



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Worth Repeating: The Parables of Jesus

[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

"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- When it comes to arguments, fights, disagreements, and drama, most of us would say these things take up a big part of our lives.
- Behind every disagreement we have is this thought: I know better than you.

TENSION

- Tell a personal story about a time you got into an argument because you thought you knew better than someone else.

- Most of the drama, disagreements, or fallouts in our relationships are influenced by the fact that we think we're better, we're right, or we know best.
- When we think this way, it motivates our actions and changes the way we see ourselves and others. We start to act as though we deserve better.
- Maybe . . .
 - You think you're the best player on your team, so you deserve to be captain.
 - You think you're the best musician in your school band, so you deserve to be first chair.
 - You think you're a better friend in your friend group, so you deserve more of your friend's attention.
- Any time we feel like we're better than someone, it reveals an issue in our character.

TRUTH

- In one of Jesus' parables recorded by Luke, we read about a dinner party. At this party, Jesus explained that if we choose to pick the seat of highest honor next to the host, we aren't showing a humble spirit and may be humiliated when asked to move. But if we choose humility and sit in a least honorable seat, we may be rewarded by being asked to move to a more honorable spot. (Luke 14:8-11)
- Humility means that we see and put others before ourselves.
- Humility changes the way we treat and respond to others.
- Jesus was the best example of humility. Even though He was perfect, He served others, loved others, and treated others as though they were better than Him.
- And that's what Jesus calls us to do because humility helps us see value in people and reminds us that they are loved by God and important to Him.
- Putting others first changes us and our relationships for the better.

APPLICATION

- It's easier to think we're right, or deserving, or owed something from someone else than it is to be humble.
- What if we chose humility? How would it change our relationships with others?
- This week, think of one way you can practice humility. Then watch how it makes your relationships and your heart better.

LANDING

- Putting others first changes us and our relationships for the better.
- What's one way I see myself as better than others?

YOUR STUDENTS

The ability to see yourself and your choices from someone else's perspective hasn't come for most students in this phase. Their self-awareness develops as they grow, but as middle schoolers, it's still in the early stages of development. That means that seeing how their lack of humility might impact those around them can be difficult. It also makes recognizing the ways they can serve those people challenging. Examples will be key to help students' wheels start turning in regards to humility and what it looks like in action.

INTERACTIVE: A SEAT AT THE TABLE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use props (a table and chairs) to demonstrate how, in Jesus' time, people's status was determined by the position of their seat at the table.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A long table
- 6 or more chairs
- A cardboard cut-out of a celebrity your students follow or admire

HOW-TO

This Interactive will help you bring a passage from Luke 14 to life for students. To pull it off, place a long table with at least 6 chairs pushed underneath on stage. Hide the celebrity cardboard cut-out in an area that's easily accessible from stage but hidden from your audience's view.

When prompted in the Truth section of your talk, bring out the celebrity cut-out and place it at the head of the table. You'll then move from seat to seat as you unpack the Scripture. Check out your Teaching Script for more instructions on when and how to incorporate this Interactive into your message.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Worth Repeating / Week 4

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

PUTTING OTHERS FIRST CHANGES US AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE BETTER.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

When was the last time you had an argument? *[Pause to let students shout out some answers.]* Well, you aren't alone! Did you know the average family spends about 49 minutes every single day arguing?¹ That's almost an hour a day! Some of you are like, "*Oh yeah, that sounds right.*" And others of you are probably thinking, "*An hour? It's more like three in my house!*"

And that's just with your family! If we add in the time you might spend arguing with your friends, your teammates, your coaches, your teachers—well, let's just say there might not be many hours left in most of our days after that. Arguments. Fights. Disagreements. Misunderstandings. Dramas. Whatever you call them, they happen. Sometimes they're big; sometimes they're small. Sometimes you make up; sometimes you don't.

Though the reason for the fight or the outcome after the disagreement may be different every time, I think there's one thing that most arguments have in common. **Behind just about every disagreement you'll have in your life is this thought: *I know better than you.***

¹ Francis, Gemma. "Families spend average of 49 minutes a day arguing, study claims." The Independent. July 26, 2018. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/families-spend-average-49-minutes-115911769.html>.

TENSION

4 MINUTES

Ouch! That's tough to admit, isn't it? I don't think many of us would willingly stand up here and say, "*Yeah, I definitely know better or am better than the last person I fought with.*" But deep down, we know we've thought it. At least I have!

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a time you got into an argument because you thought you knew better than someone else.
- Maybe you thought, "*I'm smarter, I'm better, I'm right, etc.*"
- Don't get too serious here! The goal is simply to show students how this thought influences their arguments, whether they realize it or not!

See what I mean? Whether we realize or not, I think **most of the drama, disagreements, or major fallouts in our relationships with others are influenced by the fact that we think we're better.** We think we're right, and they're wrong. We know, and they don't know. We're smart, and they're not.

Now while we may never say this out loud, we certainly think it. And eventually, **those thoughts motivate our actions. They change the way we not only see ourselves, but also the people around us.** We believe we know better, do better, or are better. And eventually, **we start to act as though we deserve better.**

Maybe you think you're the best player on your team, so you *deserve* to be captain. But when that other kid is named captain instead, you argue with your coach because you think you're better. Or maybe you think you're the best musician in your school band, and you *deserve* to be first chair. When someone else is given that spot? Well, that's when you get mad! Maybe you think you're a better friend than another girl in your friend group, so you *deserve* more of your friends' attention. When they don't give you the attention you hoped for, well, then that's when the drama begins!

