



S1.Lesson 20: Self-Awareness through God

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies: TV and DVD to watch the Nooma video: *Name* (currently available at Amazon, [HERE](#));

OPENING PRAYER

WATCH Nooma Video: Name

ASK

- Rob Bell says, “Jacob is trying to deceive his father into thinking that he’s his older brother, Esau. When we first meet Jacob in the story, he’s trying to be someone else.” Do you have friends or see people at school who are trying to be someone else, someone who they are not?
 - How do they do this? What does “being someone else” look like?
 - Do you think they know that this is what they are doing: Being someone else?
 - You don’t have to answer this one out loud, but do you think there are people who think you sometimes act like you are being someone else?
- Rob Bell says, “We’ll never live from our true selves when we’re comparing ourselves to those around us. How much life do we lose when we’re endlessly comparing and measuring and gauging ourselves to those around us?”
 - What are some ways in which you and/or your friends compare yourselves to others?

TELL

- Rob Bell asks, “I mean how much of our pain comes from not knowing how to answer “Who are you?” This raises the question, how do we discover who we are?
- There are a number of ways, right?
 1. We listen to what others tell us about us, and we act like they tell us.
 2. Or, we listen to what others tell us and we do the opposite.
 3. Or, we fix our eyes on someone that we admire, and we seek to act like that person.
 4. Or, we pay attention to how we respond automatically to a situation and then think about how we want to respond differently the next time a similar situation happens.
 5. Or, we do a little bit of all the above options.
- Jesus invites us to live out option number three.

- He calls us to follow him and to do as he does.
- And when we do that, what our actions will do is invite God into our lives.
- In so doing, God will reveal to us the truth of who we are.
- Let's look at today's scripture passage, Matthew 16:13-19.

(from The MESSAGE) MT 16:13 When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?" (Son of Man is how Jesus often referred to himself). **14** The disciples replied, "Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." **15** Jesus pressed them, "And how about you? Who do you say I am?" **16** Simon Peter said, "You're the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." **17** Jesus answered back, "God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn't get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. **18** And now I'm going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. **19** "And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven."

ASK

- Does this scripture seem familiar? (Hopefully, because we read it earlier during the year).
- Verse 14: Who do others say Jesus is? (John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, a prophet)
- Who do the disciples say Jesus is? (verse 16 – Peter says Jesus is the Messiah, son of the living God)
- And what is Jesus' response? (You're right! God must've shown you).
- Then, who tells Peter who Peter is? (Jesus)
- And is Peter's response the same as Jesus'? (We don't know. But had Peter responded like Jesus did, that would've probably been mentioned in the story)
- So Jesus says Peter sees who Jesus is because of God.
 - Do you think Jesus sees who Peter is because of God's help?
 - So what we can take from this is that God helps us to see who we are.

TELL

- Rob Bells says in the Nooma video: Do you know some of the things that we need to be saved from? We need to be saved from all the times we haven't been our true selves. All the times we've tried to be someone else. All of the lies we've believed about who God made when God made us.
 - The way that we're saved from these things is by paying attention to God. By copying what Jesus does (by following Jesus), we can learn how to pay attention to God.
- Keeping in mind that God is who helps us to see who we are, we're going to do an activity now that'll help us to think about who we are.

EXPLAIN Activity: I Am...

- In this activity, we seek to describe ourselves, not our physical selves, but who we are, with one word.
- We are to sit in a circle.
- I will go first.
- I will stand up and I will say, "I am..." and finish the statement with one word that I think describes me.
- If you think this word completely describes me, then you stand up in agreement.
- If you don't think this word completely describes me, then you stay seated.
- This is not a discussion activity.
- We're not arguing with the statements, we're simply standing or sitting.
- Then it's the turn of the person next to me and so on.
- Once it's your turn, you have to stand and say whatever comes to mind.
- Don't make the class wait.
- It's very likely that due to the time pressure, silly things might come out, like, "I am water."
- It's ok to laugh, but we will not make fun of each other. Is that understood?
- The point of the activity is to encourage us to think about ourselves and to then be able to see how our self-perception fits with how others see us.
- Therefore, the goal is to get everyone to stand in agreement with your "I am" statement.
- We'll keep going around the circle until everyone has come up with a "I am" statement that everyone stands up in agreement with.
- This is not easy. It's ok if you don't get everyone to stand up.
- Since we've talked about how God helps us to see, let's pray before we start, and ask God help us to see ourselves and others.

PRAY

DO I Am activity

- To wrap up the activity, tell them:
- There is a phrase that is true for each and every one of us, regardless of whether we live it or not.
- It has more than one word to it, so we would not have been able to say it.
- That phrase is this: "I am a beloved child of God."
- We'll go around the circle.
- Each of us will say it.
- And we will all stand in agreement.
- I will start.

CLOSE I Am activity with prayer thanking God for helping us to see the truth of who we are and asking God to help us to be able to continue to see the truth of who we are and to help us to live into the truth of who we are.