



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## How To See God / Week 1

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### SERIES OVERVIEW

#### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

A series about the fruit of the Spirit.

#### WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

**WEEK 1: You can see God.**

WEEK 2: Practice helps you progress.

WEEK 3: Pay attention to what has your attention.

WEEK 4: Look for God every day.

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### SCRIPTURE

*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15a NLT).*

*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."*

*Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:8-9a NIV).*

*"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7 NIV).*

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25 NIV).*

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a NLT).*

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### NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

As you talk to your middle schoolers about what it means to see God, remember that this can be a challenging concept for them. For starters, they think more concretely in this phase. That means, if they can't actually see God with their eyes, understanding that they can see God in other ways might require some extra context and conversation to get them there. In addition, you're introducing potentially new concepts for some, like the Holy Spirit. For students who have never been to church or are new to faith, this may be more challenging to understand. And even for those who have been coming to church for a while or following Jesus with their lives, this is still an abstract concept for their more concrete minds. As you lead this week, do your best to break down some of these concepts for them. Remind them that this isn't about seeing God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit in the physical sense; it's about seeing the fruit of the Spirit and the goodness of God in their everyday lives.

## NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

Be aware of the temptation to over spiritualize or under spiritualize the practice of looking for God. The last thing we want to do is conflate or confuse God with superstition or an alternative, counterfeit version of spirituality. At this age and phase of life, middle schoolers are trying to figure out so much about who they are, and a big part of that includes their faith and how to find God in their everyday lives. Putting too much pressure on or being too prescriptive about “seeing God” could become manipulative or harmful or just plain frustrating if it seems to not work. Be encouraging and lead with practical ways to see God.

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## INTERACTIVE: JESUS HELPS US SEE GOD

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you’ll use invisible ink and a flashlight to reveal that Jesus shows us who God is.

### WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- Invisible ink
- A flashlight or UV light (depending on the type of ink you use)
- A large posterboard
- A way to display the posterboard, like an easel, string hung from a ceiling, or a chair with a high back

### PREP

- Using the invisible ink, draw in large, bold letters the word “JESUS” on the posterboard.
  - Place the posterboard on stage.
  - Have the light nearby for easy access during the Truth section of your talk.
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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- We’re kicking off a new series that I think has the potential to change the way we experience God in our everyday lives.
- If you could have one superpower, what would it be? *[Pause to give students a chance to answer.]*
- For me, the answer would be invisibility.
- The only downside? I guess it’s the same as the upside: Nobody would ever know it was me!
- Sometimes we tend to think about God like an invisible superhero.
- Without proof, how do we know God is really here and really working in our lives?
- Over the course of the next four weeks, we’re going to talk about what it means to see evidence of a God we can’t see with our own eyes.

### TENSION

- No matter where you are on your faith journey, I’m sure you’ve found yourself wondering what it really means to believe in a God we can’t physically see.
- Maybe you’ve asked questions about it yourself. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Just think about the way you connect with or get to know a new friend. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- If we can’t get into a conversation with God, look at God, or hang out with God face-to-face, then how can we be sure God is really who everyone says?
- How do we see God?

### TRUTH

- *[INTERACTIVE: Jesus Helps Us See God: This is where you'll use invisible ink and a flashlight to reveal that Jesus shows us who God is.]*
- Throughout history people have tried all sorts of things to see and search for God. *[Give examples.]*
- About 2,000 years ago, something—or Someone—finally gave us a glimpse of God in a very real way.
- That Someone was Jesus.
- One Christian leader named Paul had a lot to say about who Jesus is and how He helps us see God.
  - *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15a NLT).*
- Paul's basically saying that when you look at Jesus, you see God.
- But are we just supposed to believe this about Jesus because Paul wrote it?
- In another book of the New Testament called John, one of Jesus' closest friends wrote all kinds of details about Jesus' life on Earth.
  - *Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:8-9a NIV).*
- Jesus confirmed what Paul later said: Jesus Himself is the reflection of God.
- So, when we look at Him, we're seeing God.
- You can see God.
- But now, the Guy who said He is God—the One we could look at to see God—is no longer around to be seen.
- So, the question is: What now? How do we see God in our everyday lives today?
- Jesus knew that He would leave the world someday, and He knew we'd need help finding God without Him there to show us.
  - *"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7 NIV).*
- We call that Advocate, or Helper, the Holy Spirit.
- That Spirit is the very real presence, power, and energy of God who is at work in us, in other people, and in the world around us.
- We can be confident that God—through the Holy Spirit—is still with us and working in the world.
- Paul gave some advice to some early Christians who started following Jesus after He left. It can also help us.
  - *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25 NIV).*
- The meaning of "keep in step" is literally to get in line behind a leader.
- Because of both Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, you can see God.

