



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Worth Repeating / Week 2

[PRELUDE](#)

[SOCIAL](#)

[WORSHIP](#)

[STORY](#)

[GROUPS](#)

[HOME](#)

SERIES SUMMARY

A four-week series on the Parables of Jesus.

WEEK 1: God loves you even when you're lost.

WEEK 2: At God's party, the invitation is for us all.

WEEK 3: When it comes to prayer, don't quit because it's quiet.

WEEK 4: Putting others first changes us and our relationships for the better.

SCRIPTURE

The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame." "Sir," the servant said, "what you ordered has been done, but there is still room." Then the master told his servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full" (Luke 14:21-23 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- When we get an invitation to join or be part of something that we're excited about, we feel amazing.
- Tell a personal story about a time when you received a really exciting or cool invitation.

TENSION

- While getting an invitation we're excited about is cool, the reality is that we won't be invited to a lot of things. And sometimes we feel that way about faith.
- When it comes to Christianity, we can feel like the actual guest list is pretty small.

- Sometimes we believe our choices and actions keep us from having a relationship with God. We think we have to be good, right, and have it all together, so when we don't see ourselves that way, we think we're off God's guest list.
- Sometimes we think other people should be left off of God's guest list because in our opinion, they're "not worthy."
- If we were in charge of God's guest list, we'd probably struggle to find anybody to invite, including ourselves. But is that how God wants it to be?

TRUTH

- Through simple stories Jesus told to His followers, He taught us really important truths about God.
- Luke wrote down a parable that described Jesus' response to a Pharisee questioning who would be in God's Kingdom. Jesus explained that there was a man who invited a lot of "respectable" people to a party, but they all made excuses for why they couldn't make it. In response, the man invited everyone—especially those considered less respectable—to the party. No matter how the world saw them, they were invited and wanted. (*Luke 14:21-23*)
- This parable explains that we can get so focused on doing the right thing that we miss having a relationship with God. No matter who we are, what we've done, or what other people think about us, we've made God's guest list. We simply have to accept His invitation.
- At God's party, the invitation is for us all.

APPLICATION

- We can change the way we see our faith and God's invitation by:
 - Remembering that God is inviting us to spend a life following Him.
 - Recognizing that His invitation is open to all of us.
 - Extending the invitation to others.
- At God's party, the invitation is for us all.

LANDING

- What's one reason I think I may not be invited to God's party?

YOUR STUDENTS

When it comes to a conversation about who should or shouldn't be invited to or accepted at church, middle schoolers are quick to point fingers. It's easier for them to look outside of themselves and pinpoint behaviors, choices, or lifestyles in other people that should exclude them from God's party than it is for them to recognize or admit those things in themselves. That's why, in conversations like this one, it's better to speak in more general terms first (i.e., asking questions about "most middle schoolers") before getting them to think specifically about themselves.

INTERACTIVE: AN OPEN INVITATION

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use a prop (a chair with balloons) to illustrate the truth that there's always room for more people at God's party. The invitation is for us all!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- An empty chair
- Multi-colored balloons filled with helium

HOW-TO

To help explain one of Jesus' parables in this week's talk, you'll place an empty chair on stage and tie helium-filled balloons to the backrest or legs. As you go through the Truth and Application sections of your message, you'll draw parallels between the empty chair and the invitation God extends to all of us to follow Him. Check out your Teaching Script for prompts on when to weave this Interactive into your talk.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Worth Repeating / Week 2

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

BOTTOM LINE

AT GOD'S PARTY, THE INVITATION IS FOR US ALL.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

Have you ever received an invitation so great that it made you feel amazing? Maybe it was an invitation to a party that left you feeling like the coolest person on the planet. Maybe it was an invitation to join the basketball team this year, or an invitation to hang out with a new friend, or even an invitation to join us here at church. When you get an invitation to join or be a part of something that you're really excited about, it's a pretty great feeling, isn't it?

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a time when you received a really exciting or cool invitation.
 - Maybe it was an invitation to a party, or to go on a cool trip, or to sit at the lunch table with a new friend, or to be a part of a new team.
 - Be sure to highlight how special, loved, or included the invitation made you feel.
-

TENSION

2 MINUTES

Getting invited to be a part of something that we're really excited about is so cool. But I think we all know that there are some invitations we'll probably never receive. If *[insert names of musicians who are popular with your students]* were hosting a big album release in New York City. Or if Tom Brady *[or your students' favorite football star]* was hosting a Super Bowl party. Or if Will Smith was having a big New Year's Eve bash. Those guest lists would probably be pretty exclusive. I know my name definitely wouldn't be on them! And if your name would be, you need to tell me how you made that happen!

My point is this: Our chances of getting that kind of invitation are pretty slim. We're not cool enough, or famous enough, or fancy enough to get invited to a party like that! And honestly, I think sometimes we feel the same way about this whole faith thing.

When it comes to Christianity, sometimes we feel like the actual guest list is pretty small. Sure, we hear all this stuff about how everybody is supposed to be welcomed and included by God. But we don't always feel like that's true. Something in us believes that we don't belong with God. Maybe it's because of the choices you made last weekend, or the way you speak to your parents, or the things you do in secret that you don't want anyone to know. Or maybe you feel like you don't read your Bible enough, or pray every day, or even understand most of what we talk about here at church. All of those things certainly would count us out with God, right? **To sit at His table, we think we have to be good, or right, or have it all together. And because we don't always see ourselves that way, we believe that means we've somehow been left off His guest list.**

Maybe you haven't thought that about yourself, but **you've definitely thought it about other people.** That bully at school or the girl on your soccer team you just can't get along with? You think they certainly don't belong at God's party. The classmate that always says the rudest comments or the guy who treats girls so terribly? You feel that they shouldn't be included here at church. Maybe you've looked around this room and thought, *"Do they really belong here? Why would God put people like that on His guest list?"*

Truth be told, if God put us in charge of determining who's in and who's out when it come to following Him, I think **we'd struggle to find anybody to include.** We may not even include ourselves! And that makes me wonder: Is that really the way God wants it to be?

