



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Be Humble / Week 2

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.

SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. "Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

Middle schoolers are looking for inclusion and acceptance just about everywhere they turn. From friends, on social media, at school, even at church—their desire to be liked, accepted, and included is at an all-time high in this phase. Keep that in mind as you lead this conversation. Some may be aware of the ways they're twisting themselves into pretzels to find acceptance, but others may be doing it unconsciously. Your role isn't to point out where you see this in them, but instead, to ask questions and lead conversations in a way that will help them discover this for themselves. With that, as you talk about being brave and being themselves, keep in mind this isn't an easy thing for all your students. Depending on things like race, socio-economic status, and cultural context, choosing to be who they are may not be as easy or even safe for some students as it for others. The goal is simply to remind them that, regardless of how the world perceives you, in Jesus' eyes, you're loved and accepted just as you are.

NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

This week, we made a concerted effort to differentiate between having pride and being prideful. We can all agree that we want middle schoolers to take pride in something and value what they do. That's different from thinking they are better than and others are less than. In this phase, some middle schoolers may struggle to understand this, so patience and explanation will be key.

INTERACTIVE 1: BALANCE BEAM OLYMPICS

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll demonstrate how difficult it is to stay balanced by having three students compete in a mini-gymnastics competition where they'll complete a variety of balancing challenges.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A piece of wood or metal to serve as a balance beam (It should be strong enough to hold the weight of an adult!)
- A way to elevate a piece of wood or metal and keep it from moving when someone is walking across it
- Gold, silver, and bronze medals for the competitors
- 3 student volunteers
- A variety of balancing challenges like:
 - Simply walking across the beam
 - Doing a trick like walking across the beam, like a spin, jump, etc.
 - Walking across the beam with a blindfold on
 - Walking across the beam backward

PREP

1. Test the balance beam to make sure it's strong enough to bear the weight of an adult.
2. Secure the balance beam to the items you've used to elevate it so that it doesn't shift or move. Be sure that the beam isn't too high in order to avoid injuries.
3. Place the balance beam on stage or in front of your audience on the floor.

Safety Tips:

- To avoid potential injuries, be sure that the balance beam isn't elevated too high off the floor or stage.
- If you place the balance beam on stage, position it very far from the edge. You want to avoid students falling off during your Interactive!

INTERACTIVE 2: BACKPACK THE BALANCE BEAM

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll show how difficult it can be to balance when you're carrying something heavy by asking a student to walk across a balance beam with a backpack full of items that represent what weighs us down in life.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A strong, large backpack
- 10 items that are heavy and small enough to fit in a backpack (Bricks, large books, hand weights, large rocks, etc.)
- A balance beam placed on stage (You can use the same one from Interactive 1!)
- A student volunteer

PREP

1. Leave the balance beam set up from your first Interactive.
2. Place the backpack and items to put inside on stage where you can reach them easily.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Have you ever had to keep your balance on something?
- *[INTERACTIVE: Balance Beam Olympics: This is where you'll demonstrate how difficult it is to stay balanced by having three students compete in a mini-gymnastics competition where they'll complete a variety of balancing challenges.]*
- Like we just saw, balancing can be tricky!
- In order to stay standing and balanced, you have to stay steady and strong—right in the center.

TENSION

- We all walk through life wanting to be to be accepted, right?
- Whether we realize it or not, trying to gain acceptance takes a lot of balance. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- To get there, we must create this perfectly presented version of ourselves—the version we think people want us to be.
- That kind of pressure can eventually get too heavy to carry.
- *[INTERACTIVE: Backpack the Balance Beam: This is where you'll show how difficult it can be to balance when you're carrying something heavy by asking a student to walk across a balance beam with a backpack full of items that represent what weighs us down in life.]*
- It can be difficult to stay balanced when you're weighed down by so much.
- Every weight we put on us is something that we hope will change the way people see us.
- Even if it's hard to manage, even if we can't carry it all, even if it throws our whole lives off balance, we load ourselves up and walk around weighed down by the pressure of trying to elevate ourselves in the minds of others.
- Eventually, that gets too heavy to carry.

