

## WEEK 2

### TEACHING GUIDE

Not Yet

### BIG IDEA

Your purpose is to know Jesus.

### BIBLE

Isaiah 6:1-10, 42:1-4, 53:3-6; Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Corinthians 11:1

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | What's The Purpose?

- Welcome back to *Not Yet*, where we're talking about something that has the potential to excite us, terrify us, or a little bit of both: our futures!
  - When we think about our futures, we might ask questions, like, "Who am I going to become? What will I do? And what's my purpose?"
  - But let's start with an easier question. Before you try to figure out your own purpose, can you figure out the purpose of all this stuff?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, you'll need [index cards](#) and an assortment of objects (or photos of objects) with purposes that aren't immediately clear. Number your objects and place them on a table. On the index cards, create two sets of cards that include the correct uses of each item, as well as a few incorrect uses to make the game more challenging. Give students one minute to examine the objects and discuss their purposes. Then split them into two teams, give each team a stack of index cards, and give them one minute to try to match the objects with their correct purposes. When time is up, have the teams try to explain how to use each item. Give a prize to the team who guessed the most items correctly, like:*
  - *Makes your hands less smelly ([stainless steel soap](#)).*
  - *Arranges the perfect bouquet ([flower frog](#)).*
  - *Protects your stuff from getting pooped on ([bird repellent spikes](#)).*
  - *Opens a pickle jar ([rubber grippers](#)).*
  - *Gives you better naps ([SlumberSleeve](#)).*
  - *Helps you make breakfast ([Eggstractor](#)).*

#### QUESTION | Did you learn anything about "purpose" from that game?

- Okay, that game was kind of dumb, but **did you learn anything about "purpose" from it?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

- You can't always tell what something's purpose is at first glance, and some things could actually have a lot of different purposes! But "purpose" gets a little more complicated when we're talking about people (and not objects), doesn't it?

## DISCUSSION

- INSTRUCTIONS:
  - When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? Has that changed?
  - \* When you were a kid, how often do you remember thinking about your future? How has that changed as you've gotten older?
  - Have you ever thought about the "purpose" of your life? If so, what have you wondered?

## QUESTION | What do you think it means for a person to have "purpose"?

- What do you think it means for a person to have "purpose"?
- INSTRUCTIONS: Give a few students a chance to respond. Encourage students to think out loud and explore — there are no right answers to this question!
- Sometimes we wonder about the "purpose" of the things we have to do, like waking up every day for school. Sure, we need to learn things — but do we need to learn them at such unspeakable hours? Or what's the purpose of organizing our closets when we know it's going to be trashed again in just a few days?
- Sometimes, we wonder about the "purpose" of the things we experience — especially the difficult things. What's the "purpose" when . . .
  - Our families crumble.
  - Our parents split.
  - Money is scarce.
  - We can't seem to get out of whatever problem we're in.
- Sometimes, we wonder about the "purpose" of our lives as a whole! We might ask questions like . . .
  - Why am I here?
  - What's the point of my life?
  - How can I make my life mean something?
- And sometimes, we wonder what God has to say about our "purpose," like . . .
  - Why did God create me the way I am?
  - What would God say my purpose is?
  - How can I find out what God wants me to do with my life?
  - Why won't God make my purpose more clear to me?
- These are big questions. As we try to find answers, we can get confused about what "purpose" really means.
  - Like those objects we looked at a few moments ago, we can mistakenly tie our "purpose" to what we can do, achieve, or produce. We think our purpose has to do with doing something "useful" or "good" for the world.
  - When we think our purpose is tied to our "usefulness" or "goodness," it makes sense that we get confused! What about when we're still young? Or get sick or injured? Or just need a break? What about when we make mistakes? Do our lives have less purpose and meaning when we're less "useful" or "good" for the world?
- Or is it possible we have a very different purpose — a purpose that doesn't change, even when we do? Could discovering our true purpose give everything else in our lives meaning, direction, and clarity?

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

**STORY** | Talk about a time you were confused about your purpose.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were confused about the direction of your life. You might talk about a time your vision for your life changed, you experienced unexpected roadblocks, or you changed careers or interests. Talk about why your life changed and how that led to questions about your life's purpose.
- See what I mean? There are so many reasons why our lives might take turns we didn't expect. That's why it's so important to understand that the purpose and meaning of our lives is connected to something so much deeper than:
  - Our skills or interests.
  - Our future jobs or careers.
  - What we can contribute to the world.

**DISCUSSION**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:**
  - \* Why do you think it's important to know our lives have "purpose" beyond our skills, interests, or professions?
  - \* If I had asked you yesterday what your purpose in life was, what would you have said? Has your answer changed at all today?

**SCRIPTURE** | Isaiah 6:1-10

- In the Old Testament of the Bible, we can find the story of a prophet named Isaiah, who had a pretty unique experience that helped him better discover his purpose.
  - As a prophet, Isaiah's role was to share words of hope and warning to the people of Israel.
  - But Isaiah really always see himself doing this prophet thing as his full-time job. He actually really liked the quiet life of being a palace scribe in Jerusalem. But God one day asked Isaiah to take a new turn in his life.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Isaiah 6:1-10.
- This is a pretty incredible encounter, right? It's not something you hear about most people experiencing. Isaiah actually got to see God and it absolutely blew his mind.
- In God's presence, we see Isaiah do a few things:
  - He recognized how incredible God was.
  - He recognized how imperfect he (and all of humanity) was in comparison.
  - He found forgiveness.
  - And finally, he was given a mission.
- In God's presence, everything became clearer for Isaiah. He discovered who he was, who God was, and what God wanted for his life.

