

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Caught Up / Week 2

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Celebrating is better than comparing.

SCRIPTURE

This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students see the way jealousy impacts their lives and to encourage them to combat jealousy by finding ways to celebrate both others and themselves.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Jealousy is common in this phase, but what isn't always obvious to a middle schooler is the way jealousy impacts their lives. They may not recognize it at all, and if they do, they probably don't see the potential it has to damage relationships, their self-image, and more. The goal of this week's conversation is to help open their eyes to the way jealousy (a feeling they all have) can impact them negatively if left unchecked. It's also to give them an alternative to jealousy: celebration. By encouraging them to celebrate themselves and others, you're not supporting any form of toxic positivity—asking them to pretend they're fine when they're not. Instead, you're encouraging them to choose a new perspective and build a new muscle. The more they celebrate others, the stronger that muscle will be, and eventually, it will be strong enough to overpower jealousy.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSS THIS

1. Tell us about a time somebody was really excited for you.
2. What's one thing somebody might be jealous about?
3. Do you think it's possible to feel jealous of and happy for someone at the same time? Why or why not?
4. How does jealousy make you feel about . . .
 - a. Your friendships?
 - b. Your talents?
 - c. Your stuff?
 - d. Yourself?
5. Why do you think it's difficult to celebrate other people?
6. How can celebrating other people be a good thing?
7. What's an example of something you can celebrate in someone else?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 1

Use a throwable random item (like a stuffed animal, shoe, dog toy, etc.) and play a game of "hot potato" accompanied by music. When you stop the music, ask everyone in the group to take 15-30 seconds to celebrate the person holding the item. (As the leader, you should go first!) Be sure that everyone in the group gets celebrated, including new and more introverted students. If your group may struggle with this activity, shift it! Instead of asking all of your students to celebrate the person holding the item, you, the leader, can affirm and celebrate each person.

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 2

Give each student a container and inexpensive items to fill it with, like cotton balls, small candy, marbles, beads, etc. Tell your students to take the container home and add to it every time they choose celebration over comparison. When the jar is filled to the top, encourage them to celebrate themselves for building the muscle of celebrating others and choosing that over comparison.



GAME

Bounce-ketball

This game is written to be played as a stage game, but can be adapted to an all-skate or small group game.

OVERVIEW

Two small groups will go head-to-head to see who can throw the most bouncy balls in their opponent's trashcan in the allotted amount of time.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A large open space in your environment
- 2 small groups
- 2 large, heavy-duty trash cans of equal size
- 2 tables of equal height
- 100 bouncy balls (minimum)
- Painter's tape
- High energy music and a way to play it for the group
- A timer
- *Optional: A prize for the winning team*

HOW-TO

PREP

- Clear out a large space in your environment so that it's free from obstacles.
- Use tape to split the space in half.
- Place one table in the middle of each team's space. Put a trash can on top of each table.
- Use tape to create a boundary line around each table.
- Scatter all the bouncy balls along the middle divider line. (If they won't stay in place, put the balls in small tubs along the tape line.)
- Have high energy music queued up.
- Set a timer for five minutes.

PLAY

1. Select two small groups to participate in this game.
2. Assign each group a side of the playing field.

3. Have each group divide themselves in half: Some will be the "throwers" and the others will be the "blockers."
4. On your "Go!" the throwers on each team will run to the middle dividing line and grab as many bouncy balls as they can.
5. Without crossing the middle line, the throwers will try to sink as many bouncy balls in their opponent's trash can as they can.
6. While this is taking place, the blockers must stay outside of the taped boundary line around their table but behind the middle dividing line. They'll be tasked with blocking or catching the bouncy balls being thrown at their trash can.
7. The game ends when either the five minutes are up or there are no more bouncy balls left to throw.
8. Count the number of bouncy balls in each trashcan to determine the winner. The team with the most in their opponents' basket wins!



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Caught Up / Week 2

[PRELUDE](#) [SOCIAL](#) [WORSHIP](#) [STORY](#) [GROUPS](#) [HOME](#)

SERIES SUMMARY

A 3-week series about comparison **with Toni Collier**.

