



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## Take A Bow / Week 2

### SERIES OVERVIEW

#### SERIES SUMMARY

This series encourages high schoolers to explore the interesting tension between living a life of humility and confidence at the same time. Anchored in Jesus' understanding of humility, students will be challenged to occupy their God-given space in the world and to learn how to constantly weigh the tendency for entitlement and arrogance against Jesus' call to be humble.

#### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

A high schooler's guide for taking up your God-given space in the world.

#### WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: Don't leave your space blank

WEEK 2: When you follow Jesus, you will find real rest

WEEK 3: Don't measure your God-given space by the space occupied by someone else

WEEK 4: Your space in the world will change over time

### SCRIPTURE

*["Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens" (Matthew 11:28a NLT).*

*". . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28b NLT).*

*"Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you" (Matthew 11:29a NLT).*

*"Because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29b NLT).*

### NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

There may be no phase where fitting in and proving yourself feels like a bigger temptation than high school. Teenagers are constantly aware of the standards set by the culture around them. They know who they should be, how they should act, what they should like, what they should do, and who they should hang out with to fit in, at least by the world's standards. Even if they aren't conscious of it in the moment, they're in the thick of trying to measure up. That means the weight of that pressure is likely heavier in this phase than in any other. As you talk through this, give students space to be honest about what's weighing them down, first with themselves and then with your Group. Then, focus on helping them make the abstract idea of giving those burdens to Jesus and finding rest more concrete. Brainstorm what this looks like practically, encouraging students to try just one way of go to Jesus with the pressure, pride, and insecurity they may be crumbling under and look to find real rest.

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## INTERACTIVE 1: BACKPACK

### OVERVIEW

This is where you'll use a backpack and objects to demonstrate the weight that can weigh you down.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A backpack
- Items to add to the backpack, like a water bottle, a compass, a map, granola bars, etc.

### PREP

- Place the backpack and subsequent items to fill it with on stage where you can access it during your Talk.

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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- Do you ever feel stressed about what you're going to wear? *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Or do you ever feel stressed about how your hair looks? *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Sometimes, the simplest stuff can cause us the greatest stress.
- *[Tell a story about a time in your life (preferably in high school) about how you changed something about yourself or tried to do something that might help you fit in.]*
- I think we've all felt the weight of trying to be someone we're not, of striving to meet impossible standards, of feeling like we'll never measure up.
- Is life meant to be this heavy all the time? Or is there another way?

### TENSION

- In a recent interview, LeBron James was asked if he gets nervous taking last-minute shots. He said, "Not anymore. I'm *Him*."
- A sports website said you know you're Him when you have confidence, which causes "others to cower in fear."
- There's a humble confidence that comes from a different place, and it's a much lighter burden to carry than trying to be "Him" or "Her."
- A lot of us carry around two different kinds of burdens.
- The first is the burden of pride, which is when we're constantly trying to prove our worth.
- Pride is a heavy weight to carry. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- It's hard to feel like you're not measuring up. It's harder trying to be someone you weren't made to be, which is really trying to be anyone but you.
- Then there's the other burden, and in some ways, it's even heavier. It's the burden of feeling like you'll never be good enough.
- You don't want to take any risks or put yourself out there because you're afraid of failing, of looking stupid, of confirming what you secretly fear: that you're just not enough.
- *[INTERACTIVE: Backpack: This is where you'll use a backpack and objects to demonstrate the weight that can weigh you down.]*
- Carrying the weight of pride and insecurity is exhausting, painful, and heavy.
- There's good news here: You were made for more than walking around weighed down by pride or insecurity.
- Is there a way to put down the weight of these things and find rest?

## TRUTH

- The weights we all carry, the questions that keep us up at night—Jesus spoke directly to those places.
- Listen to what He said in Matthew’s account:
  - *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens” (Matthew 11:28a NLT).*
- Jesus knows that life is difficult; He knows that we all have struggles, fears, and insecurities.
- Jesus invites us to come to Him, to bring our burdens to Him.
- And it comes with a promise:
  - *“. . . and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28b NLT).*
- Jesus offers us a different way to live that isn’t so heavy.
- But how do we find that rest? Jesus told us that, too:
  - *“Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you” (Matthew 11:29a NLT).*
- And then He dropped the bombshell:
  - *“Because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29b NLT).*
- We spend so much of our energy and brain space struggling to prove ourselves or shutting down because we think we’re not worthy.
- Jesus doesn’t want that for us. He says the key to finding rest for our souls is to come to Him.
- What does going to Jesus look like? It’s about setting down that weight and choosing to stand in the truth that we are so precious to Him.
- Coming to Jesus is about understanding that your worth doesn’t come from what you do or what others think of you. It comes from the God who made you.
- Remember this: When you follow Jesus, you find real rest.
- You have a unique role to play—a space in this world that only you can fill.
- You can rest in the knowledge that you are loved and valuable, and you have a part to play in God’s story because God created you for this specific time and place.

