



WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE

THE MAKING OF

BIG IDEA

Spending time with God can make us more like Jesus.

BIBLE

Exodus 34:29–31; Romans 12:12

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Every movie has a director who helps shape the vision as it moves from words on a page to something we experience. This week, we'll hear the story of Moses after he came down the mountain after spending time hearing directly from God. This story teaches us how **spending time with God can make us more like Jesus**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

VIDEO | Shoot Footage for *The Making Of*

INSTRUCTIONS: Every week during this series, have a volunteer shoot a behind-the-scenes-style documentary film. Film a few shots of what goes on in your group, like small groups talking, prepping for games, or interviews with teenagers and leaders. Shoot a new one every week, edit it together, and share it at the start of each night.

ACTIVITY | Freeze Frame

Welcome to the first week of our series, *The Making Of!* We're going to look at what it takes to make the movies we love and what that shows us about growing in our relationship with God. For example, have you ever watched a director in action? They call the shots and help everyone know what to do. Let's test our directorial abilities with a quick game!

INSTRUCTIONS: For this game, you'll need two adult volunteers and a few students as "directors." The adults will act out a scene that was made up. At any point, anyone from the audience can yell, "Freeze." The actors freeze in position, and the director who yelled "freeze" gets to replace one of the actors to change the scene. The new actor (previously the director) says a line of their choice to kick off the new scene. Continue until the scene has reached a stopping point.

This may sound funny, but sometimes I wish God would jump in and end one scene so a new one can begin. I want Jesus' guidance to be something I can't miss because it can be challenging to figure out how to follow Jesus in my daily life.

I read about Jesus in the Bible, but sometimes I get sidetracked while following him because there are so many distractions pulling away my attention. It's so easy to get distracted by what's trending online, global news events, discord streams, homework, and family obligations. With all that happening, following Jesus sometimes gets pushed to the side.

IMAGE | Carrie Fisher's Script Notes

A good director can help us make the best movie imaginable by asking questions, taking notes, and offering suggestions. One of the main characters in the original *Star Wars* trilogy was a Princess named Leia, played by the actress Carrie Fisher. Even though she was hired to act in the movie, she added so much more. Take a look at this picture of her script.

INSTRUCTIONS: As a teaching tool, show this image of [Carrie Fisher's script notes](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

These are some notes she wrote in the margins of her script that made their way into the movie. Carrie Fisher's script modifications go overlooked, even though she was often an uncredited writer and script director. She worked tirelessly to deliver the best version of the film possible. She shaped the dialogue and offered notes to give scenes a fresh direction. She hand-wrote her notes to change lines, cut out whole sections of dialogue, and provided new insight into the look of the movie.

These are notes on a single page of a well-known movie's script. Imagine what her other pages looked like! Carrie was driven by a desire to make every movie the best. She knew she could help improve these scripts to elevate *Star Wars* into a film that would resonate for years.

Whether it's movies, music, a school project, or (most importantly) our lives, amazing things can happen if we remain open to wisdom and direction from insightful people. Consider what could happen if we spent time allowing Jesus to do this in our lives.

When we decide to follow Jesus, we put our trust in an incredible director who wants to help us become the versions of ourselves he always envisioned. So, what does saying "yes" and allowing Jesus to direct our lives look like?

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

SCRIPTURE | Exodus 34:29–31

Early on in the Bible, there's a story found in a book called Exodus. It's about a leader named Moses, someone God empowered to save a whole nation of God's people from enslavement. There's a big moment in the story where Moses and the people of God escape Pharaoh's enslavement. Shortly after, Moses and his people walked into a new scene of their story, but they needed a fresh vision for their lives and relationship with God and each other. They had lived under Egypt's oppression for so long that they needed a reminder of what it looked like to connect with God.

So, Moses went up to Mount Sinai and talked with God. God gave Moses a list of ways for him and God's people to live and keep their relationship with God at the center of their lives.

Once Moses spent time getting this guidance from God, he walked back down the mountain to share it. That's when we read about his wild moment.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read *Exodus 34:29–31*.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he was glowing. Have you ever seen a movie so good that you

lost track of time? This sort of happened to Moses. He had been with and spoken with God for so long that his face became radiant.

See, Moses had just spent one-on-one time with God. God had just given him a new set of guidelines for all these people to center their lives around. God set them up so they could become the best version of themselves and in the community. Moses had experienced first-hand the power of a good director. God had given him notes and ways to shape the direction of his life and the life of his people. God instructed Moses to live the best life, rooted in a healthy relationship with God, and this connection with God made him glow!

