

## WEEK 1

### TEACHING GUIDE

ON THE  
FLIP  
SIDE

### BIG IDEA

Jesus flipped our assumptions about who God values.

### BIBLE

Matthew 5:1-12; Micah 6:8;  
Psalm 139:13-14

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Flip & Land

- Welcome to *On The Flip Side*, where we're going to spend a few weeks getting some of our ideas about God, ourselves, and the world flipped on their heads.
- So to prepare for all this mental flipping, let's get warmed up. How many flips can you land?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, collect a variety of bottles of water in different sizes, ranging from [8 ounces](#) to [one gallon](#), or even [2.5 gallons](#). Fill each bottle about 1/3 of the way with water and seal them tightly. Place them in a line from smallest to largest. To play, select a few students to compete. Give each of them one minute to flip as many bottles as possible — but they can only successfully flip each bottle once. If they've flipped one size successfully, they must move on to another size. Whoever flips the most bottles successfully is the winner.*
- For the next few weeks, we're going to talk about "flipping" a lot of things upside down. Not just water bottles, obviously — ideas too.

#### QUESTION | Has new information ever flipped your perspective upside down?

- Have you ever been really confident about something you thought was true, but then had your whole world flipped upside down when you found out you were wrong? Maybe you . . .
  - Discovered a rumor you had been spreading was completely made up.
  - Learned something that disproved what you used to think was true.
  - Realized someone you thought you couldn't stand was actually really great.
- **Has new information ever flipped your perspective upside down?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

#### IMAGE | An Item with Surprising Value

- I've had my perspective flipped by new information quite a few times — like this one time my mind got blown by how much something cost.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Briefly tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were totally wrong about how much something cost or was worth. Maybe you were house shopping for the first time, buying an engagement ring, got a great deal when you were prepared to spend a lot, or found out how much money someone spent on a monkey NFT. Share what you thought the item was worth, how much it was actually worth, and how you felt or reacted when you found out. As you tell the story, show an image of the item on screen.*

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
  - **What's your most valued possession? Is it actually worth a lot of money or do you just love it a lot?**
  - **Who are some of the people you value most and why?**

## STORY | Talk about a time someone got an award you wrongly didn't think they deserved.

- It's not just money I'm bad at estimating. Sometimes I'm not great at judging the value of other people either.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time someone got an award you wrongly didn't think they deserved. Maybe someone won a Most Valuable Player award, the lead in the school play, or a class officer election, but you thought you or a friend should have won instead. Share why and how you were incorrectly judging their value, why you thought you or your friend were more deserving of the award, and why the person who won really did deserve it.*
- In that moment, I was so focused on my limited definition of "value" that I couldn't see the value in someone else. Maybe you can relate.
  - Maybe you've been the person other people overlooked, judged, or pushed to the side because they didn't see the value in you.
  - Maybe you've been the person who wrongly decided someone wasn't worth your time, energy, respect, or care.
  - Or maybe you've been both.
- No matter which person you've been or still are today, Jesus has something to say with the power to flip your perspective upside down.

## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

## OBJECT LESSON | Vinyl Record

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, locate a vinyl record and record player. Demonstrate how it works and play a few snippets of music as you teach.*
- Vinyl records are part of an era none of us live in any more, but a whole bunch of us still appreciate. People collect records, play records, decorate with records, and love that scratchy earthy sound you can only get from a record player's needle hitting the vinyl.
  - But maybe the biggest difference between this vinyl record and your favorite Spotify playlist is when you're halfway through, you've got to flip it.
  - Sure, you could decide to only play one side of the album. It would work just fine, but you'd be missing out on half of the music! If you want to hear the whole thing, you've got to flip it.
- Meeting and learning from Jesus is a little bit like this vinyl record.

- There will be times we think our understanding, beliefs, and perspectives are the whole picture. We'll believe we've got things figured. We'll feel pretty confident in our judgments about God, ourselves, or others.
- But when Jesus shows up, he tends to flip everything upside down and show us there's a whole new perspective we've never considered before!
- With Jesus, we finally get the whole picture. Through him, our wrong assumptions get flipped upside down and finally made right.

