

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHORT STORIES, BIG IDEAS | PART 2

SERIES OVERVIEW

Jesus often used short stories, or parables, to teach big ideas. In this series, we'll look at three parables Jesus used so students can discover that everyone has value, everyone is invited into God's story, and God never stops searching for those he loves.

BOTTOM LINE

Let your light shine by extending an invitation.

SCRIPTURE

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." // Matthew 5:14–16 NIV

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small group leaders, use the questions below to guide your conversation.

CONVERSATION STARTERS *(Start with fun, low-pressure questions.)*

- What's something you would invite everyone in this group to if money wasn't a factor?
- Have you ever tried something because someone invited you? What was it?

WHAT GOD SAYS

- **Read Matthew 5:14–16 together.** *Jesus tells his followers that they are the light of the world. Just like no one lights a lamp and then hides it, our faith isn't meant to stay hidden. One way we let our light shine is by inviting people into places where they can hear about Jesus and experience his love.*
- According to these verses, why does Jesus want our light to shine?
- Why do you think Jesus gave so much attention to people others overlooked?

WHAT WE CAN DO

- What makes it hard to invite someone to join you at church?

Activity: Who should I invite? Who should we invite?

- **Circle 1 — People Who Know You-** Your closest friends and family. *Is there anyone in this circle that you could invite to church?*
- **Circle 2 — People You Know Of-** These are classmates, teammates, neighbors, students at lunch, or people you see regularly. *Who comes to mind?*

- **Circle 3 — People Others Might Count Out** – Someone who's new or who sits alone. Someone who gets left out or who seems quiet. *Is there someone we could invite together?*

Pick One Person- What could you say that feels natural?

- Who could we invite together? Sometimes, letting your light shine by extending an invitation TOGETHER is better. Decide as a group who you can invite!

LEADERS – *Encourage students to extend an invitation! **Local staff, include information about your local fall campus events.*