

BIG IDEA

Jesus shows us listening is worth repeating.

BIBLE

Mark 10:46–52; Proverbs 18:13;
James 1:19

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Music plays in the background of almost every store we enter, but how often do we actually listen to it? This week, we'll look at the story where Jesus stopped to listen to a man named Bartimaeus. By slowing down to pay attention to what was happening in the lives of the people around him, **Jesus shows us listening is worth repeating.**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Beat The Clock

- Welcome to the first week of our series, On Repeat. Over the next few weeks, we will look at stories from the life of Jesus and talk about how we can repeat what he did in our lives. What if learning to treat others like Jesus did was as simple as repeating a song you love so many times you could recognize it within the first few beats?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to create a playlist of five to ten popular songs appropriate for your group's culture and a prize for the winner. To play, select two volunteers. They will bet against each other to see who can guess the song the fastest by saying, "I can guess the song in ___ seconds." After any wager, the opposing teen can say, "Beat the clock," forcing the teen to attempt to guess within their time. They win a point if they can successfully guess the song before the clock. However, if they fail to guess the music, their opponent can steal the point by correctly guessing the song title. If neither player knows the song, no points are awarded. The teen with the most points wins.*
- There's music everywhere, from catchy commercial jingles to a new song from our favorite artist. We all have songs that play in our heads constantly. A lot of us even take time to make our own playlists!
- Creating playlists can help us filter out the songs we don't want to hear and create the perfect mood. No matter what kind of day it is—whether you're feeling hype, chill, or in the feels, chances are there's a playlist out there that can help capture the vibe.
- Without the ability to curate our own list of songs, we'd be stuck listening to any and everything at all times. How cluttered and chaotic! When we have too much going on, that's kind of how our lives and relationships can start to feel.
- From homework, friends, and sports to plays, music classes, and parents, life can sometimes feel packed. When we're overwhelmed, it can be challenging to be aware of what is happening inside of us, much less what is going on in the lives of others.

POLL | Whose Playlist?

- We all have a favorite song or two we put on repeat from time to time, and a list of those songs is a great

way to learn a little bit more about a person. To help demonstrate, we've asked one of your leaders to make a playlist of the songs they've been listening to this week.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your weekly program, ask a volunteer, parent, friend, or someone familiar with your group to make a playlist of ten songs they've been playing on repeat that week. Have them send you a screenshot that you can show on the screen. Teenagers will try to guess who made the playlist. If it helps, give them a list of people to choose from. Have them vote on whose playlist it is by raising their hands or moving to different sides of the room.*
- Imagine if a good friend created a playlist just for you, but you never even opened the link they sent you. It would feel pretty brutal for you to disregard their thoughtfulness. They would probably start to wonder if something was going on between the two of you! Listening to the people that matter is important. What does it look like to focus on the people we care about?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **What is a song that gets stuck in your head any time you hear it?**
 - **Was there a time when you felt like you felt genuinely listened to? How did it make you feel? What did they do to make you feel listened to?**
 - ★ **How do you think doing something for someone without listening to them might hurt the relationship—even if you do something helpful?**

STORY | A Time You Tried To Help Without Listening

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story about a time you tried to help someone but didn't listen to what they needed. Maybe you assumed you had a solution, and things got out of hand. Keep the story light and playful. You can also invite a volunteer to share their experience.*
- It's impossible to truly help others without listening to them. What if we were sick, went to the doctor, and the doctor didn't listen to what we were saying? How would they know how to help us? More often than not, we're just like that doctor—we waste time and energy in the long run rather than taking a few minutes to listen to people first.
- What would it look like to better respond to people by taking a beat to listen first? Let's look at a story from the life of Jesus that shows us what this could look like in our lives.

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

SCRIPTURE | Mark 10:46–52

- Jesus spent his entire life loving people. This is who he was—a continual source of love and care for the people around him. He saw people who needed help everywhere he went and reached out to help them. There are countless stories of how Jesus did this, but one of my favorites is about a man named Bartimaeus.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 10:46–52.*
- While Jesus was walking through Jericho, Bartimaeus, who was blind, heard Jesus was near and called out to him. The crowd around Jesus shouted at Bartimaeus to be quiet. But this only made him even louder. He wouldn't stop until Jesus heard his cry for help and healing.
- We could spend a ton of time focusing on how Jesus healed Bartimaeus, talking about how God can heal us, and inviting you to share how you want God to help you, but there's also another interesting part of this story.

- Jesus shows us something incredibly insightful about helping others. Did you notice what Jesus did once he heard Bartimaeus calling out to him? *He stops and asks Bartimaeus what he would like him to do.*
 - Jesus took a moment to stop and listen to Bartimaeus. Jesus' movements are always very intentional. So when he stops to listen, we need to pay attention.
 - Jesus shows us that part of listening is asking good questions that allow the other person to tell us what help would look like for them.
- Jesus asked him about his need and showed everyone watching what it looks like to listen well. We can do the same. Jesus is asking us to press pause to listen to those around us.

