



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

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SERIES SUMMARY

A 4-week series about emotions.

WEEK 1: Emotions don't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 2: Anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 3: Fear doesn't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 4: Guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.

SCRIPTURE

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:23-27 NIV)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7 NIV)

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- What's the craziest thing you were afraid of as a kid?
- Tell a personal story about your silliest/craziest childhood fear.
- Now that we're older, we may not be scared of the things we were scared of as kids, but our fears now are bigger and more serious.

TENSION

- We all know what it's like to feel fear, whether we think about our fears a lot or not often at all.
- Our imagination plays a big part in our fears, and it can cause us to let fears take over our minds and motivate our thoughts.
- Fear can send us down a path of endless worry and "What ifs?"
- When we're faced with our fears, most of us have one of three responses:
 - Fight. We act on them, push against them, and try to control or fix them.
 - Flight. We avoid our fears and don't face them at all.
 - Freeze. We're paralyzed and just wait for our fears to pass.
- Fear is natural, real, and can even be helpful at times. The problem with fear comes when we let it become the boss of our actions, thoughts, and life.

TRUTH

- While in a boat on a lake with His disciples, Jesus was sleeping when a storm rolled in. Waves were sweeping over the boat, and the disciples were so full of fear that they woke Jesus up, asking Him to save them. (Matthew 8:23-25)
- Jesus calmed the storm and eased His disciples fears not only by stopping the wind and waves, but by proving that there is something else we can choose in the face of fear: faith. (Matthew 8:26-27)
- Jesus wants us to know that while we'll have reasons to fear throughout our lives, it's not the only feeling we should feel because He's more capable and powerful than fear.
- When faced with fear, we have more options than fight, flight, or freeze; we have faith.
- Fear doesn't have to be the boss of us.
- When we're out of control, Jesus is still in control, and we can trust Him with our fears.

APPLICATION

- The next time we're faced with fears, we can give our fears to Jesus. (1 Peter 5:7)
- We can go to Jesus by praying, talking with Him about our fears, inviting Him into them, focusing on the things we know are true about Jesus, and letting our faith in His ability to handle our fears help us overcome them.
- Think about what fears you're facing, write them down, and then take them to Jesus. Ask Him to help you have faith that He's in control and will be with you.
- Fear doesn't have to be the boss of you.

LANDING

- Your Small Group Leader can help you talk about and identify your fears, and then encourage you to take those fears to Jesus.
- How do I usually respond to fear?

THINK ABOUT THIS

In a conversation about fear, it's important to recognize that students in your ministry will experience fear in all kinds of ways. Some will open up about fears that seem small, silly, or insignificant. Be careful not to dismiss or minimize those fears, as they are very real to your students. In addition, some students may share fears that are bigger than you even realized. In those cases, be just as careful not to increase those fears by how you respond. Keep in mind that the three responses to fear discussed this week—fight, flight, or freeze—are not exclusive. Middle schoolers may exhibit different responses at different times and in the face of different fears. That's why having a conversation about all three is helpful to your group as a whole.

INTERACTIVE 1: FEAR GIFS

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll show gifs of people who are scared to help illustrate how it feels to be really fearful.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Four gifs depicting people who are really scared (These work best if they're funny and ridiculous!)
- A computer and screen large enough for everyone to view the gifs

INTERACTIVE: NAME THAT PHOBIA

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll ask students to define a bunch of funny sounding phobias as a way to get them involved with your talk and lighten the mood.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A list of obscure phobias and their definitions (We recommend between 4-6 phobias.)
- A digital slide for each phobia name
- A computer and screen large enough for everyone to view the slides
- Optional: Since it will be challenging for students to guess the phobia definitions by the names alone, consider adding an image on each slide as a hint.

PHOBIA IDEAS

- Nomophobia: Fear of being without your smart phone
- Xanthophobia: Fear of the color yellow
- Globophobia: Fear of balloons
- Epebiphobia: Fear of teenagers
- Omphalophobia: Fear of belly buttons

- Pogonophobia: Fear of beards
 - Pupaphobia: Fear of Puppets
 - Turophobia: Fear of Cheese
 - Alektorophobia: Fear of Chickens
 - Ombrophobia: Fear of Rain
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TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

FEAR DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE BOSS OF YOU.

INTRODUCTION

5 MINUTES

We're in the middle of a series called *Moods*. And in this series, we're talking all about some of the feelings, emotions, and moods that we experience. We're diving into what it looks like to handle our moods in a healthy way. A way that doesn't let them control us. A way that won't let them be the boss of us!

INTERACTIVE: Fear Gifs

This is where you'll show gifs of people who are scared to help illustrate how it feels to be really fearful.

