



I AM

Week 3: I am near to God

What we want students to learn: God is with His followers, wherever they go.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: Understand that God is with them and allow them to start changing their actions to honor God, who is with them always.

Large Group Message Focus: Ephesians 2:11-13

Scripture Focus: James 4:8

The Main Point

God is not physically with us, walking beside us and eating a meal across from us. Even still, He lives inside of us and we are living our lives with Him. That can be a hard concept for many students. So with this group, we want our students to understand how close He really is to us, not just when we are “good” but all the time.

INTRODUCTION

NOW, ask the Ice Breaker Question:

- **How would you live your life if you had a little angel on your shoulder (like in the movies but without the little devil on your shoulder) talking to you, staying close to you, wanting the best for you?**

We actually should be living our life like this. No, we do not have a visible angel on our shoulder. But we do have the Lord Almighty living within our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, who is constantly near to us and fighting to be near to us.

PRAY that your students would open their ears and their hearts to what you would have them hear from this small group.

LESSON

Read James 4:8. Tell your students that James was Jesus' brother and he was writing to the *believers* in Jerusalem. Additionally, after an initial read, this verse can seem pretty harsh. But, remind your students that God is still speaking to them in love through James.

- **How would you summarize this verse in 6 words or less?**
- **How can we get closer to God?**
 - *Simply, when we draw near to Him, He will draw near to you.*
- **How can you practically do this? / How have you done this before?**
 - *Spending time with Him, worshipping Him, praying and talking to Him, inviting Him into every aspect of our lives.*

- **What does he mean when he says, “Double-minded”?**
 - *They are drawn in two completely different directions. That person will get nowhere fast because his loyalty is divided. A double-minded person is unstable in all their ways and their spiritual walk is inconsistent because they try to serve God and their own interests.*
 - **How can students be especially prone to this “double-mindedness”?**
 - *So much social media can allow us to become two different people- someone on screen and someone off. It can be easy to post a Bible verse and not really digest or even read the Word. We have to learn how to be authentic in our relationship with Christ- which will result in an authentic life.*
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LIFE APPLICATION

In order to know someone, you have to put forth effort. In order to know God, you will need to put forth effort. But, when you love Him, it won't seem like any effort at all.

- **When you became friends with someone you really liked and found that you had a lot in common, did it seem like an effort to get to know them? Why or why not?**
 - *Of course not!*
- **How is this like or not like our relationship with God?**
 - *God is not physically here. But God is more than that. He is within you and always looking for the best for you. It can sometimes feel like a one-sided relationship, but that is where faith comes into play.*
- **Right now, on a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your closeness with God?**
 - *(Depending on the group, maybe ask the students to share this number out-loud, or have them think it in their head)*

Remind your students that there is always a chance to start getting closer to God and putting that effort forth to know Him this week.

- **Ask your students to state one way they are going to attempt to bring themselves closer to God this week.**
 - *Commit to meditating on a verse, chose a day of the week to do everything in honor of God (drive your car, answer the phone, greet people), spend ten minutes each morning thinking about the good things God has given you, memorize the ten commandments...*
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TAKE IT OUT

Close small group out with prayer requests. Pray that your few would learn just how close God is to them, each and every day of their lives. Pray that they would also begin living as though they know that Christ is with them through every aspect of their daily lives, ranging from school, to boyfriends/girlfriends, to family.

After prayer, be sure to remind them of any upcoming group serving activities or student events and THE WEEKEND!