



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## It's Personal / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

### BOTTOM LINE

**It's personal because  
Jesus knows what matters to you.**

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize that Jesus cares about what matters to them, and part of loving Jesus, is caring about what matters to others.

### SCRIPTURE

*...Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3b-4 NIV).*

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." (Luke 19:5 NIV).*

### TEACHING OUTLINE

#### INTRODUCTION

- *Communicator note: Begin with a story about a time when one of your friends surprised you or made you feel like you didn't even know them.*

#### TENSION

- You can know somebody and not really know them.
- **The majority of people don't feel like there's anyone who gets us 100%.**
- You were made to have somebody who gets you, understands you, and knows what your real world is like.
- It would be nice if more people just understood us. But instead, most of the time we feel like nobody gets us.

#### TRUTH

- The first followers of Jesus were Jewish, so they kind of figured that everyone who followed Jesus would have been Jewish. But Jesus was for anyone from any background, so it was natural for the not-Jewish people to feel like they didn't quite fit in.

- **Everyone wanted to see what Jesus was like** and Zacchaeus was no different.
- To get a better view of Jesus, Zacchaeus climbs a tree.
- Jesus looked out for the poor and mistreated people, and nobody was better at mistreating them or making them poor than Zacchaeus.
- Jesus looks up, sees him in the tree, calls out to him, and then invites Himself over to Zacchaeus' house for dinner!
- *"When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." (Luke 19:5 NIV).*
- **Having someone in your home sent a message of friendship.**
- *"So he [Zacchaeus] came down at once and welcomed him [Jesus] gladly" (Luke 19:6 NIV).*
- So why did Jesus invite Himself over? Because **Jesus cared about what Zacchaeus cared about.**
- Jesus understood Zacchaeus was just a person who wanted to belong, and Jesus went over to his place to show him that he did.
- If you've ever wondered what Jesus thinks about you, the story of Zacchaeus hopefully is an encouragement.
- **It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.**
- The personal Jesus surprised Zacchaeus and definitely shocked the people around Zacchaeus.

## APPLICATION

- This week try this:
  1. **Talk to Jesus about what matters to you.**
  2. **Talk to others about what interests them.**
- *...Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3b-4 NIV).*
- Look out for the interests of others.

## LANDING

- Do you know what matters to the people you know; really? Have you taken the time to be personal enough to try and "get" them?
- When we take the time to make it personal with others, we are living like Jesus.
- **It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.** Now you have the chance to go and do the same for others.

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## INTERACTIVE

The Interactive happens in the Tension section of the script. You'll need...

- 2 small boxes
- Index cards
- Markers



# TEACHING SCRIPT

## It's Personal / Week 2

PRELUDE

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### BOTTOM LINE

**It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.**

## INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

*(Communicator note: Begin with a story about a time when one of your friends surprised you or made you feel like you didn't even know them.)*

Growing up, there was this kid I knew named Elijah. He was quiet and like super-ridiculously smart. He played basketball, always took advanced math classes, and was all-around a nice guy. In school, I sat by him in class basically every year from the time we were little kids. He lived in the same neighborhood I did—which is why I thought I knew him pretty well.

Then, our sophomore year, he missed a week of class—it was weird, but I figured he was out sick or something, but when he came back the teacher was asking him all kinds of weird questions about the weather, llamas, and what he ate. So, I was like, “Hey man, did you go on a trip?” and he goes, “Yeah, I went to Peru.” And I'm like: *Wow...wish my parents did cool vacations like that. And you got to miss school?!*

Then, this happened:

Me: “Nice. So, what did you do there?”

Him: “Oh, I didn't really sightsee much. I was in a competition the whole time.”

Me: “That's cool. What kind of competition takes you to Peru?”

Him: “Oh, it's not always there. It's a different place every year. It's an international origami competition.”

Me: “Huh?”

Turns out my buddy Elijah was an internationally known origami artist—like, if it happened today, his YouTube channel would've easily had at least 20 million subs.

How is that even real?! I had known this guy my WHOLE ENTIRE LIFE and I felt like I didn't know him at all.

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## TENSION

2.5 MINUTES

Because here's the thing: You can know somebody and not really know them. And the same thing is true for you. You can hang out with people and still not have a ton of people who know the real you or who get you.

For example: have you ever dealt with something or felt something, and you simply decided to keep it to yourself because you didn't think other people would understand? Or you did share it, and you felt like the people you talked to were drawing a blank?