Tragically, God's people didn't live in ways that kept their relationship with God at the center of their lives. They had trouble seeing the meaning behind God's guidance, and prioritizing God became a challenge. We can't hold it against them, though. We make mistakes, too. Living in line with all these guidelines on our strength alone is impossible.

The good news is when we follow Jesus, he enables us to live in a healthy, whole relationship with God. The Spirit of God leads and guides us, helping us make loving and wise decisions. Just as Moses left the mountain glowing, we can radiate joy, peace, and hope because we can talk with Jesus and hear his guidance. Through Jesus, we can have these "glowing face" moments. We can listen to God's direction in our lives anytime and anywhere.

SCRIPTURE | Romans 12:12

Our time with God may not turn our face into a light bulb like it did with Moses, but it does help us become more like Jesus. Paul, an Early Church leader, grew up with a significant focus on religious rules. He tried to keep all of God's guidelines, which was exhausting.

Instead of allowing them to help him focus on his relationship with God, he became more focused on how following the rules made him better than others. Not only did he feel the weight of the long list of rules, but he was quick to use them to put people down.

God helped Paul realize worshiping God wasn't about rule-keeping. It was about accepting the love Jesus showed us on the cross and living as he lived. Paul could trust in Jesus' grace rather than all his striving and rule-keeping. This doesn't mean boundaries were thrown out the window. Paul realized that we follow God's guidance in our lives not to earn love but because we are already loved. God loves us enough to guide us to live healthy, whole lives. Paul wrote this to help an Early Church community learn how to live this way.

INSTRUCTIONS: *Read Romans 12:12.*

Paul highlights one of the keys to following Jesus. We can choose to be faithful in prayer. As we talk to God

and carve out time to listen, we will be guided, encouraged, and helped by God. As we spend more and more time with God, we will continually become who we are meant to be.

Paul wanted people to see how becoming more like Jesus isn't a one-off event. Like making a movie, it takes time, patience, and endurance. Each day, we get to choose to stay close to God, deepen our connection, and become more like Jesus.

What did Moses, Paul, and even Jesus have in common? They all spent time with God. They were consistent and didn't let their relationship grow cold. They asked questions, expressed their pain, and invited God into their lives.

We don't have to have it all together to talk to God. God wants to meet us right where we are. We simply need to invite God into our day-to-day journey and trust each step of the way. God will make us into who we're meant to be because **spending time with God can make us more like Jesus.**

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

While you can connect with God in all sorts of unique ways, learning to talk with God in those moments may be a new experience for you. Here are a few ways to pray that can help you spend time with God.

INSTRUCTIONS: *For this prayer reflection, you will need the slide [included in this week's materials](#). After explaining the prayer practices, invite your group to select one prayer type to try out for two minutes.*

A Centering Prayer is when you set aside time to focus on a specific word. The word you choose should help you slow down and focus on one aspect of your relationship with God in which you want to grow. Maybe you want to focus on trusting God's forgiveness, so choose the word "grace." Or you are feeling powerless and need God's support, so you choose the word "help." There are endless words to choose from, but once you have one, a centering prayer looks like silently repeating the word in your head, acknowledging God is with you and making you more like Jesus.

The Jesus Prayer is another simple way to connect with God in prayer. This prayer is done by repeating, "Jesus, have mercy on me." It's an ancient prayer that helps us focus on our relationship and create space in our lives to reflect on how God is working within us. You can say this prayer quietly out loud to yourself or silently in your head whenever you want to connect with God.

Sight Prayer is a simple way to pray about and for the things we see. You can use a sight prayer to share your gratitude for what you see or to pray for a specific person or event. If you're on the way to school, you could pray for the houses you pass or the particular people you see. You could pray for the people in your class and your teachers. You could start your prayers with "God, thank you for ..." and see where it goes. It's a simple way to start building a prayer habit.

Pray the Bible. As you try to build new spiritual habits, sometimes it's helpful to combine some of these practices together. Praying the Bible is one of the ways you can do that. When you read something in Scripture, allow that to influence your prayer life. This is also helpful because, many times, we may not know what to pray, especially as we are new and growing in our faith. By praying for the things we see in the Bible, we can be sure that we are asking for something that God wants for us, and not just what we think is best.

RESPONSE | Take 1, 2, 3

Today, we talked about different ways to connect with God, but like filming a movie, you have to make the script come to life in action.

INSTRUCTIONS: *For this response, provide the printable [in this week's series materials](#) and something to write with. Have everyone think about all the different ways they have heard that they can spend time with God and how they will implement that this week.*

God simply wants to spend time with us, and as we spend time with God, we will be transformed, scene by scene, into the people we're meant to be because **spending time with God can make us more like Jesus.**