



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

It's Personal / Week 2

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

## SERIES SUMMARY

A 5-week series about Zacchaeus.

WEEK 1: It's personal because Jesus knows your name.

WEEK 2: It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.

WEEK 3: It's personal because Jesus understands your story.

WEEK 4: It's personal because Jesus loves you no matter what.

WEEK 5: It's personal because Jesus knows your potential.

## SCRIPTURE

*He [Zacchaeus] wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.*

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly (Luke 19:3-6 NIV).*

## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- Tell a personal story about a hobby or interest you had in middle school that you mistakenly thought everyone else had, too.
- When things matter a lot to us, it's personal.
- Because things are personal to us, it's easy to think they are personal to everybody.

## TENSION

- We all have things that matter to us; they're personal.
- Because we have things that matter to us so much, we think it matters to others just as much. Maybe we even assume we know what matters to other people.
- Sometimes we think we know what matters to others even when we haven't taken the time to get to know them. It's easy to think we have people figured out.
- When we make assumptions about people, we can end up only hanging out with people who are like us, or we can end up feeling like we don't fit in and are misunderstood.

## TRUTH

- In Luke, we read about how Jesus made it personal with an unpopular tax collector named Zacchaeus. Even though the crowd in Jericho didn't like Zacchaeus and had probably made assumptions about him, Jesus saw past the crowd's opinions and connected with him personally. Jesus saw Zacchaeus' desire to find hope. He saw him for who he was as a person and what mattered to him. (Luke 19:3-6)
- Jesus does the same for us. Jesus sees more than what everybody else sees. He looks past reputations, assumptions, and opinions others have formed about us.
- Jesus knows us in a personal way. He knows what matters to us and truly cares about who we are deep down.
- It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to us.

## APPLICATION

- There are two things we can do to make it personal: one for ourselves and one for others.
- We can make it personal for ourselves by talking to Jesus about what matters to us. The more we talk to Him, the more personal He will become.
- We can make it personal with others by looking past our assumptions and getting to know people and what matters to them.
- Pick one person and listen to them when they share what's important to them.

## LANDING

- It's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.
- Because of that, He wants you to make it personal by discovering more about what matters to someone else.
- Your Small Group is a perfect place to share what matters to you and to get to know what matters to others.
- What's one thing that matters to me?

---

## THINK ABOUT THIS

One of the fastest ways to gain influence with a student in this phase is by caring about what they care about. You'll have a great opportunity to do that in this conversation. As students open up about things they like or are interested in, be careful not to dismiss or minimize it just because you don't understand or like it in the same way. Instead, ask questions and let them teach you about what they like. Not only are you getting a look into their world, but you're letting them know that you care about what matters to them. You're modeling for them what it looks like to care about what someone else cares about, and you're showing them a glimpse at how Jesus cares about what matters to them, too.

---

---

## INTERACTIVE 1: MY SHIRT

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use t-shirts to demonstrate what matters to you personally and what matters to your group.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A t-shirt that represents something you're a fan of (a music group, a celebrity, a movie, a musical, a sports team, a hobby, etc.)
- A t-shirt that represents a cause you're passionate about

### HOW-TO

- Before your talk, put on the shirt that represents something you're a fan of.
- Keep a shirt that represents a cause you care about nearby to use when prompted in your script.

---

## INTERACTIVE 2: ZACCHAEUS' STORY

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll use a prop (a ladder covered in leaves and branches) to help you tell the story of Zacchaeus from the book of Luke.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A step ladder covered in leaves or branches and placed on stage
-



# TEACHING SCRIPT

It's Personal / Week 2

---

[PRELUDE](#)

[SOCIAL](#)

[WORSHIP](#)

[STORY](#)

[GROUPS](#)

[HOME](#)

---

## BOTTOM LINE

IT'S PERSONAL BECAUSE JESUS KNOWS WHAT MATTERS TO YOU.

---

## INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

When I was in middle school, I was really into something super cool, super awesome, and super interesting. Well . . . at least I thought so!

### TELL A PERSONAL STORY

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

- Talk about a hobby or interest you had when you were in middle school.
- This could be your Beanie Baby collection, your favorite TV show, a random activity you got super excited about, etc.
- Be sure to set up the fact that because you were so into this interest or hobby, you thought *everyone* else was into it, too, until you realized that they actually weren't.