## APPLICATION

- So, if we want to see God today, we have to look for the Holy Spirit at work in the world around us.
- First, you have to know what to look for.
- Paul gave us a list of "fruit," or evidence, of God's Spirit.
  - a. *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a NLT).*
- When you see those things yourself or experience them in others and the world around you, that's evidence of God at work.
- That's how you can see God!
- I encourage you to commit to looking for God at work in your everyday life. *[Give relevant examples.]*
- Once you know what to look for, all you have to do is ask God to open your eyes to see it.
- Because you can see God.

## LANDING

- Over the next few weeks, we're going to talk a lot more about seeing God.
- So remember, you can see God.

- All you have to do is start looking.
- What's one way you've seen God at work in your life this week?

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## TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.

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# TEACHING SCRIPT

## How To See God / Week 1

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### BOTTOM LINE

YOU CAN SEE GOD.

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### INTRODUCTION

1 ½ MINUTES

Hey, everybody! I'm so glad you're here today! We're kicking off a new series that I think has the potential to change the way we experience God in our everyday lives. Pretty cool, right? As we get started today, I want you to think about one important question:

#### **If you could have one superpower, what would it be?**

Yes, I'm serious! This is an important question! Would it be time travel? Would you choose to be able to fly or read someone's mind? Take a second and tell somebody around you what you'd pick. *[Pause to give students a chance to answer.]*

Those are all pretty good answers, but for me, the answer would be invisibility. Maybe it's because I'm really an introvert at heart, but if I had the power to move around the world without being seen, that would be so cool! Just imagine the pranks, the stories, the secrets I'd have! Not to mention all the cool stuff I could do without anyone ever knowing it was me.

The only downside? I guess it's the same as the upside: Nobody would ever know it was me! I could do all the cool superhero stuff—save people from burning buildings, fight bad guys, right the wrongs of the world—but there'd be no evidence to prove I was there. It would be hard to get anyone to believe it was me.

What does this have to do with our faith? Well, sometimes we tend to think about God in the same way. We hear everyone say God is at work in the world, but to us, it's almost like God is this invisible superhero. Without proof, how do we know God is really here and really working in our lives?

Well, that's exactly what this series is going to help us figure out. It's called *How To See God*, and over the course of the next four weeks, we're going to talk about what it means to see evidence of a God we can't see with our own eyes.

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### TENSION

1 MINUTE

No matter where you are on your faith journey, I'm sure you've found yourself wondering what it really means to believe in a God we can't physically see. Maybe you've asked questions like...

- How do I know there's more to life than what I'm experiencing now?
- How can I be sure that God is real when I've never seen God or heard God's voice?
- How am I supposed to trust Someone who is invisible to me?
- How can I be sure that God is working in my life when I can't even be sure God is there?
- How am I supposed to connect with a God I can't see?

Trust me, I get it! Just think about the way you connect with or get to know a new friend. You spend time with them face-to-face, you hang out with them, you talk to them, you learn about who they are by being near them.

That doesn't really seem like an option with God, does it?

If we can't get into a conversation with God, look at God, or hang out with God face-to-face, then how can we be sure God is really who everyone says? How can we be sure God is even there at all? If we want to really believe in and get to know a God that seems invisible, how do we do it?

### How do we see God?

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## TRUTH

5 MINUTES

### INTERACTIVE: Jesus Helps Us See God

*This is where you'll use invisible ink and a flashlight to reveal that Jesus shows us who God is.*

*[Ask a volunteer to turn the lights off.]*

Well, we're not alone with these questions! Throughout history people have tried all sorts of things to see and search for God. *[Turn on the flashlight and move it around like you're looking for something.]* Humans have built buildings, made statues, and even claimed to be gods themselves—all to get a little bit closer to seeing the invisible God we all so badly want to see.

The bad news? None of that worked!

The good news? About 2,000 years ago, something—or Someone—finally gave us a glimpse of God in a very real way.

*[Shine the flashlight on the posterboard with the invisible ink to reveal the name "Jesus".]* And that Someone was Jesus.

