

WEEK 3

TEACHING GUIDE

ON THE
FLIP
SIDE

BIG IDEA

Jesus flipped our understanding of what's good enough.

BIBLE

Matthew 5:38-48; Ephesians 2:4-7;
Colossians 3:12-13

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Flip & Count

- Welcome back to *On the Flip Side*, where we're talking about the many ways God flips our lives upside down. Before we get there, let's test your flipping skills.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need [plastic traffic cones](#), small prizes, and large prizes. To play, choose at least one contestant, give them a cone, and put one minute on the clock. Let them know they'll need to flip and land the cone right-side up as many times as possible. If they land it even once, they'll win a small prize – but if they can land it ten times, they'll win an even bigger prize. After you play, interview your contestants and the students watching with questions like these:
 - Before you started, how many times did you think you were going to land it?
 - Were you (or would you have been) happy with landing it just once? Why or why not?
 - If you were playing, would the small prize have been "good enough" for you? Why or why not?

VIDEO | Clips of a Few Different Flips

- The phrase "good enough" doesn't exactly have the best reputation, does it? It's what you might say when you give up on a project halfway through or settle for something low-quality.
- Of course, there are some times in life when you definitely don't want to settle for "good enough." Check out some of these athletes and imagine what might happen if they got halfway through their flips and thought, "Ehh – I'm halfway. That's good enough."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play short clips from a series of ESPN'S TikToks, like [this flip at the beach](#), [this series of backflips](#), [this old man flipping off a swing](#), [this trampoline flip](#), and [this flip on a pogo stick](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Yeah, if you decided to give up halfway through one of these flips, you'd end up on the ground and in quite a bit of pain. There are some times (like in the middle of a flip) when your goal should probably be a little better than "good enough."

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's a situation where you never settle for "good enough"? What's a situation where you definitely do?
 - * When do you think it's okay to settle for "good enough"? When is it not?

QUESTION | When is it okay to settle for "good enough"?

- But we can't be amazing at everything, always give one-hundred-percent of our effort, or go hard all the time . . . can we? What do you think? **When is it okay to settle for "good enough"?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

QUESTION | How do you decide when to give more than what's "good enough"?

- I'm sure we've all had moments when we could have put more effort into something we were doing or working on, but . . . well, we just decided not to. Whether we're doing homework, cleaning up, practicing an instrument, or having a difficult conversation, we often have to make decisions about how much effort to put into something.
- So how do you make that decision? **How do you decide when to give more than what's "good enough"?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*
- It's one thing to ask these questions about our homework, chores, or hobbies. But what about things that are much more important, like . . .
 - Our relationships with God?
 - Our relationships with each other?
 - And the people we're becoming?
- Whether you tend to do just the bare minimum, or you find yourself doing too much sometimes, Jesus has something to say with the power to flip your perspective on what's "good enough" upside down.

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

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.*
 - If following Jesus was a scale of 1-5 (with 3 being "good enough") what do you think each number on that scale would look like?
 - * What are some reasons we sometimes settle for "good enough" when it comes to following Jesus?

OBJECT LESSON | The Flip Board (Part 1)

- When it comes to following Jesus, we probably all have ideas about what it looks like to do what's "good enough," versus doing "the most" to follow him. So what do you think?

- What does it look like to do what's "good enough" for God?
- What does it look like to do "the most" for God?
- **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. On the blank side, create two columns labeled "Good Enough" and "The Most." Write students' answers to the above questions in the appropriate columns.

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 5:38-48

- When Jesus was here on earth, he spent a lot of time talking to religious people and leaders alike about what was (and wasn't) "good enough" in God's eyes.
- Many of these religious people thought they could love God by following every single one of God's laws perfectly. When it came to following those laws, doing the bare minimum wasn't "good enough" for them. They were committed to following as many laws as possible, as perfectly as they could. They even came up with new laws on their own so they could follow those too!
 - But the desire these religious people had to get perfect scores on their imaginary "holiness report cards" often led them to become self-righteous, judgmental, and self-centered.
 - If you had asked them how much effort they were putting into pleasing God, I'm pretty sure they would have said, "Definitely the most."
 - That's why some of Jesus' words for them were so shocking. Instead of congratulating them on doing "the most" for God, Jesus said, "sorry, but it's not good enough."
- In one portion of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount, he helped them see this by first quoting one of the laws they were so proud of following — and then taking it a step further.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 5:38-48.
- The religious people of his day thought they were doing "the most" by following their religious rules perfectly, but they were actually missing the whole point of what God wanted them to do: love!
 - Religious leaders sometimes accused Jesus of disrespecting God's laws when Jesus didn't always follow God's laws the way they expected him to.
 - But Jesus didn't come to throw away the Law God had given. Instead, he came to clarify the heart and the intention behind God's Law.
 - To help his followers understand this shift, Jesus needed to flip their understanding completely upside down.
- God's Law said "an eye for an eye" because God is a God of justice.
 - There was a time when this law helped God's people figure out ways to live with each other in peace and safety. But because people began using this law as an excuse to take revenge on people who had hurt them, Jesus needed to flip their understanding.
 - "An eye for an eye," he said, "isn't good enough. If someone offends you, don't just take revenge. Show them mercy, kindness, and generosity instead."
- God's Law said to "love your neighbors" because God is a God of love.
 - But God's people sometimes struggled to understand who their "neighbor" actually was. Because people convinced themselves they were fulfilling God's laws by loving only the people they wanted to love, Jesus needed to flip their understanding.
 - "Love your neighbor," he said, "isn't good enough. Don't just love the people it's easy to love. Love everyone — even your enemies."

