



A 4-WEEK SERIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ON

# IDENTITY

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*

BY ADAM MASHNI



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## OVERVIEW

## DISTINCT

### STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

#### THIS SERIES

- ▶ [About This Series](#)
- ▶ [Room Design, Music, and Games](#)
- ▶ [How to Prepare for This Series](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Middle Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for High Schoolers](#)
- ▶ [Hacks for Students with Special Needs](#)
- ▶ [About the Author](#)
- ▶ [Devotional for Volunteers](#)

#### MULTIMEDIA

- ▶ [Graphics & Video](#)
- ▶ [Spotify Playlists](#)

#### COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Weekly Volunteer Emails](#)
- ▶ [Monthly Parent Email](#)
- ▶ [One-Minute Sermon Scripts & Videos](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Plan](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)

### STUFF FOR EACH WEEK

#### WEEK 1

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School  
Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 2

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School  
Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 3

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School  
Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

#### WEEK 4

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Sermon Guide](#)
- ▶ [Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Middle School  
Small Group Guide](#)
- ▶ [Hybrid Guide](#)
- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

### WEEK 1

This week, we'll see how John and Paul make it clear that Jesus is unlike anyone else who has ever lived — He's God.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus is distinct.
- **THE BIBLE:** John 1:1-18; I Corinthians 8:5-6; Hebrews 13:8
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Poll, Question, Story, Reflection, Image, Object Lesson, Music, Discussion

### WEEK 2

This week, we'll see what John the Baptist's life and ministry reveal about the unique ways God creates and calls each of us.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God made you distinct.
- **THE BIBLE:** John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Question, Story, Reflection, Response, Discussion

### WEEK 3

This week, we'll discover why Paul and Peter both wanted to see a diversity of gifts being used to serve in the Church.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** We can all serve in distinct ways.
- **THE BIBLE:** I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10; Proverbs 11:25
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Question, Story, Reflection, Discussion

### WEEK 4

This week, we'll discover what Paul's teachings and John's visions reveal about diversity within the Body of Christ.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** We can celebrate our distinctions.
- **THE BIBLE:** I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10; Psalm 139:13-14
- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:** Activity, Video, Story, Reflection, Discussion

## HOW TO PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

Outside of your teaching time, we have a few programming ideas to help this series really come to life — everything from how to **design your room**, to which **games to play**, to what **music to play and sing**.

### ROOM DESIGN

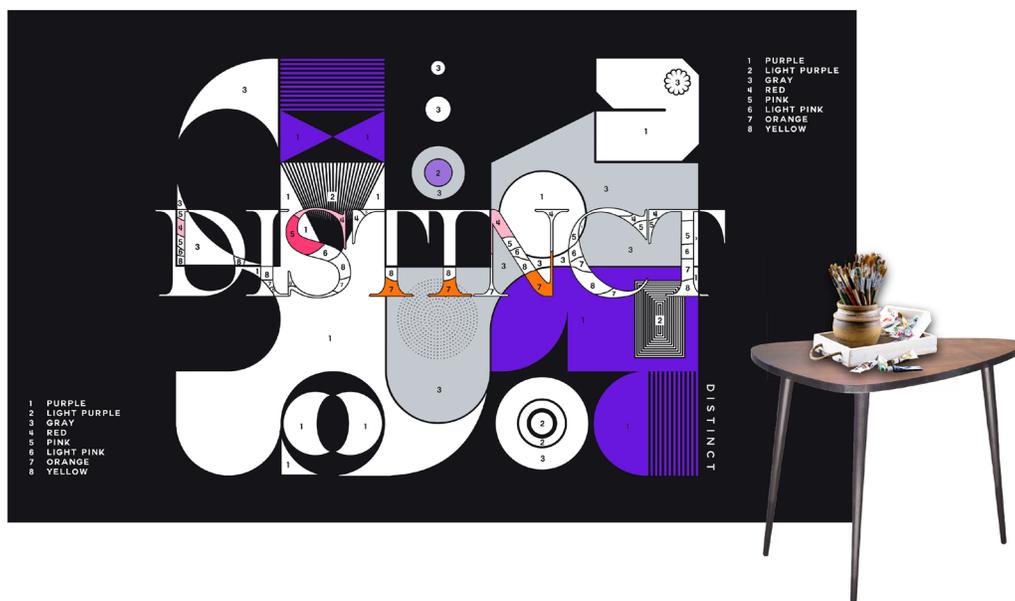
For this series, we're doing an interactive color-by-number backdrop that gets students involved and using their gifts to create it!

