



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Take A Bow / Week 4

SERIES OVERVIEW

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

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT).

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to (Philippians 2:5-6 NLT).

He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Matthew 26:37-39 NLT).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

Patience is hard for most any of us, but it's especially challenging for teenagers. This generation is growing up in an on-demand world. That means they're conditioned to get what they want when they want it in most areas of life. So, asking them to develop the discipline and patience to wait on growth and change is a big ask! For some students, this is made even more challenging by the perceived lack of growth they've seen in their lives so far. Be sensitive to the students who have prayed and waited for change and growth but feel as though it hasn't come. That's a very real tension to sit in, and we don't want to brush over it. Instead, let students acknowledge the ways in which waiting on growth has been challenging and even disappointing so far. Then, remind everyone that, because growth takes time, it's never too late to see it happen. No matter what, we can humbly trust that God is working in our lives even if seeing the fruit of that work takes time.

INTERACTIVE 1: FILLING THE CIRCLE

OVERVIEW

This is where you'll use a circle to represent your life and everything that you think makes you valuable.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Two large posterboards
- Marker
- A way to display your posterboard (Easels, chairs, etc.)

PREP

- On one posterboard, draw an empty circle.
- On one posterboard, draw a circle that is filled in.

INTERACTIVE 2: ROOM TO GROW

OVERVIEW

This is where you'll use a physical plant or a picture of a plant to illustrate the way things grow over time.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A small plant or picture of a plant
- If using a picture, a way to display the image to your students.

PREP

- If using a plant, place it where you can easily access it during your Talk.
- If using an image of a plant, have it loaded and ready to display during your Talk.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- How many of you like to find an easy way out of things?
- *[Tell a story from your own life about a time when you tried to find an easy way out of something.]*
- We've been in this series, *Take a Bow*, where we've been talking about confidence and humility.
- Humility is thinking about yourself correctly.
- And with that, humility and confidence can coexist.

TENSION

- *[INTERACTIVE: Filling the Circle: This is where you'll use a circle to represent your life and everything that you think makes you valuable.]*
- Sometimes, we're not happy with the life that we've been given.
- Maybe we feel overwhelmed that the expectations of others or the expectations we have for ourselves are just too much. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Maybe we feel like we want more space to step into, and we're frustrated with opportunities we aren't getting. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Maybe we feel fearful, and it's tempting not to show up at all. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- With that in mind, the question is: If you want your circumstances or your life to change, is that wrong?

- To be clear, it's not wrong to want your life to change. It's not wrong to ask God for more, and it's not wrong to ask God for less.
- Part of the reason this discussion about living a life of humility and confidence is so important is that life constantly changes.
- You have permission to let go of things that are draining you, and you have permission to want to grow as a person.
- Growing things change. It's how we respond to those changes that matter.
- So, how do we change in a way that's helpful and healthy, full of confidence and humility?

TRUTH

- The apostle Paul understood the tension of humility and confidence well.
 - *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT).*
- Paul got right to the point! Take a bow and be humble!
- And then he made a subtle statement that's often overlooked:
 - *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:4 NLT).*
- Paul implied that true humility and confidence rest in learning how to constantly shift between your own interests and the interests of others.
- He punctuated his point by giving us unbelievable advice:
 - *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to (Philippians 2:5-6 NLT).*
- Paul said that we should have the same attitude as Jesus.
- In Matthew 4, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Matthew wrote that Jesus went out into the wilderness where He was tempted.
- While there, Jesus was asked to throw Himself into harm's way and see if God would protect Him to prove that He is God's Son.
- Could Jesus have done this and some? Yes! But Jesus chose to humble Himself.
- Matthew wrote about a time three years later when Jesus was in a garden called Gethsemane:
 - *He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Matthew 26:37-39 NLT).*
- Jesus seemed to understand the extreme suffering that was coming His way.
- In the same breath, Jesus seemed to reconcile Himself to who He is and why He exists. Jesus humbled Himself to do what He came to do.
- Jesus showed us an example of how to live so we can become more like Him.
- If we want to navigate life's changes in healthy ways, we must learn when to step back and when to step forward.
- Think of it this way: Your space in the world will change over time.
- It's freeing to know that your life is always changing, and when we pay attention, we can see those changes for what they are.
- We must learn, develop wisdom, and always consider others first, but we also have to consider who God created us to be.

APPLICATION

- In light of what we talked about today, here are three suggestions:
 - First, don't force your way to growth.
 - Second, give growth time.

- *[INTERACTIVE: Room to Grow: This is where you'll use a physical plant or a picture of a plant to illustrate the way things grow over time.]*
 - o Lastly, always ask for help.