### OBJECT LESSON | The Flip Board (Part 1)

- We've already talked about some of the things we get wrong about who is and isn't valuable. So what do you think some of those "wrong" ideas are? **What are some not-so-great reasons to decide someone is valuable (or not valuable)?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, prepare a large [two-sided white board that can be flipped](#). On one side, write, draw, or use the Big Idea images provided in your Graphics & Video folder to display this week's Big Idea. When you're ready to teach, keep that side of the board hidden while you write students' responses to your question on the blank side.
- Whether it's money, popularity, looks, ability, knowledge, or skill, there are a lot of shallow or unimportant reasons we might wrongly decide someone has (or doesn't have) value.

### SCRIPTURE | Matthew 5:1-12

- When Jesus was here on earth, he spent a lot of time correcting people's incorrect beliefs about God, themselves, and each other. At that time, a lot of people were under the assumption God favored people who followed every religious rule, seemed really holy, and had it all together. But in Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount, he flipped all of that upside down.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 5:1-12.
- Jesus wasn't exactly known for telling people what they wanted to hear. He flipped people's ideas about God, the world, and themselves completely upside down — usually in uncomfortable ways. This time, Jesus flipped people's assumptions about who mattered most to God.
  - Some of the people Jesus was speaking to believed God valued people who were the most religious. But Jesus said having things like power, status, and fame don't get you any bonus points or special treatment with God.
  - According to Jesus, the people who are the most "blessed" in God's kingdom are people who have known poverty, who are grieving, who are gentle and kind, or who are suffering. Because God values the people the world often doesn't.
- I wonder how this news from Jesus would have been received differently by the different kinds of people who were within earshot.
  - For the people listening who had often been overlooked and undervalued, this was probably really good news. They likely had been told (and believed) they were less deserving of love, care, and attention than others were. But now Jesus was flipping their view of themselves upside down! According to Jesus, they were loved, cared for, seen, and deeply valued by God.
  - But for the people listening who were religious leaders, powerful, or wealthy, Jesus' words may have seemed like bad news. After all, if you've always seen yourself as better and more valuable than others, you don't want to be told you've had it all wrong.

- Jesus' message was for everyone who showed up in the crowd that day and for everyone who would hear this story later (like us). To all of us, Jesus makes this clear: God sees and values people who are often overlooked.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - \* What was so revolutionary about the people Jesus chose to value?
  - \* If Jesus were on Earth right now, who are some of the people he might choose to value (and ask us to value too)?

## SCRIPTURE | Micah 6:8

- There's a passage in the book of Micah about another time God's people got this wrong.
  - Many years before Jesus was born, people tried to make themselves seem more valuable to God by doing a lot of religious things. At the same time, they began treating others as not-so-valuable.
  - These people followed God's laws, sang worship songs, and made offerings to God . . . but they sort of lost track of the point. They cared so much about earning God's love they forgot to love the people God values.
  - In response, God sent the prophet Micah to deliver a message.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Micah 6:8.*
- Micah's message was a strong criticism of anyone who neglected, mistreated, or took advantage of others in God's name. When people weren't valuing others well, God used Micah to show them a new way. God invited them to . . .
  - Pursue justice for those who have been mistreated.
  - Be merciful to others, rather than judgmental.
  - Humbly follow God's lead.
- Some of this sounds a bit like Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, doesn't it? Maybe that's because God has been trying to tell us the same thing for a long, long time.

## OBJECT LESSON | The Flip Board (Part 2)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using the same two-sided white board you used earlier, flip it so the Big Idea is made visible.*
- God values people the world often overlooks or mistreats.
  - When you think you don't matter, or deserve to be overlooked or mistreated, Jesus flips that idea upside down.
  - And when you think you're better or more worthy of God's love than someone else, Jesus flips that upside down too.
- Right when we think we have it all figured out, **Jesus flips our assumptions about who God values.**

## GOD'S DESIGN

- Read Psalm 139:13-14. **God created** the world and **each of us with intentional and wonderful design.** When our perspectives are flipped to see as God sees we can chase after God's best for our lives.