SERIES BOTTOM LINE: Breaking free from comparison.

WEEK 1: God doesn't compare you to others.

WEEK 2: Celebrating is better than comparing.

WEEK 3: Choose to see yourself the way God does.

SCRIPTURE

This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).

TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and prompts that are bolded in this script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier Subscribers.

OPTIONAL MEDIA

OPTIONAL MEDIA available in the Annual Subscription to the XP3 MS Media Package:

- Caught Up Countdown Video (10 minutes)
 - Caught Up Week 2 Teaching Video
 - Caught Up Week 2 Integrated Teaching Video
-

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- We all have the potential to get caught up in comparing something about ourselves against something about someone else.
- Comparison has a way of making us feel a lot of things, including jealousy.
- *Tell a personal story about a time you were super jealous of someone else.*

TENSION

- Jealousy is what we feel when we want what someone else has. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- *Complete the Jealousy Brainstorm Interactive.*
- While some of us feel good about our lives and don't feel jealousy when we compare ourselves to others, comparison is a cycle that we'll eventually find ourselves caught up in.
- Jealousy doesn't just impact us; it also impacts our relationships with others. We tend to avoid them, talk behind their backs, or struggle to be happy for them.
- Jealousy can lead us to stop celebrating the good things in others' lives because it reminds us of what's missing in our own lives.
- We want to be the kind of people who are happy for others when we compare ourselves to them.
- How do we keep ourselves from getting caught up in jealousy that comes from comparison?

TRUTH

- We can learn a lot about how to deal with jealousy and comparison in the Bible.
- When David and King Saul were both celebrated after a battle victory, Saul became very jealous of David.
- *This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).*
- Jealousy changed the way Saul viewed himself and David, which affected both of their lives in negative ways.

- Jealousy has the power to change the way we see what we have, destroy relationships with people, and take away our ability to celebrate the good things happening in our lives and others' lives.
- In Proverbs, the writer explained jealousy like this: *A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).*
- Envy, or jealousy, has the potential to ruin us from the core. It breaks us down and impacts our lives from the inside out.
- While Saul let jealousy rot everything in his life, David kept his heart at peace and focused on the good that was promised to him.
- When we focus on what we do have, we'll find more peace. We'll be able to enjoy and celebrate the good in our lives and in others' lives more easily.
- Celebrating is better than comparing.

APPLICATION

- You can avoid getting caught up in comparison and jealousy by . . .
 - Thinking about the good things in your life and celebrating them.
 - Celebrating and appreciating someone else, even if you're jealous of them.
- Celebrating is better than comparing.

LANDING

- Your small group is there for you to encourage each other to celebrate instead of compare, both inside and outside of church.
- Question: Who is one person you can choose to celebrate this week?

NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

Caught Up is a series about comparison created in collaboration with Toni Collier. As you lead your middle schoolers through this series, make sure you check out the awesome additional resources Toni pulled together to help you, your students, and your volunteers believe the truth that, with God, we're all enough just as we are. Listen to the roundtable discussion curated specifically for ministry leaders and volunteers, participate in three short self-care challenges each week explained via audio and video, and learn something new in the list of resources designed to help leaders and volunteers continue on the journey of breaking free from comparison.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Jealousy is common in this phase, but what isn't always obvious to a middle schooler is the way jealousy impacts their lives. They may not recognize it at all, and if they do, they probably don't see the potential it has to damage relationships, their self-image, and more. The goal of your talk this week is to help open their eyes to the way jealousy (a feeling they all have) can impact them negatively if left unchecked. It's also to give them an alternative to jealousy: celebration. By encouraging them to celebrate themselves and others, you're not supporting any form of toxic positivity—asking them to pretend they're fine when they're not. Instead, you're encouraging them to choose a new perspective and build a new muscle. The more they celebrate others, the stronger that muscle will be, and eventually, it will be strong enough to overpower jealousy.