LANDING

- Your life is constantly changing, and it will continue to change.
- A big part of continuing to become the amazing person God created you to be is learning how to manage confidence and humility as you grow.
- Your space in the world will change over time.
- Living a life of humility and confidence starts with learning to be your true self in the moment you're in and trusting God with what comes next.
- Throughout your life, how has your God-given space changed?

TEACHING SLIDES

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



TEACHING SCRIPT

Take A Bow / Week 4

BOTTOM LINE

YOUR SPACE IN THE WORLD WILL CHANGE OVER TIME

INTRODUCTION

2 ½ MINUTES

I want to start with a question that might not apply to everyone but will definitely be understood by everyone: How many of you like to find an easy way out of things? *[Pause to give students a chance to respond.]*

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a time when you tried to find an easy way out of something.
- Maybe it was using a cheat code in a video game, or skimping on the laps you had to run at practice, or getting your siblings to do your chores instead of doing them yourself.
- Keep your example light.
- A sample story is included below.

A while back, I was playing a video game known for being one of the most difficult games you can ever play. I put hours and hours into beating this game. I got about halfway through, and toward the end, I got completely stuck. No matter what I did, there was nothing I could do to get past this point in the game: the boss fight. If you don't play video games, a boss is like the big battle at the end of a level that you have to beat to be able to move forward. It's supposed to be harder than any other moment in the game, and this boss lived up to that challenge.

After dozens of attempts, I finally started to think differently. Instead of using my sword, I used a bow and arrow. Instead of rushing the boss as fast as I could, I hung back far away. Eventually, I realized that there was a spot on the map where I could stand, and the boss wouldn't be able to hit me, but I could hit him. Kind of cheap, right? I had tried so many times, so I decided to take the cheap way out. And do you know what happened? I beat the boss. But it didn't feel nearly as good as I thought it would. Why? Because I didn't really beat the boss. I got there the easy way. There is actually a name for this in the video game world. It's called "cheesing" a boss. Cheesing a boss is when you take the easy, cheap path to victory. And any time you do that, you can't brag about it because you didn't beat the boss the way you were supposed to; you just skipped around them.

We all know what it's like to take the easy way forward, right?

We've been in this series, *Take a Bow*, where we've been talking about confidence and humility. It's easy to think about humility as just thinking lowly of yourself. You know, when someone compliments you, you brush it off, or you never admit that you're good at something because it gives you the ick. But what we've learned together the past few weeks is that humility isn't that at all. Instead, **humility is thinking about yourself correctly**. And with that, **humility and confidence can coexist**. We can live completely confidently and humbly at the same time.

TENSION

2 MINUTES

Let's use this circle again to illustrate.

INTERACTIVE: Filling the Circle

This is where you'll use a circle to represent your life and everything that you think makes you valuable.

[Show the large, empty circle.] In this illustration, this circle represents your life and who God created you to be. That means that living a life of humility and confidence is living in such a way that you fill this space. *[Show the filled in circle.]* Not going outside of it, not taking space that isn't yours, and not shrinking to be less than. Instead, humility starts with recognizing that this is who God created you to be and living your life in a way that reflects that, including how you love and encourage others.

But here's the thing: **Sometimes, we're not happy with the life that we've been given.**

Maybe we feel overwhelmed that the expectations of others or the expectations we have for ourselves are just too much. Maybe your parents are fighting so much that you've had to take on roles at home you don't want to. Your younger siblings are looking to you for stability, and you don't want to be the strong one. You feel overwhelmed because you're asked to take up too much space.

Maybe we feel like we want more space to step into, and we're frustrated with opportunities we aren't getting. Maybe a parent is sick, and you've had to step up in ways you don't want to. You wish you could focus on other things. Or maybe you want more playing time or a more significant role in that production, but your coach or teachers just don't see your potential. That can be so frustrating!

Maybe we feel fearful, and it's tempting not to show up at all. Maybe you want to run for student government, but you don't think you'll win, so you don't even try. You're overly concerned about what others think, and you're really struggling to see yourself the way God sees you. So, you shrink. You make yourself less than because trying at all is just terrifying.

With that in mind, the question is: If you want your circumstances or your life to change, is that wrong?

To be clear, it's not wrong to want your life to change. It's not wrong to ask God for more, and it's not wrong to ask God for less. Life is always changing. Part of the reason this discussion about living a life of humility and confidence is so important is that life constantly changes. And because life changes, you have permission to let go of things that are draining you, and you have permission to want to grow as a person. **Growing things change.** It's how we respond to those changes that matter.

So, how do we change in a way that's helpful and healthy, full of confidence and humility?

Fortunately, we have amazing examples.