- God created your inmost being and loves you completely. God sees you. God knows you. God loves you.
- I hope you can **see yourself** as God sees you: **wonderfully made**.

## NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
  - What are some reasons people your age might not feel valuable? Have you ever felt that way?
  - When you don't feel valued, what helps you (or would help you) feel valuable again?
  - Read Psalm 139:13-14. How can this verse help us remember how much God values us? How can it move us to value others?

### OBJECT LESSON | The MVP Award

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, find an old MVP trophy or plaque that no one really cares about or make one [like this](#). Hold it as you teach.*
- "Most Valuable Player" trophies are usually awarded to people who do something exceptionally well. You have to earn them! But Jesus showed us a new way of viewing value.
  - Jesus shows us you don't have to do a thing to earn your value. You're already valued, simply because you're deeply loved by the God who made you.
  - Nothing you do can earn you any extra value in God's eyes. And here's what's really amazing — nothing you do can take away any of your value either.
  - Because we're all deeply loved by God, we can stop competing to see who's the most valuable. Instead, we can choose to value each other like God values us.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, it's kind of like Jesus was giving away Most Valuable People awards, but to the most unlikely people. If Jesus were preaching that same sermon here today, I wonder who he'd give a trophy to. Maybe he'd mention the person who . . .
  - Avoids the lunchroom because they aren't sure who they'd sit with.
  - Has endured years of bullying, trauma, or abuse.
  - Doesn't look, sound, dress, or seem to fit in with the people around them.
  - Is quietly dealing with physical or mental health concerns.
  - Has recently lost someone they love.
  - Isn't sure where their next meal or safe place to live is going to be.
  - Is anxious about what their family is going through.
  - Often gets overlooked or taken advantage of.
  - Is trying to figure out who they are or where they fit in.
  - Has rarely felt loved or valued.
- Once you figure out who Jesus might give an MVP award to, I wonder how you could value that person too? Could you . . .
  - Reach out and start a new friendship with them?
  - Help or defend them?
  - Ask how they're doing?
  - Ask how you can support them?

- And if you are that person who has often felt like you aren't valued, I wonder how you could begin to find more of your value in Jesus. We all struggle to believe we're loved and valued sometimes. If that's you, do you need to . . .
  - Get to know Jesus for the first time?
  - Spend time reading what God has said about how loved you are?
  - Spend time talking to God about how you're feeling — and let God's Spirit talk to you too?
  - Tell a trusted adult how you're feeling?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
  - **\* Without naming names, can you think of someone you've overlooked or haven't valued recently? How do you wish you'd have treated them differently?**
  - **This week, how will you go out of your way to value someone Jesus values?**

## REFLECTION | Flipping the Vinyl

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, purchase enough [vinyl record coasters](#) for each student and place a [white 2" round label](#) on the center of each side so both sides of the vinyl can be written on. Place one under each seat, along with a permanent marker. Play some reflective music as students reflect and write. One on side, invite students to write a person (or type of person) they struggle to value, reminding them that person might even be themselves. On the other side, invite them to write one way they plan to help that person know they are valued by God this week.*
- In Jesus' upside-down Kingdom, it's not the most perfect, popular, richest, or most frequent church-attenders who are most valued by God. Jesus shows us we are all valued — and to make that point, he puts special attention on the people who are usually the most under-valued.
  - If you were feeling less-than-valuable today, I hope you remember Jesus loves you deeply.
  - If you've been trying to prove your value to God or others, I hope you'll trust you have nothing to prove.
  - And if you've been overlooking or even hurting someone Jesus values, I hope you'll make it right this week by choosing justice, mercy, and humility instead.
- **Jesus flipped our assumptions about who God values.** So what will you do this week to value the people God values?