TRUTH

- Jesus saw firsthand that people were walking around with all sorts of heavy weights, and He wanted to help them carry those weights.
 - *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NLT).*
- When Jesus began, He was talking to people who were worn out, stressed out, and exhausted from the weight of the world they were carrying.
- In other words, He's talking to all of us!
- And what did Jesus tell us to do when we feel worn out by the weight of pride in our lives? Come to Him.
- Jesus wants you to give up the balancing act, lay down the pressure you feel, and give everything you're carrying to Him. When we do, we'll get rest in return.
- Then Jesus said something kind of weird.
 - *"Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29 NLT).*
- In this case, a yoke was basically a harness that went over two animals. This helped them share the load of whatever they were pulling.
- So, when Jesus told us to take up His yoke, He was telling us to attach ourselves to Him. Then, we don't have to hold the weight alone.
- Jesus has given you an invitation to follow Him. To choose humility over pridefulness and find rest when you do.
- Remember, humility means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance.
- When we choose humility, we're choosing to stop trying to balance it all and instead accept the help Jesus offers to carry it with us.

- But this isn't always easy. In fact, it takes a lot of courage to lay down the carefully created version of yourself and the pridefulness that tells you to protect it.
- Today, I want to challenge us all to do two things: Be brave, be humble.

APPLICATION

- Be brave, be humble.
- How do we start doing that right now?
 - Lay down the weight.
 - Be brave enough to be you.
- Humility requires you to be brave, and that can be scary.
- Remember, you're not doing this alone. You have adults like a parent, guardian, or Small Group Leader to support you and encourage you to trust God to lead you.
- Be brave, be humble.

LANDING

- Today, my prayer is that we would resist the pressure to be who other people want us to be.
- That we would let Jesus carry our burdens and give us rest.
- That we would choose to be brave, be humble right now as middle schoolers.
- What's one brave thing you can do this week to step toward humility?

TEACHING SLIDES

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



TEACHING SCRIPT

Be Humble / Week 2

BOTTOM LINE

BE BRAVE, BE HUMBLE

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

What's up, everyone! My name is _____, and I have a serious question for you.

Have you ever had to keep your balance on something?

Maybe a balance beam?

Or a bike?

Or a little tiny log over a stream in the woods?

Or maybe you've been snowboarding or waterskiing?

INTERACTIVE: Balance Beam Olympics

This is where you'll demonstrate how difficult it is to stay balanced by having three students compete in a mini-gymnastics competition where they'll complete a variety of balancing challenges.

[Note: When the competition is over, have the audience vote for their favorite athlete and give out gold, silver, and bronze medals.]

Like we just saw, balancing can be tricky! You can't lean too far to the left or too far to the right. You can't lean too far back or too far forward. You can't go too far in any direction. If you do, you'll probably fall.

In order to stay standing and balanced, you have to stay steady and strong—right in the center.

TENSION

3 ½ MINUTES

I don't know about you, but to me, this sounds a lot like life sometimes.

We all walk through life wanting to be to be accepted, right?

We want to have friends.

We want to be liked.

We don't want people to turn the other way when we walk into the room.

Whether we realize it or not, trying to gain acceptance takes a lot of balance.

We don't want to be too quiet, or people may think we're rude.
We don't want to act like the main character all of the time, or people might think we're too into ourselves.
We don't want to be forgettable, but we also don't want people talking about us behind our backs.
We want attention, but we don't want to be the center of attention.
We want to be included, but we don't want the pity invite.
We don't want to be too much, and we don't want to be not enough.

To get there, we have to create this perfectly-presented version of ourselves. And that version is exactly who we think people want us to be. That demands a lot of balance! In fact, that kind of pressure can eventually get too heavy to carry.

INTERACTIVE: Backpack the Balance Beam

This is where you'll show how difficult it can be to balance when you're carrying something heavy by asking a student to walk across a balance beam with a backpack full of items that represent what weighs us down in life.

Let's imagine this is you. *[Pull out the backpack.]* Whatever goes in here is what you'll have to carry around in your day-to-day life. We want to have friends and be accepted, so we start loading up our backpack with the things that we think will get us there.

Things like . . .

Don't talk too much. *[Add a weight to the backpack.]*
Don't be too quiet. *[Add a weight.]*
Be talented. *[Add a weight.]*
Don't show off. *[Add a weight.]*
Be smart. *[Add a weight.]*
Don't be a know-it-all. *[Add a weight.]*
Be popular. *[Add a weight.]*
But don't make people feel less than you. *[Add a weight.]*
Don't be too much. *[Add a weight.]*
Be enough. *[Add a weight.]*

This backpack just got really heavy! Would you want to carry this much weight around all the time? I sure don't!

[Bring up a volunteer. Ask them to put on the backpack and walk across the balance beam.]

As *[name of volunteer]* just showed us, it can be really difficult to stay balanced when you're weighed down by so much.