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

In this series, we're looking at some of the stories that Jesus shared with His followers while He was on Earth. They're called parables, and they're stories that are definitely worth repeating. Why? Because **through these simple stories, Jesus taught us really important truths about God.**

Luke, a close follower of Jesus, wrote down the parable we're going to look at today. And guess what it's about? A party! That's right, Jesus actually had a lot to say about parties, guest lists, and invitations.

One day, Jesus was at a dinner party at a religious leader's house. The religious leader was part of a group of people called the Pharisees. Basically, the Pharisees thought that following God meant you had to follow the rules so closely that you'd never break one of God's laws. **But even though they thought they were following God by obeying all of these rules, they often missed God Himself.**

While at dinner, one of the dinner guests brought up the great banquet—the big party that's going to be in God's Kingdom when we live with Him forever. And in response, Jesus told a story—a parable.

In the parable, there was a man who invited a lot of people to a party. But when the time came for his guests to arrive, all of them suddenly came up with excuses for why they couldn't come. One by one they told the man's servant that they weren't going to make it. Rude, right?

Now if I were this guy, I would've just given up and cancelled the whole thing. But instead, the man did something different:

The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Luke 14:21 NIV).

Remember how we said Jesus used parables to teach us new things about God? Well, if that's the case, then this story is about so much more than just a guy whose friends stood him up for a party! It's about the people God invites to follow Him in real life.

Jesus was telling this story to the Pharisees—the religious, rule-following folks. In the first part of the story, only the most respected people were invited to the party. In other words, the religious leaders got invitations. But they all made excuses about why they couldn't come.

Jesus was relating the story He was telling to the situation He was actually in. He was right there among the religious leaders. God Himself was standing among the Pharisees! But they were missing Him. They were so focused on other things that they were missing out on the main thing: Jesus!

You and I might be able to relate. **We might get so focused on doing the right thing that we miss God. We might think that all God wants from us is obedience, when the main thing He wants is our hearts—a relationship with Him.** The obedience will follow after that.

Now, back to the story. There were other folks who *did* come to the party. Did you catch who did?

“The poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.”

In other words, the people who the Pharisees viewed as less respectable.

Let's look back at what the man says next for one more detail:

“Sir,” the servant said, “what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.” Then the master told his servant, “Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full” (Luke 14:22-23 NIV).

So after the people who were viewed as not-so-respectable had come to the party, there was still room. And the servant had to compel people to come. Why? Probably because they were freaking out! Nobody believed they belonged at a party like that, but still, they were invited. No matter how the rest of the world saw them, they were included. Not only that, but the party host urged them to come. They were *wanted*.

And that's exactly what Jesus was trying to help the Pharisees see in His story—that they were going to be surprised by who is at God's big party. And we can learn from this lesson, too. That's the way God's invitation to us works!

INTERACTIVE: An Open Invitation

This is where you'll use an empty chair to illustrate the truth that there's always room for more people at God's party and the invitation is for us all. Check out the Communicator Guide for more details.

Everyone is invited. God offers a seat at His party to every single one of us. *[Point to the empty chair.]* **No matter who you are, what you've done, or what other people think about you, you've made God's guest list.** You don't have to be good, or right, or any of those things to get in the door to His party. **You simply have to accept the invitation.** You just have to take a seat at the party! *[Sit in the empty chair.]*

Did you catch one more thing? The party wasn't full, so the man kept inviting more and more people to join. He didn't care if they were respected in their society; he wanted to make a space for everyone at his table. **He wanted to extend the invitation to them all.** There was room for everyone. *[Point to the empty chair.]*

Jesus told this parable because He wanted the people at the dinner to know that God's heart is the same. Those invited to join His party don't have to be perfect; they just have to show up. To love Him. To want to be in a relationship with Him. And there's no limit on that kind of invitation!

At God's party, the invitation is for us all.

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

If this is all true, then I think it means we have to change the way we see a few things about our faith and God's invitation for us to be a part of it.

For starters, **we need to remember what God is inviting us to.** God's inviting you to spend a life following Him. And that's a really big deal! It's something worth celebrating! But when we look at it the way the first people invited to the party did, we risk missing out on so much of what it means to follow God.

Then, **we have to recognize that His invitation is open to ALL of us!** God wants you to sit in a chair at His table. *[Point to the empty chair.]* He's invited you—each and every one of you—to the party. He wants you there because He loves you. No matter who you are or what you've done, you are on God's guest list; you just have to say yes. In fact, if that's an invitation you've never thought about before, now might be a great time to start. You can talk to your Small Group Leader or another trusted adult here at church about what it might look like for you to accept God's invitation to follow Him with your life.

Finally, **we can extend the invitation to others!** Because **at God's party, the invitation is for us all.** When we invite somebody to the party, God opens our heart and eyes to see them the way He does—as people deserving of the invitation. And not only that, we make a way for them to see themselves as God sees them, too! And who knows? They may even accept the invitation and decide to take a seat at His party! *[Point to the empty chair.]*

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **at God's party the invitation is for us all.**

So, as you head to Small Group, I want you to think about this: **What's one reason I think I may not be invited to God's party?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