INTERACTIVE: JEALOUSY BRAINSTORM

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, your group will use the provided scenarios to brainstorm words and feelings associated with jealousy to illustrate how jealousy can potentially cause negative feelings like anger, insecurity, or loneliness.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A large white board or poster board
- A way to display the white board or poster board for everyone to see
- Dry erase markers or permanent markers

PREP

- Place the large white board or poster board and writing utensil somewhere you can access easily during the Tension section of your talk.
- Make sure the white board or poster board can be seen by everyone in your audience.

HOW TO

- Read each scenario listed in the Tension section of your Teaching Script.
- Ask students to yell out words or feelings they'd feel in that scenario.
- Write the answers your students share on the board.
- After you've brainstormed each scenario and before moving on, respond to the answers your students shared by reading a few out loud.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Caught Up / Week 2

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

BOTTOM LINE

CELEBRATING IS BETTER THAN COMPARING.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

We're right in the middle of a series called *Caught Up*. What's it about? The one thing that all of us have the potential to get caught up in: **comparison**. It's **when we compare something about ourselves against something about someone else**.

Of course, comparison has a way of making us feel all kinds of things: disappointed, frustrated, anxious, motivated, prideful, hopeless. The list could go on and on! Today, though, we're talking about one of the strongest feelings comparison has a way of bringing out in us: **jealousy**.

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a time (preferably in middle school) when you were super jealous of someone else.
- Maybe it was because you wanted a spot on the team, wanted to date someone your friend was dating, or wanted a really cool item of clothing.
- Be sure to talk about how the jealousy made you feel. Remember, the goal is to set up the idea that when you saw what someone had in comparison to what you had, it left you feeling jealous.

TENSION

6 MINUTES

Maybe you can relate. In fact, I'm sure you can! Because jealousy is part of what comes from getting caught up in comparison. **It's what we feel when we want what someone else has.**

INTERACTIVE: Jealousy Brainstorm

This is where your group will use the provided scenarios to brainstorm words and feelings associated with jealousy to illustrate how jealousy can potentially cause negative feelings like anger, insecurity, or loneliness.

I need your help here brainstorming some words that might describe what you feel or experience when you're jealous of someone else. I'm going to read a few scenarios, and after I read each one, yell out what words or feelings you think of!

[Read the following scenarios out loud one at a time. After each one, quickly write down what your students yell out on your white board or poster board. The goal here is for students to see all of the feelings written down that can be caused by jealousy.]

- When that kid in your class wears the shoes you've been wanting, but you're still wearing the same ones from last school year.
- When you're playing pickup basketball in your neighborhood, and your friends are better players than you.
- When you're singing in the car with your siblings, and you're not the best singer.
- When your friend is so much fun that everyone wants to be around them, but you don't feel like you're as popular.
- When the kid in your small group has two parents living at home, but you have a family that's separated.
- When your best friend asks your other friends for advice about a problem, but they don't ask what you think.

[After brainstorming each of the scenarios, respond to the words students shared by reading a few out loud.]

See? All of these feelings and words are caused when we experience jealousy.

Sometimes we don't experience a lot of jealousy when we compare ourselves to others because **we feel pretty good about our lives.** Honestly, comparison might even make us feel better than others. Remember, comparison is a cycle. It never stops! So, while we may feel great about our lives right now, eventually, we'll find ourselves caught up in trying to compare to someone else.

This is where jealousy really gets difficult. Because it doesn't just impact us. It **impacts our relationships with other people.** When we're jealous of someone else, we do things like avoid them, or talk behind their backs, or struggle to be happy for them. Eventually, we stop being able to celebrate the good things in their lives because it only reminds us of what's missing in our own.

For me, that's just not the kind of life I want. I don't want to be unhappy simply because something in my life doesn't compare to someone else. I don't want to be the kind of friend, or family member, or teammate, or member of a small group who can't celebrate someone else. I'm sure you don't either! So, **how do we keep ourselves from getting caught up in the jealousy that comes from comparison?**

TRUTH

3 MINUTES

People have been dealing with this whole jealousy thing for thousands of years. So much so that the authors in the Bible share story after story of people whose lives were affected by it. One of those people was a guy named **David**.