## APPLICATION

- So, how do we embrace humility and find rest in a world that always tells us to hustle, compete, and perform?
- When you follow Jesus, you find real rest.
- Let me ask you to close your eyes and imagine yourself carrying a heavy backpack.
- Now, I want you to imagine setting that backpack down.
- As you do, silently pray:
  - *“Lord, look at this heavy backpack I’ve been carrying. I’ve been struggling and striving. You’ve seen it, but I don’t want to carry these heavy burdens anymore. I don’t want to strive, and perform, and pretend. Please help me embrace who You say I am. Please help my heart remember what You say is true about me.”*
- Now, I want you to imagine picking up a new backpack. This one is light, so it’s easier to carry.
- Imagine you’re opening the backpack. There, you see a simple note that says:
  - *“You are loved. You are enough. You have a purpose. I made you, and I love being with you as you live your life.”*
- Whenever you feel the weight of those old burdens trying to sneak back in, remember that you can always pray and ask God to help you set them down again.
- You are free to be who God made you to be.

## LANDING

- I know it’s not always easy to believe what God says is true about you.
- But here’s the thing: Our worth doesn’t come from what we do or others think of us. It comes from the God who made us.
- Follow Jesus. Let His way be your way. That’s when we find rest for our souls.
- May you have the courage this week to let God define who you are so that you can be who you were made to be and find rest.
- Remember, when you follow Jesus, you find real rest.

- What is one thing that feels heavy for you to carry right now?

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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

## Take A Bow / Week 2

### BOTTOM LINE

WHEN YOU FOLLOW JESUS, YOU WILL FIND REAL REST

### INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Let me ask you a question:

Do you ever feel stressed about what you're going to wear? You want the drip to be strong, but you're just not sure that it is. Sometimes, the fit looks amazing, and sometimes, you're not so sure.

Here's another question: Do you ever feel stressed about how your hair looks? Some of you would say an immediate, "Yes!" How many of you have never felt stress over how your hair looks one single day of your life? *[Pause to give students time to respond.]* You are incredibly lucky people!

Sometimes, the simplest stuff can cause us the greatest stress.

#### TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a time in your life (preferably in high school) about how you changed something about yourself or tried to do something that might help you fit in.
- Keep it short and light while still being honest about the worries you had about not measuring up.
- A sample story is included below.

*I've been there. In high school, I was stressed about so many normal things. I worried about my clothes being outdated, not knowing a trending artist, and being terrified of dancing in public. I thought if I could imitate certain people—their style, mannerisms, and interests—I'd feel better about myself. But the harder I tried to be someone else, the more miserable I became.*

Can you relate? Maybe what you're carrying looks different than what I was, but I think we've all felt the weight of trying to be someone we're not, of striving to meet impossible standards, of feeling like we'll never measure up.

So here's my question: Is this how life is supposed to be? Is it meant to be this heavy all the time? Or is there another way?

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## TENSION

4 MINUTES

In a recent interview, LeBron James was asked if he gets nervous taking last-minute shots. He said, “Not anymore. I’m *Him*.” If you’re a LeBron fan, that response fires you up. And if you’re a LeBron hater, you want to cringe hard at that. I get it, and it’s fun to say to our friends, “Are any of us really Him (or Her)?”

A sports website said you know you’re Him when you have confidence, which causes “others to cower in fear.” But in the first week of *Take a Bow*, we challenged the assumption that we need to tear others down to feel like we’re okay ourselves. There’s a humble confidence that comes from a different place, and it’s a much lighter burden to carry than trying to be “Him” or “Her.”

What if you didn’t have to be “Him” or “Her”? What if you can’t be? **What if you were just meant to be you?**

A lot of us carry around two different kinds of burdens. The first is the burden of **pride, which is when we’re constantly trying to prove our worth**. Pride is a heavy weight to carry.

Think about it:

- You’re always comparing yourself to others, trying to outdo them.
- You’re exhausted from putting on a show and pretending to be perfect.
- You’re stressed about maintaining your image and reputation.
- You feel like you can never let your guard down and never be vulnerable.

It’s a lot of pressure, isn’t it? For example, did you know that a “like” on a social media post can make you feel bad about yourself? No, seriously, did you know that sometimes, when we post something online, and people respond positively, it can make us more, not less anxious?

When we present an edited version of ourselves online that doesn’t match how we truly feel, positive responses to that inauthentic image can increase our anxiety. We assume people wouldn’t like the real us, so their approval of our curated persona makes us feel more insecure. It’s the type of post where what we put out for the world to see isn’t who we believe ourselves to be.

This all happens a bit subconsciously, yet still, it gets heavy. And we don’t just project our digital selves, we do this in real life too. It’s hard to feel like you’re not measuring up. It’s harder trying to be someone you weren’t made to be, which is really trying to be anyone but you.

It’s exhausting trying to be the best or trying to be someone you’re not. And the crazy thing is, there will always be someone smarter, prettier, or more talented. It’s an unwinnable chase.

Then there’s the other burden, and in some ways, it’s even heavier. **It’s the burden of feeling like you’ll never be good enough**. And when you carry this kind of burden, it’s easy to want to shrink back—to make yourself small. You don’t want to take any risks or put yourself out there because you’re afraid of failing, of looking stupid, of confirming what you secretly fear: that you’re just not enough.