Yes, a real person who really lived in the ancient Middle East wound up changing how billions of people see God. Thankfully, we live on the other side of Jesus' life and ministry, so we have the privilege of looking to Him to understand more about who God really is.

One Christian leader named Paul had a lot to say about who Jesus is and how He helps us see God. In one of his letters to some of the first Christians ever in a city called Colossae, Paul wrote this: *[Shine the flashlight on the posterboard again as you read the Scripture.]*

***Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15a NLT).***

This pretty much sums it up, right? I mean, you can't get more direct than this! Paul's basically saying that **when you look at Jesus, you see God**. All those people who lived before Jesus' arrival on Earth were waiting, wanting, and trying to see God. Then, just like that, Jesus showed up and finally showed them (and us!) what God is like.

But are we just supposed to believe this about Jesus because Paul wrote it? I mean, is it as simple as a guy writing a letter thousands of years ago, and all the sudden, everything changed? Sure, Paul's words are important, but they're not the only evidence we have.

In another book of the New Testament called John, one of Jesus' closest friends (yes, named John) wrote all kinds of details about Jesus' life on Earth. He saw it all with his own eyes and recorded it for us to look back on today. There's one encounter that John wrote down that I think can help us understand more about how we see God in the world. Let's read:

***Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."***

***Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:8-9a NIV).***

I think Philip speaks for all of us here! He's basically asking Jesus, "How do I see God? I want to believe, I want to trust, I want to get to know God, but how do I if I can't see God?" To which Jesus basically said, "Hold my water bottle. This is about to get real."

Jesus confirmed what Paul later said: **Jesus Himself is the reflection of God.** So, when we look at Him, we're seeing God. We don't need to look anywhere else, try any harder, or wonder any longer.

**You can see God.**

Now, I get it. Jesus lived 2,000 years ago! So the Guy who said He is God—the One we could look at to see God—is no longer around to be seen.

So, the question is: What now? How do we see God in our everyday lives today?

Well, Jesus had something to say about this, too. He knew that He would leave the world someday, and He knew we'd need help finding God without Him there to show us. That's why Jesus promised to send some help. Look at what He said:

***"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7 NIV).***

Jesus said that even though He left, He sent the Advocate, or Helper, to be with us. Typically, we call that Helper the Holy Spirit. That Spirit is the very real presence, power, and energy of God who is at work in us, in other people, and in the world around us. So no, Jesus is no longer standing right in front of us, but we can be confident that God—through the Holy Spirit—is still with us and working in the world.

In fact, the Spirit is key to helping us see God every day. Paul gave some advice to some early Christians who started following Jesus after He left. It can also help us. So, check it out:

***Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25 NIV).***

The meaning of "keep in step" is literally to get in line behind a leader. Think Kindergarten single-file lines here. We're holding the rope, and the Spirit is the line leader. We're following the Spirit's moves, looking to the Spirit for guidance, and watching where the Spirit goes.

Because of both Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, **you can see God.**

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## APPLICATION

1 ½ MINUTES

So, if we want to see God today, we have to look for the Holy Spirit at work in the world around us. How do you do that? I'm glad you asked!

First, you have to **know what to look for**. Paul gave us a list of "fruit," or evidence, of God's Spirit. Just like a tree grows fruit, when the Holy Spirit is working in your life, the lives of others, and the world around us, there's fruit to show it.

So, what's the evidence we need to look for? What's the fruit of God's Spirit?

Let's read how Paul described it:

***But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a NLT).***

When you see those things yourself or experience them in others and the world around you, that's evidence of God at work. That's how **you can see God!**

Now that you know what to look for, I encourage you to **commit to looking for God at work in your everyday life.**

When you feel joy while scream-singing your favorite song with a friend, you can see God at work.  
When you have a moment of peace while walking outside and enjoying nature, you can see God.  
When you use self-control to study for the test instead of scrolling social media, you can see God.  
When you experience the kindness of your Small Group Leader, you can see God.  
When you're loved by someone in your family, you can see God.

Once you know what to look for, all you have to do is ask God to open your eyes to see it.

Because **you can see God.**

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Over the next few weeks, we're going to talk a lot more about seeing God. While I know this is a big idea that may be hard for us to understand at times, I also know it has the potential to help us connect with God and grow our faith in new ways.

So remember, **you can see God.**

All you have to do is start looking.

When you head to Small Group, think about your answer to this question:

**What's one way you've seen God at work in your life this week?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS