

“God didn’t make you to blend in. He made you to stand out.”

Youth Bible Study

WHAT IS THIS?

Am I living like the main character God made me, or am I just an extra in somebody else's story?

God didn't create you to be an NPC in somebody else's story. You weren't made to stay in the background, copy everybody else, or let the crowd decide who you're supposed to be. God made you on purpose, with purpose, for a purpose. You're not random. You're not an extra. You've got a role.

This study is getting into the stuff that actually hits: identity, peer pressure, comparison, fitting in, finding your people, and figuring out who God really made you to be. We're pulling up on real people in the Bible who got rejected, felt insecure, dealt with pressure, got scared, made bad choices, and wondered if they were even built for what God called them to do.

And spoiler alert: God cooked every single time. So lock in. Stop playing background character in a story God gave you a lead role in.

HOW THIS WORKS

Every other week is a teaching session.
The weeks between are Plot Twist Challenges - because every good story has a turning point, and yours starts now.

THE REAL TALK

Every week, ask yourself: Am I living like the main character God made me, or am I playing a background role?

PHASE ONE: LOST - When You Forgot You Had a Role

These characters forgot who they were. Sound familiar?

WEEK 1 - Gideon: BRO DOESN'T KNOW HE'S HIM

> ***"God called Gideon a mighty warrior while he was hiding. That's how God sees you too - not as who you are, but who you're becoming."***

SCRIPTURES

Judges 6:11-12 *(NLT)*

> *The angel of the Lord came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, 'Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!'*

Judges 6:15-16 *(NLT)*

> *'But Lord,' Gideon replied, 'how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!' The Lord said to him, 'I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.'*

Psalm 139:13-14 *(NLT)*

> *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous - how well I know it.*

Ephesians 2:10 *(NLT)*

> *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

1 Samuel 16:7 *(NLT)*

> *But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'*

Jeremiah 29:11 *(NLT)*

> *'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'*

THE REAL TALK

God doesn't call you what people see. He calls you what He sees.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When someone gives you a compliment, do you believe it or brush it off? Why?
2. What's one thing you're insecure about that you think disqualifies you?
3. How does it hit different knowing God called Gideon a 'mighty warrior' while he was literally hiding?
4. What would you do if you actually believed God's version of you over everyone else's?
5. What lie about yourself do you need to stop agreeing with?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #1

> ***"You can't live in your calling if you're hiding from it."***

SCRIPTURES

Romans 8:37 *(NLT)*

> *No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *(NLT)*

> *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

Zephaniah 3:17 *(NLT)*

> *For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.*

THE MISSION

Write down three things God says about you from this week's scriptures. Put them somewhere you see every day this week - your phone lock screen, your mirror, wherever. Every time you see them, say them out loud.

BE HONEST: *Did it feel weird to say those things about yourself? Why or why not?*

NOTES

WEEK 2 - Joseph: THEY REALLY SWITCHED UP

> ***"The same people who threw Joseph in a pit ended up bowing to him. God's plan doesn't need their approval to work."***

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 37:3-4 *(NLT)*

> *Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph - a beautiful robe. But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.*

Genesis 37:19-20 *(NLT)*

> *'Here comes the dreamer!' they said. 'Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, Some wild animal has eaten him. Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!'*

Genesis 50:20 *(NLT)*

> *You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*

Romans 8:28 *(NLT)*

> *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

Psalm 27:10 *(NLT)*

> *Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.*

Isaiah 43:2 *(NLT)*

> *When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.*

THE REAL TALK

What they meant for harm, God meant for your promotion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. Have you ever been betrayed by someone you trusted? How did that affect you?
7. Joseph kept his integrity even when everything went wrong - where do you struggle to keep yours?
8. How do you usually respond when people turn on you - revenge, shut down, or something else?
9. What does it mean to trust God's plan when the situation looks terrible?
10. Is there anyone you need to forgive so your story can keep moving forward?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #2

> ***"Bitterness keeps you stuck in the pit. Forgiveness gets you to the palace."***

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 50:20 *(NLT)*

> *You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*

Matthew 5:44 *(NLT)*

> *But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

Romans 12:19 *(NLT)*

> *Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, 'I will take revenge; I will pay them back,' says the Lord.*

THE MISSION

Think of someone who has hurt or betrayed you. Write their name down and write a prayer over them - not because they deserve it, but because YOU deserve to be free from it.