And before we get into what we're going to talk about today, I have a question for you: What's the craziest thing you were afraid of as a kid? You know, that thing that made you feel like this? *[Show a "fear gif" and add some context/commentary.]* Where you were so scared to be in your room at night without a light on that you reacted like this? *[Show a "fear gif" and add some context/commentary.]* Maybe you were scared of weird clowns or crazy cartoon characters on TV, and they made you feel exactly like this person. *[Show a "fear gif" and add some context/commentary.]* Or maybe you were scared of getting shots at the doctor. Just the thought of going made you feel just like this. *[Show a "fear gif" and add some context/commentary.]*

While I didn't have these exact fears, I definitely had things I was scared of when I was younger.

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about your silliest or craziest childhood fear.
- Maybe you were scared of a person on TV, or the swimming pool, or eating a certain food. Whatever it is, make sure you choose something that's obviously outrageous—something you know you don't need to be afraid of as an adult and something your students would be unlikely to be scared of now.
- Keep it light and funny for your students!

Okay, so maybe that was a little bit of a stretch. We all were probably scared of things as kids that, as we've grown up, we know aren't that scary. But now that we're a little bit older, I think we all probably have new things, bigger things, more serious things we might be afraid of. And that's what we're going to talk about today. The feeling behind the stuff we're afraid of. *Fear.*

TENSION

8 MINUTES

Because the truth is, we all know what it's like to feel fear. **We all know what it's like to be afraid of something.** Some of our fears are really common. Things like talking in public, or snakes, or spiders? I bet quite a few of us here today have at least one of those fears! But some of us may have some really unique and uncommon fears!

INTERACTIVE: Name that Phobia

This is where you'll ask students to define a bunch of funny sounding phobias as a way to get them involved with your talk and lighten the mood.

[One-at-a-time, put the name of a phobia on screen and ask students to try to define what that phobia is. A list of phobia names and definitions are listed in the "Interactive" section of this Communicator Guide.]

Okay, those were some really interesting phobias! I had no idea that some people are scared of *[list one of the phobias you used in the Interactive.]*

Regardless of what we're scared of, we all have something in common. We all experience fear at some point in our lives.

For some of you, fear is a really big deal. The stuff you're afraid of? Well, you think about it a lot! It may be the only thing you think about. But for others of you, fear isn't really something you think about very often. Sure, you might be worried about things in your life, but the minute the fear creeps in, you just push it aside.

No matter how you manage fear, what's interesting is that **our imagination seems to play a big part in experiencing fear.** The stuff we're usually the most afraid of is the stuff we imagine might happen to us. The stuff we imagine will be said about us. The stuff we can't control, or don't see coming, or don't know how to handle if it does come. The stuff we can only imagine.

And when we let fear take over our minds and motivate our thoughts, it leads our imagination down a path of endless "What ifs?"

What if I never have the friends I want?

What if my parents get divorced?

What if I never get taller?

What if my sister doesn't get better?

What if my boyfriend or girlfriend breaks up with me?

What if God isn't actually real?

What if I fail my class?

*What if we have to move?
What if I get in trouble?
What if my dad loses his job?
What if I don't make the team?
What if I never feel any different than the way I feel right now?
What if my acne never goes away?*

See what I mean? Fear takes us down a path of endless worry. It gets our imaginations going about the things that could be, or might be, or we hope will never be. It takes over our thinking.

And when we're faced with our fears, most of us usually have one of three responses:

- **Fight.** When we're faced with fear, some of us fight against it. We act on it. We try to control the things we can control to keep the things we fear from actually happening. Maybe you yell at your dad to take care of himself because you're afraid he'll get sick. Or you try to force your sibling to avoid that party because you're worried what might happen if she goes. Or you study way more than you need to for that test because you're afraid you'll fail it if you don't. You focus on what you can control. You fight back against fear by trying to take control. And you don't give up until you feel like you've fixed it, or stopped it, or done what you can to keep what you fear from coming true.
- **Flight.** Others of you face fear by well, not facing it at all! Fear motivates you not to fight back, but to run in the opposite direction. You avoid asking questions because of the fear it will lead you to doubt your faith. You stay away from your friends when they hurt your feelings because you don't want to face the fear that they might reject you. You're afraid you won't get the lead in the play, so you just don't try out for it. For you, fear sends you running away from and avoiding the things you're worried about or afraid of altogether.
- **Freeze.** And finally, for some of you, fear simply freezes you in your tracks. It paralyzes you. You get stuck. When you're faced with the fear that something bad will happen, or you'll be disappointed, or that things won't turn out the way you hoped, you can't get passed it. You can't do anything but hide out, pull the covers back over your head, and stay there until the fear hopefully passes.

Here's the thing: Fear is natural. It's real. We all experience it no matter what age we are. And I'm not here to tell you that you should never be afraid of anything. Because honestly, there's a lot of stuff to be afraid of. And fear can be helpful sometimes because it helps us avoid or be cautious around things that could hurt us. **The issue is when fear takes over.** When it becomes the boss of our actions, thoughts, and life. That's when we need to figure out a new way to face it.