David's story is crazy because he went from being a shepherd boy to a hero on the battlefield to eventually becoming king. At first, the King of Israel at the time, a guy named **Saul**, liked David. After all, David killed a giant named Goliath and helped the nation win a huge battle. That was a big victory for Saul's army! Excited over the victory, the people of Israel greeted Saul with a parade to celebrate as the army returned home from battle.

That's when things started to change.

See, Saul had a major issue with the way the people decided to celebrate. The song they sang celebrated both King Saul *and* David. As king, Saul didn't want to share his fame and popularity with anybody. In other words, Saul was jealous.

Let's take a look at his response:

This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:8-9 NLT).

See what happened there? Just like that, jealousy changed the way Saul viewed David. Eventually, that jealousy changed the way he treated David. It got so bad that Saul even tried to kill David. Not once, not twice, but multiple times!

Jealousy changed Saul completely! He was happy with his life and his relationship with David until he started comparing himself to David. That comparison led to jealousy, and that jealousy changed everything. It changed Saul, it changed his relationship with David, and it changed the rest of Saul's story.

I know that's dramatic, but that's what jealousy has the power to do. It can change the way we see what we have. It can destroy our relationships with other people. It can kill our ability to celebrate the good things happening in our lives and in theirs.

In another place in the Bible, a book filled with wisdom called Proverbs, the writer explained jealousy this way:

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30 NIV).

Envy is just another way to say jealousy. As the writer of this proverb said, it has the potential to rot, or break down, your bones. Just think about your bones for a second. They're a pretty important part of your body. They're the core of what holds you up. The writer here was making the point that jealousy rots, or ruins, us from the core. It breaks you down. It eats at you. Of course, it won't literally do all that! The writer was simply painting a picture of the way **jealousy impacts our lives from the inside out.**

That's what happened to Saul. Jealousy rotted everything in his life. It consumed him, so much so that he could hardly lead the nation because of it. But David? He kept his heart at peace. As the proverb tells us, that's what gives life to the body.

See, while jealousy breaks down, peace builds up. So even though David was hurt by Saul's jealousy, he never went down the road of comparison with Saul. David kept his eyes on the

good that was promised to him and that helped him stay at peace. It helped him break free from comparison.

And the same can be true for us!

When we keep our eyes focused on what we have, we'll find more peace. When we stop focusing on what others have, we'll be able to enjoy the good in our lives and in theirs more easily.

Because the truth is this: **Celebrating is better than comparing.**

APPLICATION

1 MINUTE

How do we avoid getting caught up in comparison and jealousy? How do we choose to celebrate others and ourselves instead? I think we can begin by doing two things:

1. **Start with you.** Think about what you *do* have that's worth celebrating. Whether it's a friendship, something about your family, a good grade, a beautiful day, or just the fact that God loves you, there is something you have that's worth a celebration! Big or small, start breaking free from jealousy by celebrating the good things in your own life.
2. **Celebrate someone else.** I want you to try to find a way to celebrate a person you're jealous of right now. No, it's not going to be easy! But remember, celebration will help you move toward peace, and peace will build you up. So, congratulate them for doing something awesome, compliment them, or talk positively about them when their name comes up. If all you can do is pray for them, that works, too! Prayer is a great place to start celebrating and appreciating someone else.

This week, whatever you choose to do, take a step to celebrate the good in your life and the lives of those around you. Because **celebrating is better than comparing.**

LANDING

1 MINUTE

We know it's easy to talk about this stuff, but it's not as simple to actually apply it to your real life. That's why we made sure everybody in this room has a small group to help you out! Together, you can encourage each other to choose celebration over comparison, not just while you're here at church but as you go through every day.

So, as you head to small group, think about opening up to them as you answer this question: **Who is one person you can choose to celebrate this week?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