OBJECT LESSON | Active Noise Cancellation

- Listening is crucial when caring for others. But what does that look like when there is so much noise that may distract us?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your weekly program, borrow a pair of headphones with an Active Noise Cancellation feature. If you can't find a physical pair of headphones, you can also show an image of a pair. As the teaching indicates, put on and take off the headphones.*
- Many headphones have this great feature that helps you listen to a playlist uninterrupted. It's called Active Noise Cancelling technology. It uses built-in microphones to listen to your surroundings and then cancels out the sound around you so you can focus on what you are listening to.
 - It helps prevent your music from being drowned out by cars driving or the sound of someone dropping weights at the gym. These noise-canceling headphones keep distractions away so we can focus on what we want to pay attention to.
 - In a noisy world, it's easy to get distracted. It's easy to miss the part of the track or that one song on the playlist that makes your head bob. Headphones that cancel out the noise help us pay attention and not miss a beat.
- Sometimes, distractions can make it hard to focus on what's most important. Jesus shows us that our love for others can act like noise-canceling headphones. As we learn to love like Jesus and engage with our world as he did, it filters out the noise so we can pay attention to how we can love the people on repeat.
- As we learn to listen as Jesus did, we learn to focus on what's most important. We may hear how a sibling is struggling, that a community food pantry needs more food for its shelves, or a call to help address how a natural disaster affects entire communities.
- Jesus shows us that as we cancel out the noise and focus on what matters to God, we learn to pay attention to and hear the people around us. Jesus shows us that we can repeat what he did—notice others and pay attention to what they need.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Why do you think Jesus asked Bartimaeus what Jesus wanted him to do for him?**
 - ★ **When you have needs, do you feel like you can ask for them like Bartimaeus? What holds you back from asking?**
 - **What characters in the story did you relate with the most? What would have been going through your mind if you had been in their positions? How would you have reacted? Would you have done anything differently?**

SCRIPTURE | Proverbs 18:13

- What Jesus was doing wasn't exactly a brand new thing. He showed us something God had been hoping

we would always be doing. Jesus was living out wisdom that the book of Proverbs had been encouraging God's people to do for centuries.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Proverbs 18:13*
- Listening is a well-recognized pathway to care for others in the Bible. To keep us from responding in hurtful ways, the Scriptures encourage us to listen and ask questions before we take action, speak, or react to others. When we don't listen before jumping in, we can do things that aren't helpful or worsen a situation. Even with the best intentions, we can accidentally hurt those we want to help if we're not listening to what people need.
- The book of Proverbs and the story of Bartimaeus shows us how critical it is to listen actively, which opens us up to how they want to be cared for. Learning to listen before speaking will take some practice, which is great because **Jesus shows us listening is worth repeating.**

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

STORY | When Someone Listened To Me

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story about a time you were facing a challenging moment, and someone listened to you. What was impactful about that interaction? How did you feel when they were asking you questions? Be sure to include parts of your story that highlight the takeaway points listed below. You can also invite a volunteer or teen to share their experience.*
- When we ask questions and let others speak for themselves as Jesus did, we open ourselves to understanding them more deeply. Who are they? What are they all about? What makes them feel connected to God? Here are a few ways you can do that this week.
 - **LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND.** Listening to understand isn't about finding solutions immediately or seeking an opportunity to share our wisdom. It's about hearing others and letting them share their stories. This may mean there's a bit of an awkward silence after they stop talking. That's okay! "Awkward silences" are a great time to try and process what's been shared. After someone shares something, practice waiting a few moments before you respond.
 - **REPEAT WHAT THEY'VE SHARED.** We can help people feel heard and understood by repeating things they've shared. You can say something like, "It sounds like you're having a hard time with ...," or "Correct me if I misunderstood, but what I hear you saying is ... ?" Before giving your thoughts, repeat what you heard them say. In addition to making sure you understand everything, it can also help you internalize and empathize with what they are going through.
 - **ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP.** This last step is crucial if we want to love people the way Jesus did. It's as simple as saying, "How can I pray for you, and what can I do?" The last part of listening to others is asking what it would look like to come alongside them in prayer and help them with your actions. It's about giving them the space to verbalize their feelings, needs, and hopes but then joining them in the places where they need help.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **This week, how will you use listening as a way to love someone in your life?**
 - **Read James 1:19. How do you think being quick to speak and slow to listen makes anger more likely?**

REFLECTION | Learning To Listen

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this reflection, you will need the handout included in this week's [series of materials](#). First, have teenagers think about and write down something they need help with this week. The need could be funny or serious. Then, break them into small groups of two or three. Have them each take a turn sharing their need. After someone shares, have the other group members write down what they are hearing and repeat it to the person when they share. Finally, have them ask the person to share how they could have used help and how they can help them in the future and write that down as well.
- When we listen to understand, repeat what has been shared, and ask how we can help, we show people how much we care about them. It can take some work, but it's worth it because **Jesus shows us listening is worth repeating.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ★ **What is one way you want to commit to intentionally listening before speaking this week?**
 - **Today, what is one relationship where you can begin practicing this week's listening on repeat? What will that look like in practice?**

RESPONSE | Our Community Playlist

- Like building an amazing playlist for someone else, listening shows our care and love for others. But it might not look the same for each of us. Throughout this series, we will create our own playlist, each of us picking a song to add.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Throughout this series, your group will create a playlist. Before your weekly program, create a collaborative playlist on your music service of choice for your whole group. Create a QR code with the link that lets them add a song to the list. Teenagers can add a song to the playlist each week during the series. Share the updated playlist weekly on your group's social media or communication platform. By the end of the series, your ministry will have a playlist generated by your group that you can give to them to help them understand and encourage each other.
 - **NOTE:** If you would like to filter the songs on the list before they are added, you could have an adult leader add teenagers' songs to the playlist or have them hand in an index card with their music on it that you can add later.
- Together, as we listen and learn more about the people around us, we can care for others as Jesus did.

ACTIVITY | Spiritual Gifts Assessment

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you haven't already done so, this would be a great series to encourage your group to complete the Spiritual Gifts assessment, which you can find in your [Discipleship folder](#). You can do it during your program or give it to leaders or teenagers to do later. However, you do it to create space to follow up about what they found and what it looks like to put what they learned into practice.
- When we learn to stop and actively listen to what people need and prayerfully follow what it looks like to help them, it can make a huge difference in their lives. It's what we see Jesus do over and over because **Jesus shows us listening is worth repeating.**