BE HONEST: *How hard was it to pray for that person? What did it feel like afterward?*

NOTES

WEEK 3 - Prodigal Son: BRO LEFT THE PLOT

> ***"He thought leaving would give him freedom. It gave him a pigpen. But when he came back, his father ran."***

SCRIPTURES

Luke 15:11-13 *(NLT)*

> *To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: 'A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, I want my share of your estate now before you die. So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.'*

Luke 15:17-18 *(NLT)*

> *When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you.'*

Luke 15:20 *(NLT)*

> *So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.*

Luke 15:24 *(NLT)*

> *'For this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.*

1 John 1:9 *(NLT)*

> *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

Romans 8:1 *(NLT)*

> *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

THE REAL TALK

You can't out-wander God's love. He's already running toward you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

11. Have you ever chased something that looked good but left you empty?
12. What makes it hard to come back when you've messed up?
13. The father ran to the son while he was still far off - what does that tell you about how God feels about you right now?
14. Where are you trying to find something that only God can give?
15. Is there something you need to turn around from today?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #3

> ***"The moment you turn back is the moment He starts running toward you."***

SCRIPTURES

Luke 15:20 *(NLT)*

> *And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.*

James 4:8 *(NLT)*

> *Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.*

Psalm 103:12 *(NLT)*

> *He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*

THE MISSION

Be honest with God this week about where you've been trying to do life without Him. Write it out in a prayer. No filter, no church words - just real talk with God.

BE HONEST: *What happened when you got honest with God?*

NOTES

WEEK 4 - Peter: LOCK IN, BRO

> ***"Peter walked on water until he looked at the waves. The second he took his eyes off Jesus, he sank. Stay locked in."***

SCRIPTURES

Matthew 14:28-29 *(NLT)*

> *Then Peter called to him, 'Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.' 'Yes, come,' Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.*

Matthew 14:30-31 *(NLT)*

> *But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. 'Save me, Lord!' he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. 'You have so little faith,' Jesus said. 'Why did you doubt me?'*

2 Timothy 1:7 *(CEV)*

> *God's Spirit doesn't make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control.*

Philippians 4:13 *(NLT)*

> *For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

Isaiah 41:10 *(NLT)*

> *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 *(NLT)*

> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

THE REAL TALK

Fear and focus cannot coexist. Whatever you fix your eyes on is what you move toward.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

16. What's your biggest fear right now - like actually?
17. Where do you find yourself looking at the 'waves' instead of staying focused on God?
18. Peter stepped out of the boat when everyone else stayed - when have you played it safe instead of stepping out in faith?
19. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?
20. What does it look like for you to 'lock in' this week?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #4

> ***"Stop staring at the storm. Fix your eyes on the One standing on top of it."***

SCRIPTURES

Joshua 1:9 *(NLT)*

> *This is my command - be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

Psalm 56:3 *(NLT)*

> *But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.*

Romans 8:31 *(NLT)*

> *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?*

THE MISSION

Do one thing this week that fear has been stopping you from doing. It doesn't have to be huge - just one step out of the boat. Tell someone in the group what you did.

BE HONEST: *What happened when you took the step? Did God show up?*

NOTES

PHASE TWO: BRAVE - When You Started Walking In It

These characters knew who they were and refused to fold. Now it's your turn.

WEEK 5 - Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego: EVERYBODY BOWING? COULDN'T BE ME!

> ***"Everyone bowed. Three didn't. And they walked out of the fire with someone who looked like the Son of God walking beside them."***

SCRIPTURES

Daniel 3:4-6 *(NLT)*

> *Then a herald shouted out, 'People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command! When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.'*

Daniel 3:16-18 *(NLT)*

> *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.'*

Daniel 3:25 *(NLT)*

> *'Look!' Nebuchadnezzar shouted. 'I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!'*

Romans 12:2 *(NLT)*

> *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Galatians 1:10 *(NLT)*

> *Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.*

1 Corinthians 15:33 *(NLT)*

> *Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for bad company corrupts good character.*

THE REAL TALK

Standing alone for God is never actually standing alone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

21. What's something everybody around you does that you know you shouldn't?
22. How much does pressure from friends or the internet affect your decisions?
23. These three said 'even if He doesn't save us, we still won't bow' - how does that kind of faith hit you?
24. What does it cost you to stand for what's right in your school, your friend group, online?
25. What would it look like to be the one who doesn't bow this week?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #5

> ***"Everybody else bowing doesn't make it right. It just makes you the one who stands out."***

SCRIPTURES

Romans 12:2 *(NLT)*

> *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

1 Peter 2:9 *(NLT)*

> *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

Matthew 5:16 *(NLT)*

> *In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

THE MISSION

Identify one thing you've been going along with because everyone else does. This week, make a different choice - even if it's just once. Tell someone you trust what you did.