- And before these examples, Jesus gave them even more! He listed law after law, saying, "You think you're doing 'the most' by following this law, but it's actually not good enough — not if you're not doing it out of love."

SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 2:4-7

- Over and over again, Jesus kept flipping ideas on their heads to get us to think differently about what God wants from us. But he didn't just talk about it. He modeled it for us too.
 - Jesus didn't just come to earth to teach us things. He didn't come to give us a new set of rules to follow or new impossible standards to meet. He didn't show up just to tell us everything we'd gotten wrong.
 - Instead, Jesus came to earth to make things right. To do that, he didn't just do the bare minimum. He gave everything for you and me.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Ephesians 2:4-7.*

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.*
- Jesus didn't just command us to show love, mercy, kindness, and grace to each other. Jesus went first by going above and beyond for you and me. He didn't do the bare minimum. He gave everything for us, and now he invites us to extend that same love to each other.
- Through his words and his example, **Jesus flipped our understanding of what's good enough.**

GOSPEL INVITATION + RESPONSE

- Every 4-6 weeks in Hope Student Ministry we have a clear invitation and next step for students to accept the Gospel into their hearts for the first time. This is the week! [Here is a guide](#) to help you prep on our Resource Page; Talk to your Student Campus Pastor about how your campus leads students into their direct follow up step.

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! 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 do you think the religious people of Jesus' day got wrong about what God wanted from them? Do you see any similarities to religious people today?
 - How did Jesus flip our understanding of what God says is "good enough"?
 - Read Colossians 3:12-13. When is it most difficult for you to do this?

STORY | Talk about a time you did the bare minimum when you were in a conflict with someone.

- But what does this mean? What does it look like to go beyond what's "good enough" in our love for God and each other?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were in a conflict with someone, but rather than working to resolve it in a healthy way, you did the bare minimum. Maybe you ghosted someone instead of having a hard conversation, resorted to violence or*

meanness instead of dialogue, or faked niceness instead of saying how you really felt. Looking back, why do you think you chose to take the easy way out? What do you wish you would have done instead, even if it would have been more difficult? If you were also a Jesus-follower at the time, share how you did or did not connect your relationship with this person with your relationship with God.

- I'll be honest: in this situation, I did the bare minimum. I did only what I thought was "good enough." I certainly didn't walk that second mile, as Jesus invited us to do. As a result, I missed out on some important things. If I had decided to do more than what was "good enough," I wonder . . .
 - How I could have grown in the process?
 - How they could have grown in the process?
 - If our relationship could have turned out differently?
 - Or what God wanted to teach me along the way?
- I wonder who you're struggling to love right now, maybe because you've been in conflict with them or because they've hurt you unjustly.

A DISCLAIMER ABOUT ABUSE

- But before we go any further, I want to talk specifically to those of you who are struggling to love is someone who has been hurting, abusing, bullying, or making you feel unsafe. If someone is harming you . . .
 - Jesus is *not* telling you to let them continue harming you.
 - He is *not* telling you to ignore what they've done or cover for them.
 - He is *not* telling you to put yourself in more danger by doing kind, generous, or loving things for them.
- If someone is harming you, the most loving thing you can do for them, yourself, and others is to tell a trusted adult about what's going on. When you do . . .
 - The person hurting you can get the help they need to change (or the accountability they need to stop the harm they're causing).
 - You can help prevent them from hurting anyone else.
 - You can get the help you need to begin to heal.
- If you think this might relate to you, or you need help deciding if it does, don't leave here today without talking to an adult you trust.

REFLECTION | Going the Second Mile

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. As you teach, invite students to write the following:*
 - *In the center of the handout, write the name of a person they are struggling to love right now.*
 - *In the "Mile 1" lane, write what they have already done or a first step they could take to be merciful and kind to them.*
 - *In the "Mile 2" lane, write what more they could do to show that person Jesus' love and grace.*
- So who is someone you're struggling to love right now? Is it a friend you've had a fight with, an acquaintance you can't stand, a family member who's been frustrating you, or maybe an adult you disagree with? Once you've identified who they are . . .
 - **WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MILE?** What are the first steps you can take to begin to show them mercy and kindness? Maybe you could . . .
 - Pray for them.
 - Text them.
 - Be the first to apologize.
 - Smile when you see them.

- Drop the attitude.
 - Not seek revenge.
 - Choose to let it go.
- **WHAT IS YOUR SECOND MILE?** Now this is where things get interesting. How can do even more than what's "good enough" for the person you struggle to love? What would it look like for you to . . .
 - Do something loving and generous for them?
 - Pray regularly for them, maybe asking God to do great things for them?
 - Fight for a relationship with them?
 - Have hard conversations with them?
 - Give them more compassion, time, energy, or care than you really want to?
- If your "second mile" seems easy to do in your own strength, you may not be thinking big enough.
 - The kind of love Jesus invites us to extend to others is bigger than anything we're capable of giving on our own. For that kind of love, we need God's help, guidance, and Spirit.
 - If you've never experienced that love for yourself, or you're not sure you know what it means to know Jesus or his Spirit, it's available to you right now! Jesus isn't hiding his love from you. He is generously offering it to you.
- Remember, Jesus refused to do the bare minimum for you and me. **Jesus flipped our understanding of what's good enough.** He gave everything for us, and now he invites us to extend that same love to each other.

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.*
 - * Talk about a time you did the bare minimum when someone was difficult to love. What do you think Jesus might be inviting you to do differently next time?
 - What are some things that could prevent you from going the second mile for someone? How can we help each other overcome those obstacles?
 - This week, what is one way God might be inviting you to go the second mile for someone? What are you going to do about it?