At the time, *[the hobby/interest you just shared]* mattered so much to me. It was personal for me. And because it was personal for me, I thought it was personal for everybody!

---

## TENSION

4 MINUTES

Maybe you can relate! Maybe you thought everyone still cared about hoverboards, or fidget spinners, or rainbow looms as much as you do. But your dreams were crushed when you realized that most people had moved on from those trends years ago!

Whatever it is, we all have stuff that matters to us. Things that are personal to us. And a lot of times, we show what matters to us to the people around us!

## **INTERACTIVE: My Shirt**

*This is where you'll use t-shirts to demonstrate what matters to you personally and what matters to your group.*

Here's what I mean. I'm really into *[something that you're a fan of]*. I'm so into it that I even have a shirt that tells everyone how much I love it. *[Point to the shirt that you're wearing.]* Or what about *[a cause that matters to you personally]*? It means so much to me that my shirt announces how important I feel it is! *[Hold up another shirt that represents a cause that you care about.]*

Even as I'm looking at our group here today, I see a lot of things that matter to all of you! *[Point out a couple of students and what matters to them based on the shirts/hats/shoes they're wearing.]*

These are things we care about as individuals. *[Tip: To get students involved in this part of your talk, ask them to raise their hands or stand up if the following things matter to them. Feel free to edit these examples to fit your unique group of students.]*

Things like video games,  
or fashion,  
or sports,  
or music,  
or animals,  
or photography,  
or fishing,  
or TikTok,  
or dance,  
or dancing *on* TikTok.

And we all also have personal values that matter to us,  
like being kind,  
or getting good grades,  
or having a ton of friends,  
or making people laugh,  
or even following Jesus and going to church.

And because we're so interested in that thing or believe so strongly that what we value is important, it's easy to think it matters to other people as well. We feel that if it's personal for us, it means it's personal for others. **If we care about something, that means that other people probably care about it too, right?**

Or maybe, **even if we know other people don't really care about the things we care about, we still think we know what they care about.** That kid at school, your new neighbor, the girl on your team, the boy in your Small Group. You don't really know them, but you think you do. You think you have them all figured out, even though you really haven't taken the time to get to know them personally.

Here's the truth, we all do this! Think about it! I bet you can all picture someone in your life right now that you think you have figured out. You think you know who they are, what they're into, and what they're like. You think you understand what matters to them and what they care about. And you've probably thought those things based only on assumptions or observations from a distance. You don't *really* know what matters to them, but you think you do.

That's because, like we said, **it can be easy to think we have people figured out.** It can be easy to feel like we know people personally, even when we don't. And while that may not seem like that big of a deal, I think it actually has the potential to impact both others and ourselves in some not so great ways.

For starters, **we tend to only hang out with people who we think are like us and who care about what we care about.** And that means we leave out, avoid, or exclude people we think are different than us. Not only does that cause us to miss out on people who might bring a lot of great things to our lives, but it also leaves room for us to hurt them, whether we mean to or not.

Or, **these assumptions we make about ourselves and others makes us feel like maybe we're the ones who don't fit in.** We feel stuck, lonely, and misunderstood. We feel like nobody understands what really matters to us. Like nobody really knows us on a personal level.

---

## TRUTH

4 MINUTES

That's why I love what Jesus did in the story of **Zacchaeus**. Jesus didn't make assumptions. Jesus made it personal by truly understanding what mattered to Zacchaeus.

Before we get too far into Zacchaeus' story, let me give you some background on what was happening at the time. Jesus was becoming extremely popular, so more and more people were starting to follow Him. He had fulfilled prophecies, worked miracles, and some of His sermons pretty much went viral. It's safe to say that people thought Jesus was a pretty big deal.

In this story we're about to read, Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and had just entered a city called Jericho. The crowd in Jericho was so excited to see Jesus that they welcomed Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna," a term used to celebrate and express joy back then. It was here that Jesus had His last recorded personal encounter before He died on the cross. And that encounter was with Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus wasn't someone you'd expect Jesus to personally connect with. In fact, I'd say it was probably the opposite! You see, Zacchaeus didn't have the best reputation. He was the chief tax collector, which meant that he had to collect taxes from citizens on behalf of Rome. The problem was that tax collectors at this time were known to be dishonest and untrustworthy. Most people thought they were greedy thieves, so that's how most people viewed Zacchaeus.