For most of us, our friends are probably the people who "get" us the most. And some of you may say that you have a bestie who TOTALLY gets you. That's awesome, but it's probably not a lot more people than that, is it? Here's a stat I made up, but I think it's true: **The majority of people don't feel like there's anyone who gets us 100%.**



*For this Interactive, you'll use index cards and two boxes or crates to illustrate how there are certain things that we'll talk to certain people about who we think understand us better, compared to those who we think don't.*

*Say something like: A lot of times, we share parts of our lives with different people—the parts of our lives that we feel like they'll get...*

- *We have friends that we go deep with. But some friends we only laugh and have fun with, because they wouldn't get all the deep stuff. (Put "laugh" in one box and put "deep" in another box.)*
- *We have people that we hang out with, but we don't talk about "sports" with. It seems like they have no interest in sports, so they wouldn't get it. Or maybe it's that there are people who know you like sports, and then there's some people who know that your grandfather taught you baseball and taught you everything you know. (Put "likes sports" in one box and put "sports = family" in another box.)*
- *We have people in our small group that we can talk about our faith with. But we don't talk about our faith with certain people at school. (Put "Knows my faith" in one box and "Knows I go to church" in another box.)*

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And this is totally normal. But sometimes it would be nice if more people just understood us. All our quirks, interests, struggles, and fears. But instead, most of the time we feel like nobody gets us.

And you know who else feels that way...literally everybody. Almost everybody. The truth is, that "nobody gets me" or "nobody knows the real me" feeling isn't easy. It's one of the reasons this idea of "personal" matters so much. Because whether you knew this or not, **you are actually wired to be known.** You were made to have somebody who gets you, understands you, and knows what your real world is like.

And this, my friends, brings us back to a guy named Zacchaeus.

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# TRUTH

9 MINUTES

Last week, we started talking about this encounter Jesus had with a man named Zacchaeus. In the section of the Bible called the New Testament, there are eyewitness accounts from people who knew Jesus personally. Those are called “The Gospels.” There are four of them, and they all come from different perspectives. They didn’t all share the same stories. Sometimes they were writing to different people, which affected which details they included. Here’s what I mean:

The Gospel of Luke is the only gospel that tells the story of Zacchaeus, and there’s a reason for that. Luke was writing to a mostly NOT Jewish audience. The first followers of Jesus were Jewish, so they kind of figured that everyone who followed Jesus would have been Jewish. But that’s not the way Jesus operated—He was for *anyone* from any background, so it was natural for the not-Jewish people to feel like they didn’t quite fit in.

So, in Luke’s gospel, there are a lot of stories about people who didn’t feel like they fit in. It’s easy to imagine that these are the people Luke wrote ABOUT, because these are the people Luke wrote TO. He wanted his readers to see how Jesus treated people like THEM.

So Luke shares the story of Zacchaeus, who, like we learned last week, was on the outside of the group. He was a Jewish tax collector which was a super-bad thing to be. The short version? He was a sellout and a traitor.

But then Jesus comes to town, and everyone is dying to see Him. By this point, Jesus was WAY famous, and people wanted to know...

- **Is He like the rumors say He is?**
- **Is He really healing people and performing miracles?**
- **Is He really challenging the powers in charge?**

Everyone wanted to see what Jesus was like and Zacchaeus was no different, so he shows up.

To get a better view of Jesus, Zacchaeus climbs a tree. He was short, so getting a higher view helped. But also, I imagine Zacchaeus wasn’t sure how Jesus would feel about a guy like him—a guy who collected taxes for the Romans and probably a little extra to keep for himself. Jesus looked out for the poor and mistreated people, and nobody was better at mistreating them or making them poor than Zacchaeus.

So I imagine he wasn’t looking to stand out.

But then the craziest thing happens: Jesus looks up, sees him, calls out to him, and then invites Himself over to Zacchaeus’ house for dinner! Luke tells it this way...

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” (Luke 19:5 NIV).*

We hear that and think, “Okay, that’s a little bold. Cook me dinner—I’m coming over with no warning!” But in the context of this culture, it was an honor to host someone for dinner. **Having someone in your home sent a message of friendship.**

So Zacchaeus wasn’t sitting in the tree thinking Jesus was rude for inviting Himself over. He was most likely sitting in a tree thinking, “I CAN’T believe Jesus would want to have dinner with me at all! And He announced it loud enough for everyone in the crowd to hear!!”

In fact, Luke writes...

So he [Zacchaeus] came down at once and welcomed him [Jesus] gladly (Luke 19:6 NIV).