TRUTH

4 MINUTES

The apostle Paul understood the tension of humility and confidence well. After Paul started following Jesus, he started churches and wrote more New Testament books than anyone else. In a letter to a church in Philippi, Paul encouraged Jesus' followers this way:

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT).

Paul got right to the point!

Don't always be about getting what you want.
Don't be more than you are.
Don't play the comparison game.
Don't exist to impress other people.

Take a bow.
Be humble.

And then he made a subtle statement that's often overlooked. So, let's revisit it here:

Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too (Philippians 2:4 NLT).

Paul didn't say your own interests don't matter or that you should never consider yourself at all. No, Paul implied that true humility and confidence rest in learning how to constantly shift between your own interests and the interests of others.

And Paul punctuated his point by giving us unbelievable advice. He wrote:

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to (Philippians 2:5-6 NLT).

Paul said that we should have the same attitude as Jesus. Then, he gave a really important aspect of Jesus' attitude. Jesus did not consider equality with God "something to cling to." This is also translated as "something to be used to his own advantage."

And wow, do we have examples of Jesus living this out!

In Matthew 4, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Matthew wrote that Jesus went out into the wilderness where He was tempted. While there, Jesus was asked to throw Himself into harm's way and see if God would actually protect Him to prove that He is God's Son. Was Jesus God's Son? Could Jesus have done this and some? Yes! But Jesus chose to humble Himself.

Matthew wrote about a time three years later when Jesus was in a garden called Gethsemane. Jesus knew what was about to happen, and He knew how difficult it would be. Here's what happened:

He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Matthew 26:37-39 NLT).

This was an incredible moment! Jesus seemed to understand the extreme suffering that was coming His way. Very soon after this, Jesus was arrested, beaten, and crucified. And here, right before all of that, Jesus asked God if there could be a different way. It's as if Jesus was saying, "Is there any way I do not have to do this?"

But in the same breath, Jesus seemed to reconcile Himself to who He is and why He exists. He decided not to manipulate things to His own advantage, even though He could have. Instead, Jesus humbled Himself to do what He came to do.

As we read in the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus could have flexed and been all that He is and then some. But Jesus didn't do that. Three years later, at the end of His life, Jesus realized that the pain He was about to suffer would be so intense, and He asked God if He could avoid that pain. But Jesus decided to live out His purpose. Jesus showed us an example of how to live so we can become more like Him.

While certainly not to this extreme, the same idea applies to us. If we want to navigate life's changes in healthy ways, we must learn when to step back and when to step forward.

Think of it this way:

Your space in the world will change over time.

It's freeing to know that your life is always changing, and when we pay attention, we can see those changes for what they are. You have permission to let some space go when it isn't yours to occupy. And you have permission as you grow to be the fullest, best version of the person God created you to be. We have to learn, develop wisdom, and always consider others first, but we also have to consider who God created us to be.

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

In light of what we talked about today, here are three suggestions:

First, don't force your way to growth. One of the biggest temptations you'll face is wanting more sooner than you should or more than is good for you. The easy route is usually never worth it, and a good result will always cost something, but it shouldn't hurt ourselves or others. Control what you can control: the condition of your heart, how you love, serve, and encourage others, being a great daughter or son, classmate, teammate, and friend. Be your true self in the moment and season you're in. Then, trust God with what comes next.

Second, give growth time. Humility and confidence are one area of your journey where time is your friend. Growth takes time, and instant growth usually never ends well. Just know that you will probably wrestle with this process most of your life, and that's okay. If you find yourself feeling stuck, then trust that God is growing you right where you are.

INTERACTIVE: Room to Grow

This is where you'll use a physical plant or a picture of a plant to illustrate the way things grow over time.

Think about this plant. *[Show plant or image of the plant.]* You can water it and give it the right amount of sunlight, but you can't force it to grow. That's because growth takes time.

In the same way...

- Building a new habit takes time.
- Getting through high school takes time.
- Growing in your faith takes time.

But in the process, something powerful is being built in you, and your character, just like a beautiful plant, is being forged over time!

Lastly, always ask for help. Share how you're feeling with your friends, Small Group Leaders, a trusted adult, and God. Share your feelings with people who can help you see and understand your life and circumstances right now. Sometimes, others have a better perspective of our lives than we do. They can be more objective.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Your life is constantly changing, and it will continue to change. Sometimes, you'll have the starring role, and sometimes, you'll be a supporting cast member. A big part of continuing to become the amazing person God created you to be is learning how to manage confidence and humility as you grow.

So, take a bow. Be humble. **Your space in the world will change over time.** Growing things change. We can't always see how our lives will change, but living a life of humility and confidence starts with learning to be your true self in the moment you're in and trusting God with what comes next.

When you go to Group, think about this question:

Throughout your life, how has your God-given space changed?



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