If anyone could have made the argument, "*I don't really have time for you,*" it probably would have been Jesus in this moment. But instead, a different story took place.

### **INTERACTIVE: Zacchaeus' Story**

*This is where you'll use a prop (a ladder covered in leaves and branches) to help tell the story of Zacchaeus from the book of Luke.*

***He [Zacchaeus] wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. [Climb up the ladder while sharing the rest of this Scripture.]***

***When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly (Luke 19:3-6 NIV).***

*[Come down from the ladder.]*

Based on how the crowd viewed Zacchaeus, I bet what Jesus did surprised everyone! But Jesus saw something about Zacchaeus that the crowd didn't. The crowd saw someone who greedily took more money than he should have. The crowd saw someone who kept all the nice things for himself. The crowd had every reason to assume that what mattered to Zacchaeus was money and wealth.

But Jesus saw a grown man who had run ahead of the crowd to climb a tree. *[Climb up the ladder.]* He saw someone who was so interested in meeting the rumored Savior that he didn't care what his reputation was or what assumptions people made about him. Jesus saw a man desperately interested in finding hope. Zacchaeus wanted hope so desperately, he climbed a tree just to get a glimpse of the guy he heard would be able to give it to him. *[Motion to the ladder you're on and slowly climb back down.]*

The people thought they knew all about Zacchaeus. To them, he was nothing more than a greedy, sinful traitor. The exact opposite of the kind of person Jesus should've noticed, let alone asked to hang out with.

Jesus knew what Zacchaeus did for a job and what people thought about him. But **Jesus didn't let assumptions tell Him who Zacchaeus was personally or what really mattered to him.** Jesus made His interaction with Zacchaeus personal because Jesus knew what mattered to him.

And the truth is, Jesus does the same for us. See, **it's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.** Jesus sees more than what everybody else sees. Jesus sees into the very heart of all of us. He looks past all the outward things like reputations and assumptions.

So the next time you wonder if anybody cares about what you care about? The next time you feel alone, or misunderstood, or just out there on your own? Think about Jesus, who knows you in a personal way. Who knows your world and knows what matters to you. Who cares about the real you, not the one everyone thinks they know.

Remember, **it's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.**

---

## APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

So, what can we take from this? How can we learn from Jesus' example? Well, I think there are two things we can do to make it personal: one for ourselves and one for others.

First, we can make it personal for ourselves by **talking to Jesus about what matters to us.** Jesus cares about every single thing you care about. So, tell Jesus what matters to you. Pray about it. Write it down. Jesus wants us to talk to Him about anything and everything, just like we would with our best friend. And the more that we talk to Him about the things that matter to us, the more connection we'll feel with Him. The more personal He will become.

Now maybe you're thinking, *"I don't really know what matters to me yet! I have some interests and some things I care about, but are they the things that really matter to me?"* If that's you, I totally get it! Honestly, that's normal. We're all constantly learning and figuring out what matters to us. And one of the best ways you can keep discovering that is by talking to Jesus about it.

Second, we can **make it personal with others.** In His encounter with Zacchaeus, Jesus demonstrated what He wants you and I to do for the people in our lives as well. To look past our assumptions and what we think we know about each other and what matters to us. To make it personal. To take the time to get to know other people and discover what matters to them.

So how do we do this?

We just need to be intentional about getting to know someone. We need to look beyond what we think matters to them and even beyond what matters to us. And instead, we can actually get to know more about who they are by taking an interest in their interests.

**Start with one person who you think you already know things about.** Or someone you may have never taken the time to get to know personally. Talk to them. Ask them about what matters to them and then pay attention to what they say. Take an interest in other people, and you might just be surprised to find that you have more in common than you thought. You may find that you've made a personal connection where there wasn't one before.

---

## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **it's personal because Jesus knows what matters to you.** And because of that, He wants you to make it personal by discovering more about what matters to yourself and someone else.

Your Small Group is a great place to do just that! It's a perfect place where you can learn about what matters to others and to show them you truly care about who they are as a person. It's a place to share what matters to you most and to let them get to know you in return.

Now, as you go to Small Groups, here's a question I want you to think about: **What's one thing that matters to me?**

---



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

---