

BIG IDEA

Jesus is truth.

BIBLE

John 17:13–19; John 14:6–7; Colossians 1:15–19

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

IMAGE | Library Requests

- Welcome back to *I Am*, where we are letting Jesus tell us who he is in his own words. In the age of online searches, we can simply Google what Jesus said and get a general idea of what he said about himself, but what did people do when they wanted any information before the Internet or Bible apps?
- They didn't have computers, Wi-Fi, iPhones, or YouTube. I know what you are probably thinking – what kind of life was that? Before the Internet, most people went to the library for information or would ask a librarian, who would go and do some research to find answers.
- Here are some examples of the random questions people used to ask New York Public Library between the 1940's–1980's. And most of these questions were about etiquette, the Bible, historical facts, or animals . . . and then others were as random as these:
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As you teach, show images of questions asked to librarians before the Internet on screen, like [this one](#) about squirrels or [this one](#) about having elephants in your dreams. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Librarians had to investigate everything and gather all this information to answer people's questions. Sometimes, having someone tell us the answer might be easier than Googling it. With a librarian, at least you know the answer came from a book, but on the Internet, who knows where the answer could have come from and if it is true?

ACTIVITY | Trivia Relay

- Where do you search for information about things you don't know much about, like the science of sound? Let's test your skills to figure out the truth with this game.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need an encyclopedia or book about sounds like [this one](#), a laptop with Wi-Fi, two tables, and a sign that can be worn on the neck or held that reads "Seeker of Wisdom." Before your program, set up the laptop and encyclopedia on separate tables. Choose three trivia questions about "sound" (ensure all the answers can be found in the encyclopedia you are providing), and find one volunteer. To play, choose three teams of three people and position the teams a short distance away from the items. Their goal is to be the first relay team to answer three trivia questions about sound. To find the answer, they can either look up the answer on the computer, in the encyclopedia or ask the "Seeker of Wisdom." However, to find their answer, they can only use one of the three options provided and each resource can only be used once. When the game leader says go, they tell the first three players the questions, who then run to get the answer from their platform of choice. Once they get their answer, they return to the game leader and tell them their response. If it is correct, they ask the following question to the next member of the relay. The first team to answer all three questions wins. Note: be sure you supply the "Seeker of Wisdom" with the answer to all three questions. Here are a few trivia questions to get you started:

- What is the speed of sound?
- What is the top of the sound wave called?
- Can sound be heard in space? Why or why not?

OBJECT LESSON | Pocket Truth

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this object lesson, you'll need a device that can answer questions with a digital assistant, like Alexa, Siri, or Google Assistant. Find a few places in the teaching to activate your device to get it to answer or ask students questions you should ask it.
- Coming up with answers is not that difficult anymore. With the sound of our voice, we can find answers to our questions by asking Siri, Alexa, or Google.
- How do we know the information that they give is accurate? I mean, they are just telling us what the Internet says. The only way to fact-check is to study it yourself.
- Jesus isn't afraid of us seeking and looking into the truth about who he is. Maybe you have heard about Jesus for a long time. Perhaps you've known about Jesus since you were a kid. You've even started hearing opposing opinions about who people say he is. You might think you know who Jesus is, but do you? What if you have been missing out on truly enjoying who God is?
- When it comes to Jesus, we must ask ourselves, who does Jesus say he is – in his own words? Why does who Jesus is matter to us today? What is awesome about Jesus is that this isn't something we need to figure out on our own. We can hear about who Jesus is from him.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - **Fill in this blank I AM statement: "One unbelievable fact about me is that I AM _____."**
 - **How do you fact-check what you read on the internet?**
 - **In your opinion, and be honest, how do you define truth?**

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | John 14:5–7

- In the Bible, we saw the disciples ask Jesus tough questions. There was a moment like this the night before Jesus was crucified.

- He was trying to help his friends understand who he was by telling them what was about to happen to him and what it meant. But they were having a hard time believing it, and if they did believe it, the thought of their friend dying was pretty upsetting.
- Think about it from their perspective. They had been following Jesus and seeing him do some amazing things. Then suddenly, he was talking even more cryptically than normal about his future. Jesus said things like they couldn't follow him where he was going. I would have some serious questions. Wouldn't you?
- They wanted to understand why they couldn't go with him like they had been doing. They wanted to keep following where he was going and didn't understand what he was about to do. So, one of his friends asked him a question, and he gave them a profound answer.
- **INSTRUCTION:** Read John 14:5–7.
- This is how Jesus begins to speak to the concerns of his friends. He said they couldn't go where he was going and do what he was about to do, but that didn't mean they could follow his lead.
- Jesus reminded them that because they knew him, they knew the way to a relationship with God. They had seen how he lived, prayed, believed, and loved others. This is what they were to continue to do. Jesus is the truth of who God is and how humans are called to live.
- This is also an encouragement to us. Jesus wants us to know him, but not from afar – not like “I follow him on social” *know* but “I spend time with him, and I know God because I know Jesus.” The more we know Jesus, the more we can know God.
- Jesus embodied the truth of all Scripture and the story of God and people from the beginning. The more time we spend hearing from and following Jesus, the more we recognize the truth of God when we listen to it. This is what it means for Jesus to be “the way, the truth, and the life.”
- The Bible tells us that when we begin to know and trust that Jesus is not “a truth” but the truth, we begin to learn and experience who God is.

STORY | When I Trusted Jesus Is Truth

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a story from your own life about when they came to understand that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. What had you heard about him? What changed your mind or solidified that you should follow Jesus? Include tangible examples of how Jesus began to change your life when you started following him. You can also invite a volunteer or student to share their experience.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ⊗ **What do you think about Jesus' claim to be the truth?**
 - **What questions do you have about Jesus saying that no one gets to the Father except through him?**

SCRIPTURE | John 17:17–19

- Just because we have accepted the truth of who Jesus is doesn't mean that believing God as the way, the truth, and life makes sense all at once. It is a gradual process that we are learning. That is why a little later, Jesus said this:
- **INSTRUCTION:** Read John 17:17–19.
- Sanctification is an intense-sounding spiritual word, but it is pretty simple. Sanctification is the journey we are on to be like Jesus. He knows that as we accept his way, truth, and life as our way, everything we are going through won't magically change.

- It takes time for us to hear Jesus gently guide us to a life that looks like his. Sanctification is the process God leads us through to think what Jesus thought, pray as Jesus prayed, and live how he would live if he were in my situation.
- Jesus being the truth means that we are on a journey of hearing from him and learning what it means to be like him through every moment – big or small.
- When we hear Jesus tell us who he is in his words, he says that to know him is to listen to the truth about who God is, the truth about how we can live, and the truth that Jesus is the life we long for. This is because **Jesus is truth.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

OBJECT LESSON | Turn Up The Volume

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you'll need a Bluetooth speaker and your phone. Before your program, choose a song appropriate for your group to use in the object lesson. You will play the speaker at two volumes. When the teaching indicates, play a short clip of the song very loudly, and at another time, let it slowly fade in and gradually get louder.*
- I think a lot of us, including me, feel that when we acknowledge Jesus as the truth, we should be able to believe all the things he said, live as he lived, and experience life as he did, instantly. We like to think that hearing his voice is instant, like immediately turning a speaking on super loud.
- This may be true for some people, but it is more like a slow fade-in for most of us. When we acknowledge Jesus is the truth, as we connect with him and read what he said about himself in the Bible, his voice and way of life slowly become more prominent in our lives. The volume of what Jesus is saying to us gradually, over time, gets louder.
- So if we want to allow Jesus to turn up his volume in our lives, we need to start connecting with Jesus as the truth. This means that truth isn't only an idea to agree to but someone to interact with. Today you can begin to see Jesus is truth, and this means he is . . .
 - **SOMEONE TO TRUST:** Jesus says he is always with you and the only one who can sustain you in all circumstances. Trust that he and he alone is the one to trust with your whole life. Read about why you can trust him this week in the Bible. If you need a place to start, read the gospel we have been looking at over the past few weeks, the book of John. As you read, you will discover that Jesus is the truth, and you can trust him.
 - **SOMEONE TO CONNECT WITH:** When we hear that Jesus is the truth, that means there is a difference between facts and truth. While all facts are true, not all true things are facts. There are undoubtedly facts about Jesus, which are good things to know, but the truth is *someone* we can connect with. When Jesus tells us that he is the truth, we can interact with and connect with the one who is the source of every true thing. As we pray and read the Bible, he can give us clarity and vision about all the questions we bring to him.
 - **SOMEONE TO LIVE LIKE:** Jesus helped his friends see that they could trust how he showed them to live in the world. This is true for us too. We can look at the life of Jesus and begin to live as he did by spending time with God, telling our story, using our gifts, and connecting with others.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*

- ✪ **When did you start believing Jesus is the truth that leads to God? Is there anything holding you back from believing that?**
- **Read Colossians 1:15–19. Does knowing Jesus shows us the fullness of who God is challenge your preconceptions of God?**
- ✪ **What three steps can you take to turn up the volume of Jesus' voice in your life?**

REFLECTION | Slowly Turning Up The Volume

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this reflection, you'll need the [Week 2 printout](#) included in this week's materials and something to write with. Invite students to write down the answers to the question on the handout. Let students think about how they sense that Jesus wants to encounter them this week. If you chose a worship song for this object lesson, you might consider playing that song or another as people do their reflection, but make sure you have purchased any licenses required. For more information, [read this!](#)*
- Because Jesus is the truth, he invites us to become more aware of why we follow and trust him. This is an invitation to know God through Jesus personally. Our faith needs to be our own – something we choose and explore for the truth of who Jesus is.
- While it is important to have friends on the journey of following Jesus' way (people are vital, we can't follow Jesus alone), we also can't live someone else's faith. Only we can live our story.
- Jesus is inviting us into the grand adventure of experiencing his truth in our lives. That means we can commit to allowing him to up the volume of his voice in our life and experience how he is the truth for ourselves.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✪ **What is one truth about Jesus you would want to tell others about?**
 - **What would it look like for you to live like Jesus is the truth? What is one way you will take to live like that this week?**

RESPONSE | Voice Memo Scripture

- A simple way to get to know Jesus is to listen to God's word through Scripture.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this response, have students connect with another student they trust. Choose a Scripture that works for your group and have them each pull it up on their phones (we suggest Psalm 25:4–5), and take turns making a voice memo on their phones reading it. Then ask them to send that voice memo to each other a few times weekly to remind them that God's truth is a path they are gradually learning to walk.*
- Allow God to turn up the volume in your life by sharing a reminder that Jesus is the truth, and we are all learning what that means to us. If we want to know who God is, we've got to know Jesus because **Jesus is truth.**