starting a brand-new series called *Be Humble*. It's all about what it looks like for us to reflect Jesus' humility and confidence.
- Let's make sure we're on the same page when it comes to those words: humility and confidence.
- Humility simply means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance.
- Confidence is all about being certain of yourself or something else.
- When it comes to being humble, you may find yourself more familiar with what it means to be humbled.
- *[Tell a story from your own life about a time you were overconfident at something and quickly were humbled.]*

### TENSION

- We all tend to think we need to be a little prideful at times.
- There is a difference in taking pride in something and being prideful.
  - Taking pride in something simply means you value it.
  - Being prideful is when you feel like you need to be arrogant or better than everyone.
- We get messages that tell us this is normal from the world around us on the regular. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- For some of us, this works! At least for a little while, this pridefulness pushes us to reach our goals.
- But for others of us, this approach does little more than make us feel like a failure. No matter how hard we try or how prideful we are, it just doesn't work out for us.
- At the end of the day, pridefulness won't get us where we want to go.
- Even if it works for a little while, eventually, we'll be humbled along the way.

## TRUTH

- Good news: There *is* another way, but it isn't easy.
- To get started, we're going to look at a letter written by Jesus' very own brother, James.
  - *God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God... Come near to God and he will come near to you (James 4:6b; 7a; 8a NIV).*
- James' message here is the exact opposite of what society has been telling us our whole lives.
- *[INTERACTIVE: What Society Says vs. What God Says: This is where you'll move between two signs that say "God" and "Society" to help bring some interest to the Truth section of your talk.]*
- While it's the way I want to live, I find myself looking at this and thinking, *How do I actually do this?*
- A few verses later, James landed with this:
  - *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:10 NIV).*
- This is how we do it! By humbling ourselves before God and trusting that God will lift us up and help us when we do.
- Remember, humility means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance. So, when we humble ourselves, it means we get rid of that pridefulness and arrogance.
- What does this actually mean for you right now as a middle schooler? *[Give relevant examples.]*
- What happens when we choose to be humble? Well, as James said, God will lift us up. God will provide. And that's something we can be confident in!
- Be confident, be humble.
- Of course, you should be confident in the things you're good at and the person God made you to be! But that confidence shouldn't come from what you've done or how awesome you are; it should come from the God who made you and has a plan you can trust.
- So remember: Be confident, be humble.

## APPLICATION

- What does this mean for us right now? Well, let's look back at James' words:
  - *Come near to God . . . (James 4:8 NIV)*
- If we want to lead with humility and find our confidence in the right place, this is where it starts: by getting close to God!
- Proximity has a way of changing our perspective.
- When we come near to God, the way we see everything—including our sense of confidence and humility—changes.
- First, find one way to come near to God.
- Then, ask for confidence and humility.
- Remember, we can truly be confident, be humble.

## LANDING

- Imagine how your life might change if you chose to live with humility and confidence rather than take society's path to success.
- I think you'd be surprised at just how much things might change for you if you chose to be confident, be humble.
- Who do you know that demonstrates what it looks like to be confident and humble?

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## TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.

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# TEACHING SCRIPT

Be Humble / Week 1

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## BOTTOM LINE

BE CONFIDENT, BE HUMBLE

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## INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

What's up, everyone! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm super-excited because today we're starting a brand-new series called *Be Humble*. It's all about what it looks like for us to reflect Jesus' humility and confidence.

Before we go on, let's make sure we're on the same page when it comes to those words: **humility and confidence**. What do they mean to you? Take a second and tell somebody around you. *[Pause to give students time to share]*

**Humility simply means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance.** So, people who have humility are people who don't show off, don't act like they're the best, don't talk down to other people, and generally aren't out here acting like they're the greatest in the league.

**Confidence is all about being certain of yourself or something else.** When you're confident in your skills, yourself, your faith, your friends, and your identity, you aren't worried about what other people think. You're simply sure of who you are.

Now, when it comes to being humble, you may find yourself more familiar with what it means to be humbled. I think we've all been humbled more than we'd like to be. I know that's true for me!

### TELL A PERSONAL STORY

*Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .*

- Talk about a time you were overconfident at something and quickly were humbled.
- Maybe it was trying to nail a perfect dive in the pool, or winning a dunk contest, or asking someone out.
- Whatever it was, focus on the fact that, when it didn't go the way you thought, your pride was hurt.
- A sample story is included below.

*In middle school, I remember when I decided to tell my crush how I felt about her. I walked up to her with all sorts of swagger and all my friends behind me. I thought for sure that she would feel the same way. I quickly realized that was not the case when she told me clearly that she didn't feel the same way. . .in front of my entire group of friends.*

*While that experience definitely hurt my pride, I think you can probably relate.*

*I was proud of myself for stepping out and doing something brave. That's a really good thing! But if I had responded to what happened by acting like I was better than the other person, that would have been prideful. Sometimes we think being prideful is our only option.*

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## TENSION

2 MINUTES

If you're like me, you may have found yourself thinking this way too! You believe that to get what you want, to be who you want to be, to go where you want to go, you need to be at least a little prideful to start.

Now let's be clear: There is a difference in *taking pride* in something and *being prideful*. You and I should take pride in anything and everything we do: relationships, schoolwork, playing an instrument, playing a sport, getting a part in a play. Taking pride in something simply means you value it.

Being prideful though? That's next level.

Being prideful is when . . .

You feel like you need to be arrogant.

You feel like you need to be smarter, more popular, more athletic.