BE HONEST: *How did it feel to not go along with it? Did anyone notice?*

NOTES

WEEK 6 - David & Goliath: BRO THOUGHT SIZE MATTERED 💀

> ***“Everybody saw a giant. David saw a problem that God already had the answer to.”***

SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 17:4, 8-9 *(NLT)*

> *Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the Israelites. He was over nine feet tall!... Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. 'Why are you all coming out to fight?' he called. 'I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me!'*

1 Samuel 17:33, 37 *(NLT)*

> *'Don't be ridiculous!' Saul replied. 'There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth.'... 'The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!' David said.*

1 Samuel 17:45-47 *(NLT)*

> *David replied to the Philistine, 'You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies - the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!'*

Philippians 4:13 *(NLT)*

> *For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

2 Corinthians 12:9 *(NLT)*

> *Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*

1 John 4:4 *(NLT)*

> *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*

THE REAL TALK

The giant in front of you is not bigger than the God inside you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

26. What's your Goliath right now - the thing that feels too big to beat?
27. David ran TOWARD Goliath - what's something you've been running away from?
28. Everyone told David he was too small and too young - who has told you something similar?
29. What would it look like to face your giant in God's name instead of your own strength?
30. What's one stone you already have in your hand that God could use?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #6

> ***"David didn't wait for the giant to come to him. He ran at it. Your turn."***

SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 17:45 *(NLT)*

> *David replied to the Philistine, 'You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.'*

1 John 4:4 *(NLT)*

> *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*

Isaiah 54:17 *(NLT)*

> *But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord; their vindication will come from me. I, the Lord, have spoken!*

THE MISSION

Name your giant. Write it down. Then write down what God's Word says about it. Pray over it every single day this week and take one step toward it instead of away from it.

BE HONEST: *What happened when you stopped avoiding it and faced it?*

NOTES

WEEK 7 - Daniel: ZERO NEED TO FIT IN

> ***"Daniel prayed the same prayer in the same spot every day even after it became illegal. That kind of consistency is what separates people who talk about faith from people who actually have it."***

SCRIPTURES

Daniel 1:8 *(NLT)*

> *But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.*

Daniel 6:10 *(NLT)*

> *But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.*

Daniel 6:22-23 *(NLT)*

> *'My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.' The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den.*

Romans 12:2 *(NLT)*

> *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Matthew 5:14-16 *(NLT)*

> *You are the light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see.*

Joshua 24:15 *(NLT)*

> *But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve... But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.*

THE REAL TALK

Your consistency in private is what gives you courage in public.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

31. Is your faith something you show publicly or something you keep private? Why?
32. What would you stop doing for God if it became illegal or unpopular?
33. Daniel's private habits saved his public life - what are your private spiritual habits right now?
34. Where do you feel the most pressure to just fit in and not be 'too' Christian?
35. What does it look like to be the light in your school, your team, your friend group?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #7

> ***"You don't need to be loud about your faith. You need to be consistent."***

SCRIPTURES

Joshua 24:15 *(NLT)*

> *But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.*

Galatians 6:9 *(NLT)*

> *So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*

Matthew 5:14 *(NLT)*

> *You are the light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.*

THE MISSION

Pick one private spiritual habit - prayer, reading, worship - and do it every single day this week at the same time. No skipping. At the end of the week, journal what changed.

BE HONEST: *How did showing up consistently change how you felt about your faith?*

NOTES

WEEK 8 - Jeremiah: "I'M TOO YOUNG" IS CRAZY

> ***“Jeremiah told God he was too young. God basically said - I didn't ask your age, I said go.”***

SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 1:4-5 *(NLT)*

> *The Lord gave me this message: 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.'*

Jeremiah 1:6-7 *(NLT)*

> *'O Sovereign Lord,' I said, 'I can't speak for you! I'm too young!' The Lord replied, 'Don't say, I'm too young, for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you.'*

Jeremiah 1:8-9 *(NLT)*

> *'And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!' Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, 'Look, I have put my words in your mouth!'*

1 Timothy 4:12 *(NLT)*

> *Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.*

Psalm 71:5 *(NLT)*

> *O Lord, you alone are my hope. I've trusted you, O Lord, from childhood.*

Joel 2:28 *(NLT)*

> *Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.*

THE REAL TALK

God never called you to be ready. He called you to be available.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

36. What's your version of 'I'm too young' - what excuse do you use to avoid stepping into your purpose?
37. God said He knew Jeremiah before he was even formed - how does it feel knowing God has known YOU that long?
38. What do you think God might be calling you to do that you've been putting off?
39. 1 Timothy 4:12 says don't let anyone look down on you for being young - where do you need to walk in that confidence?
40. What would your life look like if you stopped waiting to be older, smarter, or more ready?

NOTES

PLOT TWIST CHALLENGE #8

> ***"You are not too young. You are exactly on time."***

SCRIPTURES

1 Timothy 4:12 *(NLT)*

> *Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.*

Jeremiah 29:11 *(NLT)*

> *'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'*

Ephesians 2:10 *(NLT)*

> *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

THE MISSION

Write your Main Character Declaration - who God says you are, what He's brought you through, and what you believe He's calling you to. Share it with your group. Own it out loud.

BE HONEST: *What kind of person is God calling you to become from here?*

NOTES

FINAL DECLARATION

A background character follows the crowd.

A brave character pushes through the fear.

A main character walks in what God said - no matter what.

The goal is not to be perfect.

The goal is to be real.

The goal is to be exactly who God wrote you to be.