## **INTERACTIVE: Backpack**

*This is where you'll use a backpack and objects to demonstrate the weight that can weigh you down.*

It's kind of like this. *[Hold up a backpack.]* You're lugging a heavy backpack everywhere—school, practice, hanging out with friends. This form of working out is called rucking, which is building endurance by carrying a weighted pack long distance. But when you're rucking, you're not just carrying the pack. You're carrying your gear, your supplies, your food and water. *[Add items to backpack.]* It's a heavy load. And over time, it wears you down. Your body aches, and your whole vibe feels crushed.

That's what carrying the weight of pride and insecurity feels like. It's exhausting and painful. The longer you carry it, the heavier it gets.

But what if you could put that pack down? What if there was a way to find rest and relief? There's good news here. **You were made for more than walking around weighed down by pride or insecurity.**

So, what do we do? How do we learn to be confident in who we are without constantly feeling the need to prove ourselves?

Is there a way to put down the weight of these things and find rest?

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## TRUTH

2 ½ MINUTES

You know, it's amazing to me how Jesus always seemed to zero in on the things that matter most. The weights we all carry, the questions that keep us up at night—Jesus spoke directly to those places.

Listen to what He said in Matthew's account:

***“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens” (Matthew 11:28a NLT).***

In other words, He knows that life is difficult. He knows that we all have struggles, fears, and insecurities. And He doesn't shame us for that. Instead, He invites us to come to Him, to bring our burdens to Him.

And it comes with a promise:

***“... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28b NLT).***

Jesus offers us a different way to live that isn't so heavy. Isn't that what we want? Rest from the constant striving, performing, and proving.

But how do we find that rest? Jesus told us that, too:

***“Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you” (Matthew 11:29a NLT).***

In other words, “Walk with Me. Learn from Me. Do life My way.”

And then He dropped the bombshell:

***“Because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29b NLT).***

We spend so much of our energy and brain space struggling to prove ourselves or shutting down because we think we’re not worthy. But Jesus doesn’t want us to carry those burdens like a rucksack. **Jesus says the key to finding rest for our souls is to come to Him.**

What does going to Jesus look like? It’s not about our usual approaches of making ourselves small or putting ourselves down. It’s about remembering what He says about us. It’s about stepping into His true view of who we are and resting there. It’s about setting down that weight and choosing to stand in the truth that we are so precious to Him.

Coming to Jesus is about understanding that your worth doesn’t come from what you do or what others think of you. It comes from the God who made you. It comes from His opinion of you. You are incredibly valuable to Jesus, and when you know this truth, you can rest in it.

Remember this:

**When you follow Jesus, you find real rest.**

You have a unique role to play—a space in this world that only you can fill. You don’t have to strive so much anymore. You don’t have to prove your worth or earn your place. You can rest in the knowledge that you are loved and valuable, and you have a part to play in God’s story because God created you for this specific time and place.

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## APPLICATION

1 ½ MINUTES

So, how do we live this out? How do we embrace humility and find rest in a world that always tells us to hustle, compete, and perform?

As we said, **when you follow Jesus, you find real rest.** So, let’s practice that.

I want to give you a chance to symbolically release the heavy burdens you’ve been carrying. I promise it won’t be weird.

Let me ask you to close your eyes and imagine yourself carrying a heavy backpack. Picture all the weights you’ve been shouldering—the pressure to perform, the fear of not measuring up, the exhaustion of trying to be someone you’re not.

Now, I want you to imagine setting that backpack down. Just letting it go.

And as you do, silently pray:



*“Lord, look at this heavy backpack I’ve been carrying. I’ve been struggling and striving. You’ve seen it, but I don’t want to carry these heavy burdens anymore. I don’t want to strive, and perform, and pretend. Please help me embrace who You say I am. Please help my heart remember what You say is true about me.”*

As you continue with your eyes closed, I want you to imagine picking up a new backpack. But this one is light, so it’s easier to carry. Imagine you’re opening the backpack. Take a look inside. There, you see a simple note that says: *“You are loved. You are enough. You have a purpose. I made you, and I love being with you as you live your life.”*

Carry that truth with you this week. And whenever you feel the weight of those old burdens trying to sneak back in, remember that you can always pray and ask God to help you set them down again.

**You are free to be who God made you to be.**

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

I know it’s not always easy to believe what God says is true about you. Trust me, I struggle with it, too. But here’s the thing: **Our worth doesn’t come from what we do or others think of us. It comes from the God who made us.** When we start to live from that place, embrace our God-given identity and space in the world, and step fully into our God-given space, we find freedom. Jesus will help us do that.

Follow Jesus. Let His way be your way. That’s when we find rest for our souls.

So, may you have the courage this week to let God define who you are so that you can be who you were made to be. May you find rest and peace as you walk humbly with your God.

Remember, this week, **when you follow Jesus, you find real rest.**

When you head to Small Group, think about your response to this question:

**What is one thing that feels heavy for you to carry right now?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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