You feel like you need to be better than everyone else, and you want to know it and show it!

I think that's because we get messages like this from the world around us on the regular.

*Win at all costs.*

*Use other people to get to where you want to go.*

*Destroy your competition.*

*Be the best.*

That's what we think we have to do in order to get where we want to go in life.

And for some of us, this works! At least for a little while, this pridefulness pushes us to reach our goals. Even if we lose friends, hurt others, or act out of character along the way, we still get there in the end, which is really all we care about. It's what seems to be most important at the time.

But for others of us, this approach does little more than make us feel like a failure. No matter how hard we try or how prideful we are, it just doesn't work out for us the way it does for others. Once again, we're humbled pretty quickly, and our sense of self-worth and confidence are hurt right along with our pride.

No matter where you find yourself here, the truth is the same for all of us: At the end of the day, pridefulness won't get us where we want to go. It doesn't help us become the kind of people we want to be. In fact, it has the potential to really hurt people in the process. Even if it works for a little while, eventually, we'll be humbled along the way.

There has to be another way, right?

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## TRUTH

3 ½ MINUTES

Good news: There *is* another way!

Before I tell you what it is, let me give you a warning: This other way—this better way—*isn't* easy. In fact, it goes directly against just about everything we've learned about reaching our goals in this world.

To get started, we're going to look at a letter written by Jesus' very own brother, James. Let's jump in:

***God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. . . Come near to God and he will come near to you (James 4:6b; 7a; 8a NIV).***

James' message here is the exact opposite of what society has been telling us our whole lives.

### **INTERACTIVE: What Society Says vs. What God Says**

*This is where you'll move between two signs that say "God" and "Society" to help bring some interest to the Truth section of your talk. For the remainder of your message, anytime you mention what society or God says, motion or interact with the signs.*

Society says: Putting others before yourself will lead to failure.

God says: Putting others before yourself will lead to successful relationships and a full life.

Society says: Pursue yourself and your own desires.

God says: Submit to God, and God will lead you to an abundant life.

Society says: Strive for greatness at all costs.

God says: Resist the pull to strive, and you'll find peace.

Sounds pretty good, right? While it's definitely the way I want to live, I find myself looking at this and thinking, *How do I actually do this? How do I resist what society constantly says and instead follow and trust God?*

Well, a few verses later, James landed with this:

***Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:10 NIV).***

This is how we do it! By humbling ourselves before God and trusting that God will lift us up and help us when we do.

Remember, humility means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance. So, when we humble ourselves, it means we get rid of that pridefulness and arrogance. We humble ourselves before God and trust God to do the rest.

What does this actually mean for you right now as a middle schooler? Well, humbling yourself can look like . . .

- Apologizing when you're wrong.
- Serving someone else when you deserve to be helped yourself.
- Celebrating others even when there's a reason for you to be celebrated.
- Not bragging about your own skills or goals to make yourself look better.
- Not arguing when you know you're right.

- Supporting someone else who does better than you on a test.
- Being a good teammate even when your coach takes you off the starting lineup.

What happens when we choose to live this way? When we choose to be humble? Well, as James said, God will lift us up. God will provide. And that's something we can be confident in!

In fact, I think that's what we can take away from James' words today:

**Be confident, be humble.**

Here's the thing: James wasn't saying that we need to mope around and pretend to be bad at things we're good at. He didn't mean that we should look in the mirror and talk badly about ourselves or not be proud of the gifts and talents we have. That's not it at all! Of course, you should be confident in the things you're good at and the person God made you to be! But that confidence shouldn't come from what you've done or how awesome you are. It should come from the fact that you recognize Who created you and Who your gifts, and skills, and even the breath in your lungs come from: God! You can trust God's plan for your life. Because when you do, you can walk forward in confidence and humility knowing that, no matter the outcome, you're walking in God's plan for your life.

So remember:

**Be confident, be humble.**

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## APPLICATION

1 ½ MINUTES

What does this mean for us right now? Well, let's look back at James' words:

***Come near to God . . . (James 4:8 NIV).***

If we want to lead with humility and find our confidence in the right place, this is where it starts: **by getting close to God!**

See, proximity has a way of changing our perspective. The closer we are to something or someone, the more the way we see them changes. This is how our relationship with God works, too! When we come near to God, the way we see everything—including our sense of confidence and humility—changes.

That's where I want you to start this week.

First, **find one way to come near to God.** Maybe it's spending time in prayer, reading more of God's Word, listening to worship music, or just showing up to Small Group to talk more about what you believe. Maybe it's pausing a few times a day and simply acknowledging the fact that your life is the result of a really good God. Whatever it is, start by taking one small step to come closer to God and watch how your perspective changes as a result.

Then, **ask for confidence and humility.** When we come near to God, James shared that God will come near to us in return. And because of that, we aren't doing this whole humility thing on our own. We have God's real, up-close-and-personal help to guide us in being confident in God and the abilities we've been given. We have God's help in choosing humility even when it's hard.

Then, we can truly **be confident, be humble.**

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Imagine how your life might change if you chose to live with humility and confidence rather than take society's path to success.

If you didn't feel like you had to crush others on the way to reaching your goals...

If you could release the pressure you feel to measure up to others...

If you could let go of what the world says you have to do in order to win...

If you could celebrate your gifts with confidence, not arrogance...

I think you'd be surprised at just how much things might change for you if you chose to **be confident, be humble.**

Now, as you head to Small Group, I want you to think about this question:

**Who do you know that demonstrates what it looks like to be confident and humble?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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