So why did Jesus invite Himself over? **Because Jesus cared about what Zacchaeus cared about.** And even though it didn't seem like it on the outside, Zacchaeus cared about...

- **Belonging.**
- **Being accepted.**
- **Being seen.**
- **And being known.**

How do I know that? Because he was a human and we literally all want that. And we want it more when we feel like we don't belong anywhere.

Zacchaeus lived his life as an outsider. As a Jewish man, he didn't fit in with the Romans, even though he worked for them. And he didn't fit in with his Jewish neighbors because he taxed them on behalf of the Roman government. See, Zacchaeus wasn't just climbing a tree to see Jesus. **He was climbing a tree to see if he mattered to Jesus, and to see if Jesus knew what mattered to him.**

And, don't miss this, it surprises everyone. People didn't expect a friendship to form between Jesus and the local outcast. They liked Jesus and wanted to be around Him, and they didn't want to be around Zacchaeus. In fact, they all probably thought that they already knew everything they needed to know about Zacchaeus. As a tax collector, they knew exactly what he was like and they didn't want to be associated with him.

But not Jesus.

**Jesus knew that just because Zacchaeus had the label of tax collector, it didn't tell the whole story about who he was.** It turns out Jesus knew Zacchaeus better than anyone around him did. Jesus understood **Zacchaeus was just a person who wanted to belong, and Jesus went over to his place to show him that he did.**

If you've ever wondered what Jesus thinks about you, the story of Zacchaeus hopefully is an encouragement. But maybe you've always felt like there were certain things that mattered to Jesus. For example, maybe you thought Jesus cared about...

- **Your Bible reading, but not your grades.**
- **Praying, but not your friendships.**
- **Holy stuff, but not real-life stuff.**
- **Your cussing, but not your anxiety.**
- **Your obedience, but not your relationship with your dad.**
- **Your sexual purity, but not your dating relationships.**

Today, I want you to know that things that matter to you matter to Him. The things that interest you, interest Him. He doesn't just know that you love basketball or K-Pop or theatre, but He gets why. He gets you personally.

Think of it this way...

**It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.**

I don't know about you, but that was not the image of Jesus I grew up with. That's not what I thought He was like. The personal Jesus surprised Zacchaeus and definitely shocked the people around Zacchaeus. And chances are, there are a lot of people around you every day who would never guess that Jesus is so interested in them personally.

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## APPLICATION

5 MINUTES

That's why, this week, I want to challenge you to try both of these ideas....

1. **Talk to Jesus about what matters to you.** Jesus cares about what you care about. So start there. Pray about it. Share it with Him. Let Him know about the things that you like. Let Him know the things you worry about. Tell Him the things that bring you life, and the things that drain you. Jesus is never bored hearing from you and about you. Because it's personal to Him.
2. **Talk to others about what interests them.** When it came to Zacchaeus, it wasn't personal for the crowd he was in. They made assumptions about Zacchaeus, but they didn't really know him or get him. Jesus was the only one who knew that what really mattered to Zacchaeus was a sense of belonging. It's possible there are people you've made assumptions about too; people who you think are one way because of what you've believed about them, but you've never made it personal. Maybe this week you can make it personal by being intentional and discovering the things others like. Let go of the ideas you've had about them, and do for someone what Jesus did for Zacchaeus.

In his letter to the church in Philippi, the apostle Paul writes about this very idea...

*...Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3b-4 NIV).*

Look out for the interests of others. Which might mean...

- **You ask your friends questions and listen to their answers.**
- **You play something that your little brother loves to play.**
- **You go watch your friend play their sport, even if you have no clue what's going on.**
- **You make an effort to include that kid who's a grade younger than you.**
- **You get to know someone who is different than you.**

From there, Paul goes on to talk about the character of Jesus and what Jesus was like. Paul said, "Make Jesus the model. Because that's exactly what Jesus was like. He was selfless. He looked out for the interests of others. And we should do the same thing. This is what makes us stand out as people who follow Him."

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Everybody needs somebody who knows their name and knows them personally. But I want you to think about something this week—do you know what matters to the people you know; really? Have you taken the time to be personal enough to try and "get" them?

When we take the time to make it personal with others, we are living like Jesus. Jesus was never satisfied by making a judgement about a person from far away. He got close, He took time, and He never let a label or an assumption inform His opinion. He cared about what mattered to others because they mattered to Him.

**It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.** Now you have the chance to go and do the same for others.



## TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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