**SCRIPTURE** | Isaiah 42:1-4, 53:3-6

- After this encounter with God, Isaiah took his new role as prophet seriously. He spoke for God, even when the words he passed on weren't popular with the people he shared them with. Sometimes Isaiah gave warnings to the people, sometimes he gave words of hope, and sometimes he gave both.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Isaiah 42:1-4 and 53:3-6.
- We might read these words now and wonder what they're about, but these words pointed to the future arrival of Jesus on earth. Through Isaiah, God promised a Savior – someone in whom we could all put our hope, who would bring justice, and who would offer us forgiveness and salvation.

**SCRIPTURE** | Matthew 28:16-20

- Much like Isaiah was called by God to tell others about Jesus, Jesus himself actually called you and me to do the same. Maybe you've heard this passage before . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 28:16-20.*
- These were some of Jesus' last words before he left earth, so we can assume they were pretty important. Kind of like God asked Isaiah, "Who will I send? Who will go?" Jesus asks us a similar question: "Will you go? Will you tell the world about me?"
  - So back to the "purpose" of our lives. If Isaiah was asked to tell the world about Jesus, and Jesus asked his followers to do the same, is our "purpose" to tell the world about Jesus? That's certainly something God wants for us – but no, I don't think that's the best way to answer this question.
  - God eventually gave Isaiah a specific mission to accomplish, but that moment was the result of something even more important. Before Isaiah could know his mission, he had to begin by simply knowing God.
  - In the same way, Jesus gave his followers a mission to accomplish, but that mission wasn't the beginning of their relationship. He was talking to his friends – people who knew him, loved him, and had spent time learning from him.
- With God, our purpose has always been tied to a relationship with our Creator. So if you want to know why you're here or what your purpose is, start by getting to know the one who created you. Because **your purpose is to know Jesus.**

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

**DISCUSSION**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:**
  - **\* Do you agree that your purpose is to know Jesus? Why or why not?**
  - **When you hear Isaiah's story, which parts can you not relate to? Which parts can you relate to and how?**

**STORY** | Talk about how knowing Jesus has helped you discover who you are.

- Remember all the things Isaiah discovered when he encountered God? He saw himself, the world, and how God could use him more clearly than ever before. The same is true for us! When we get to know Jesus better, there are a lot more things we come to know too.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about how knowing Jesus helped you discover who you are. You might talk about how he helped bring clarity in one or more of these ways:*
  - *The qualities, strengths, and abilities God has given you.*
  - *The areas of your life where you still need to grow.*
  - *The problems in the world you want to help solve.*
  - *Who you are and who you want to become.*
- So what's my purpose in life? Is it to be a pastor? A parent? A spouse? A fill-in-the-blank? No. Not really. My purpose (and yours) is simply to know the God who made me.
- Most of us will probably never have an encounter with God where we're told, "Hey! Here's your one very specific purpose in life." But that's okay! Because when we get to know Jesus better, we learn the answers to the questions we really need to know, like:
  - Who Jesus is.
  - Who we are.

- How we can continue to become more like him.
- And the plans he has for us.
- But none of that is possible if we don't start by knowing who Jesus is.

### REFLECTION | Not Yet Notes

- This week, I want to challenge you to take fifteen minutes every day to spend some time with Jesus. When you do, remember Isaiah and think about these four questions:
  - **WHAT DO I NOTICE ABOUT GOD?** Isaiah was overwhelmed by God's holiness and majesty. When you spend time with Jesus, what do you notice about him?
  - **WHAT DO I NOTICE ABOUT MYSELF?** Time with God showed Isaiah the truth about who he was — including some things that were probably difficult to accept. When you spend time with Jesus, what does he show you about who you are or who you could still become?
  - **WHAT DO I NOTICE ABOUT THE WORLD?** When Isaiah was in God's presence, he realized how much the world needed God's help. When you spend time with Jesus, what problems do you notice that you could help solve?
  - **WHAT MIGHT GOD BE ASKING ME TO DO TODAY?** God gave Isaiah clear instructions that day. You might not always hear from God so clearly, but when you spend time with Jesus, what do you hear God's Spirit quietly leading you to do in response?
- Whether your life's purpose seems really clear to you right now or you still have a lot of questions, that's okay. Here's what matters most: **your purpose is to know Jesus**. So get to know him better — and watch how he helps you get to know yourself better too.

### DISCUSSION

- INSTRUCTIONS:
  - Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. Have you ever spent time with someone who reminded you of Jesus? If so, what were they like and how do you think they became like that?
  - Has getting to know Jesus better ever helped you understand yourself (or your future) better too? If so, how?
  - This week, what's your plan for spending time getting to know Jesus better? How can we help each other do that?