TRUTH

4 MINUTES

One of the best things about the Bible is that it gives us examples of real people who had real experiences and real feelings just like ours. And today, we're going to look at an experience some of Jesus' closest followers had that I think can teach us a lot about what we can do in the face of fear.

While on Earth, Jesus spent most of His time with a group of 12 people. They were His disciples, His closest followers at that time. Because they spent so much time with Jesus, they saw Him do some pretty amazing things. Heal sick people, forgive sins, do miracles. So, you'd think Jesus' closest friends would have had nothing to fear, right? After all, they were hanging out with the guy who could literally do *anything!* What could they have possibly been afraid of with Jesus on their side?

Well, take a look at what a guy named **Matthew**, one of Jesus' closest friends and followers, wrote down about the life and ministry of Jesus:

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" (Matthew 8:23-25 NIV)

Okay, so the disciples were traveling in this boat with Jesus when all the sudden, a huge storm rolled in. The waves were so high they were literally sweeping over the boat. And what was Jesus doing? TAKING A NAP! As the storm was getting bigger and scarier, the disciples did what I would have done: They FREAKED OUT! They got scared because in the face of this storm, they thought they had something to fear. So, they woke up Jesus, probably thinking, "Um, hello? We're about to drown and you're chilling like it's your job! WAKE UP AND HELP US!"

He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:26-27 NIV)

So, what did Jesus do? Exactly what only He was capable of doing. He calmed the storm. He took the very thing these disciples were afraid of and stopped it in its tracks. He eased their fears, not just by stopping the wind and waves, but by proving that there was something else we can choose in the face of fear. *Faith.*

Look back at what Jesus said when the disciples woke Him up:

"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"

Now while I can't be sure because I obviously wasn't there, I don't think Jesus said this because He was mad at the disciples. I don't think He was trying to make them feel bad for not having enough faith. I think He was trying to show them that faith can help overcome their fear. Did these disciples have a reason to be afraid? Well, yeah! They were on a boat in the middle of a huge storm. That's scary! But Jesus wanted them to know that their fear didn't have to be the only thing they felt. Because there is something, or someone, who is more capable and more powerful than that fear. And that's Jesus.

While we may not be physically tossed around in a storm on the ocean, sometimes our fear can feel a lot like that. But when we experience fear, we have more options than just fight, flight, or freeze. We have FAITH. That's what Jesus offers us.

See, fear doesn't have to be the boss of you.

Fear comes when we feel out of control. But the truth is, **when we're out of control, Jesus is still in control.** We can trust Him when we're in the middle of a storm. Will we still have reasons to be afraid in life? Yes! I'm not saying having faith means you never fear again. But what I am saying is that faith is what gets us through fear. It's WITH US in fear. And it will be with us when the fear is gone.

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

Fear doesn't have to be the boss of you. And like the disciples, Jesus offers us an alternative to fear. He offers us faith.

So what do we do with our fears? The next time we're faced with something to be scared of, what do we do? Well, take a look at one more Scripture with me for an answer:

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 NIV).

What I love about this verse is that it was written by Peter, a disciple of Jesus who was on that very boat in the middle of the storm. So when Peter wrote this, he wrote from experience. He knew what it's like to experience fear. And he also knew what it's like to put his faith in Jesus in the midst of it.

When Peter said "cast," he meant, throw, hurl, or heave. These are active words. That means this won't happen by accident. When you feel fear, you have to choose to take it and throw it to Jesus. And why do we do this? Well, we throw our fear on Jesus because He cares for us. How do we do this?

We can pray,
we can talk to Him about our fears,
we can invite Him into them,
we can focus on all the things we know are true about Jesus,
and we can let our faith in His ability to handle our fears help us overcome them.

So this week, that's where I want you to start.

1. **Think about what fears you're facing right now.** Big or small, they all matter here. Write them down. Say them aloud. Put some words to what you're feeling.
2. And then **one-by-one, take them to Jesus.** Throw them over to Him. Ask Him to help you have faith that He's in control. Pray that He'll be with you in the middle of your storm. Give your fears to Him, and ask Him to walk you through them.

And remember, **fear doesn't have to be the boss of you.**

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Maybe you need a little help talking about or even identifying what it is you're afraid of. Maybe you need someone to encourage you to trust Jesus in the middle of your fear. Well, the good news is that's exactly what your Small Group Leader is for. They're here to help you walk through the circumstances or situations that might be causing you to fear. And they're here to remind you that even if your circumstances don't change, you can walk through them with confidence and faith in Jesus who is in control of it all.

So, as you head to Small Group today, I want you to think about this question: **How do I usually respond to fear?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