Every weight we put on us is something that we hope will change the way people see us. It's part of an image we want people to have of us. Even if it's hard to manage, even if we can't carry it all, even if it throws our whole lives off balance, this is what we do. We load ourselves up with these heavy weights and walk around weighed down by the pressure of trying to elevate ourselves in the minds of others.

And even if it works for a while, eventually, that gets too heavy to carry.

TRUTH

3 ½ MINUTES

The good news is that Jesus knew this was human nature. Jesus saw firsthand that people were walking around with all sorts of heavy weights, and He wanted to help them carry those weights.

How do I know? Well, because Jesus Himself said so. Take a look at this:

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28 NLT).

Okay, let's break this down!

When Jesus began, He was talking to people who were worn out, stressed out, and exhausted from the weight of the world they were carrying. He was talking to people who were struggling to balance it all. He was talking to people who were impacted by pridefulness in the world around them. The pridefulness of leaders in their lives, peer pressure, the government, religious rules and regulations, and more. In our world, we could say He's talking to those of us whose pridefulness pushes us to perform well in school, create the coolest content, own the best stuff, have the most friends and followers, never get in trouble, and more.

In other words, He's talking to all of us!

And what did Jesus tell us to do when we feel worn out by the weight of pride in our lives? **Come to Him.**

Jesus wants you to bring your burdens or weights to Him. He wants you to give up the balancing act, lay down the pressure you feel, and give everything you're carrying to Him. When we do, we'll get rest in return.

So far, so good, right? Well, then Jesus said something kind of weird.

“Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29 NLT).

Yoke? Like an egg yolk? See what I mean about weird?

In this case, a yoke was basically a harness that went over two animals. This helped them share the load of whatever they were pulling. In other words, they didn't have to carry the weight on their own.

So, when Jesus told us to take up His yoke, He was telling us to attach ourselves to Him. Then, we don't have to hold the weight alone. We don't have to figure everything out on our own, or try to find acceptance, or let pride keep us from finding balance in life. Instead, we can simply let Jesus lead us.

Pride that exists in the world around us does not have to determine how we feel or live. Instead, Jesus says His way is easier and lighter because He's humble and gentle, which is different than the prideful pressures that exist in the world around us.

Jesus has given you an invitation to follow Him. To give up the balancing act and let Him lead you toward what's best for you. To choose humility over pridefulness and find rest when you do.

Remember, **humility means freedom from pridefulness or arrogance.** There's a difference between taking pride in something and being prideful. Taking pride in something simply means you value that something. Being prideful is thinking that you're better than, above, or superior to something. When we

choose humility, we're choosing to be who we are authentically. We're choosing to stop trying to balance it all and instead accept the help Jesus offers to carry it with us. We're choosing to live freely and lightly, not under the pressure of acceptance from other people.

But this isn't always easy. In fact, it takes a lot of courage to lay down the carefully-created version of yourself and the pridefulness that tells you to protect it. It takes courage to choose to be the person God made you to be. But I think it's something we can all do, especially if we know we're not doing it alone.

Today, I want to challenge us all to do two things:

Be brave, be humble.

Start to take the weight out of your own backpack.
Choose to walk with a lighter load.
Let Jesus carry the weight of it with you.
And trust God to lead you as you go.

APPLICATION

1 MINUTE

Be brave, be humble.

How do we start doing that right now? I mean, is it even possible as middle schoolers? Absolutely it is!

And here's where I want you to start:

- 1) **Lay down the weight.** Think about what feels heavy in your life right now. What are you trying to balance? How is the weight pressuring you to be someone you're not? Start by taking that to God in prayer, asking for help to lay it down and find rest.
- 2) **Be brave enough to be you.** Being brave is releasing the weight and choosing to trust that the way of Jesus is best. That might mean...
 - Stepping into the life God created you to live.
 - Giving up all the ways you try to be someone else and embracing who you really are.
 - Letting go of all the pressure that's causing you to feel like you're not enough.
 - Following Jesus' example of how to live.

Humility requires you to be brave, and that can be scary. But remember, you're not doing this alone. Not only do you have God to help you, but you have trusted adults, like parents and guardians as well as Small Group Leaders, to support you, too. They want to encourage you to be who you are and trust God to lead you. They want to support you as you move toward two big things:

Be brave, be humble.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Today, my prayer is that we would resist the pressure to be who other people want us to be. That we would let Jesus carry our burdens and give us rest. That we would choose to **be brave, be humble** right now as middle schoolers. Then, I think we'll walk toward the full life Jesus promises us.

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

What's one brave thing you can do this week to step toward humility?



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