None of this sounds super great, does it? And even if we are actually better at something or know better than someone else, thinking about it can affect how we perceive ourselves and others. I don't know about you, but it's hard for me to admit the way I think about myself compared to other people sometimes. It's hard for me to acknowledge that the reason some of my relationships have conflict is because of me. It's because of the way I see myself as better than the other person in the equation. But I think it's an important truth for all of us to realize about ourselves.

Because **any time we feel like we're better than someone, it reveals an issue with our character.** It shows us something about the way we see ourselves and others that isn't quite right. And I don't know about you, but that's something I want to change.]

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

In this series, we've been looking at some of the best stories that Jesus shared with His followers while He was on Earth. Those stories are called parables, and they've been worth repeating for thousands of years. Jesus used those stories like mirrors to hold up in front of His audience and to show them something new (and sometimes not so great!) about themselves and the way they were living.

The parable we're going to look at today was written down by a follower of Jesus named Luke. When Jesus shared this particular parable, He was at a dinner party held by a really respected man in the community. And before they started eating, the guests carefully chose where they were going to sit.

Here's what's important to know about that: In the culture at this time, choosing a seat at the table was a really big deal. **The closer you sat to the host of the party, the more status you had.** If these people got a seat next to this really respected man throwing the party, it showed everyone else there that they were better, cooler, and much more important than the other guests. Their seat determined their status.

Knowing this to be true in their culture, Jesus wanted to explain that He valued something different. So, He shared this parable with the dinner guests around the table:

"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11 NIV).

INTERACTIVE: A Seat at the Table

This is where you'll use a table and chairs to demonstrate how, in Jesus' time, people's status was determined by the position of their seat at the table. Take a look at this week's Communicator Guide for more details.

Okay, let's break down what Jesus was saying here. Imagine you've been invited to the biggest, coolest, best party ever hosted by *[name of the celebrity you selected for the Interactive]*. *[Bring out the celebrity cardboard cutout and place it on the chair at the head of the table.]* When it's time to pick a seat, you have two options: the best, most honored seat next to *[name of celebrity]* *[motion to their seat]* or the least important seat at the end of the table *[motion to the seat at the opposite end of the table]*. If you choose the best seat *[sit in the seat next to the celebrity as you say the rest of the sentence]*, you're basically saying to everyone else, *"I deserve to sit here because I'm better than you."* But when you do that, you run the risk of being embarrassed because ultimately, you might be asked to move. Why? Because there might be someone more deserving of that position.

But if you choose the second seat—the least important position at the table *[sit in the seat at the opposite end of the table while you say the rest of the sentence]*—you'll eventually be honored by the host, the guests, and everyone else around you. Why? Because you've shown humility. **Humility means that you see and put others before yourself.** A humble attitude will motivate humble actions. **Having humility in your heart will change the way you treat and respond to other people.**

Why was Jesus teaching about humility? Because it's the way His kingdom works. **Jesus Himself showed us that!** When He came to Earth, He was perfect. He literally was the best! But did He walk around proclaiming that to everyone? Did He take the top spot everywhere He went? *[Motion to the chair next to the celebrity.]* No! **Jesus spent His time serving others, loving others, and treating others as though they were better than Him.** In many ways, it was like He chose to sit at the other end of the table. *[Motion to the seat at the opposite end of the table.]*

And that's what He calls us to do in our own lives. Even if we are in fact right or we do know best, we should follow Jesus' example and show humility. Why is humility so important? **Because it helps us see the value in other people. It helps remind our hearts that the person we're serving is loved by God and important to Him.** It helps us see people like God sees them! Humility helps us live more like the citizens of God's Kingdom that we are!

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

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

If you're anything like me, your tendency would probably be to do what the people at the dinner party did—move yourself to the head of the table. That's because it's easier to see ourselves as better. **It's easier to think we're right, or deserving, or owed something from someone else.** It's in our nature to tend to see ourselves as better than others from time to time. But like we said before, that usually only ends in conflict. And as Jesus pointed out in His parable, sometimes it ends in humiliation!

So what if we chose humility instead? What if instead of thinking we deserved that top spot on the team, we congratulated the person who got it over us? What if instead of believing we were the most important friend in our group, we went out of our way to make sure everyone felt included and valued? What if instead of ignoring that new kid at school, we went out of our way to say hello? What if instead of waiting for our parents to ask us to do our chores, we finished them ahead of time? I for one think there would be a lot less drama and conflict in our lives if we did.

That's what humility looks like in action. **Putting others first changes us and our relationships for the better.**

This week, I want you to **think of just one way you can practice humility.** Maybe it's choosing to apologize first. Maybe it's celebrating someone who gets something great in their lives—maybe something you wanted or thought you deserved. Maybe it's admitting you're wrong in a fight or giving the other person the chance to explain themselves before jumping to conclusions. Maybe it's simply inviting someone into your group or going out of your way to do something kind. Whatever it is, **find one way to put someone ahead of yourself this week. Then watch how it makes your relationship (and your heart!) better.**

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **putting others first changes us and our relationships for the better.**

And as you head out today, I want you to think about this: **What's one way I see myself as better than others?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