First, you'll need a sturdy backdrop that isn't in danger of falling over when students touch it. There are tons of ways to create a backdrop that you can re-use multiple times each year. Check out [this post](#) for a list of ideas. For this series, **we recommend plywood panels** or a wall. If you have a large chalkboard or whiteboard on wheels, that's also an option.

Whatever you choose for your backdrop, **print the Room Design image we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder for this series**. We suggest printing it at a local print shop that has wide format printing. If that's not an option, you can either print the image yourself on multiple sheets of regular sizes paper or you can trace and paint the image by hand using a projector and black paint or permanent markers.

Once the backdrop is complete, **decide which art supplies you'll give to students to color it in**. Paint, markers, and crayons are all good options! You'll need supplies in eight colors: purple, light purple, gray, red, pink, light pink, orange, and yellow — the same colors that are shown in the graphics for this series. Set up a table with your art supplies and place it near your backdrop. When your series begins, invite students to come to the front before and after your service to finish coloring it in before the series ends.

Plus, you can also print the color-by-number file we provided on regular paper and give it to students as a little bonus art project.



## **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

We give you editable graphics so you can make everything your own! If you're going to **edit our graphics** or **create something brand new** . . .

Use this font!

# ALDINE721 BT

Download this font [here!](#)

And use these colors!



HEX #5B08CE  
CMYK: 78/86/0/0



HEX #FF074F  
CMYK: 0/98/59/0



HEX #FF4C07  
CMYK: 0/85/100/0



HEX #FF08BD  
CMYK: 8/88/0/0

## **MUSIC** by Libby Frees & Erica Mason

Here are a few worship songs that tie into this month's theme of identity by reminding us God loves, knows, and created us . . .

- **"Who You Say I Am"** (Hillsong Worship)
- **"Known"** (Tauren Wells)
- **"Free"** (K-Anthony)
- **"Stand In Your Love"** (Josh Baldwin)
- **"Follow You Anywhere"** (Passion Music)
- **"My Future"** (Ginny Owens)
- **"Parade"** (CYA Worship)
- **"Call Me Your Own"** (Isla Vista Worship)
- **"Better"** (SEU Worship)
- **"Sound of Heaven"** (CBC Worship)
- **"Closer"** (Maverick City Music)

We've added these songs to our [Grow Students \(Volume 5\) Spotify playlist](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)

And if you want to sing or sample a non-worship song or two (maybe as an opener, a closer, a bonus song during your program), try some of these . . .

- **"Zombie"** (Lecrae)
- **"Unbothered"** (Tori Kelly)
- **"Sunday Morning"** (Lecrae, Kirk Franklin)
- **"Yes & Know"** (David Dunn)
- **"Invisible Song"** (Hunter Hayes)
- **"Free To Be Me"** (Francesca Battistelli)
- **"This Is Me"** (Keala Settle and The Greatest Showman Ensemble)

For more fun (and clean) song suggestions, check out all of [our Spotify playlists](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)



## GAMES by Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant & Jordan Floro

If you have a designated time for games before your worship and teaching time, we have a few suggestions for games you can play . . .

- [Distinct Celebs](#)
- [The Distinct Stage](#)
- [Coin Distinction](#)
- [Secret Identity](#)

Since this series is all about the ways God made us different and unique, all of the games for this series deal with finding "distinctions" and differences between things. To get the instructions and graphics for each game, click the links or visit the Games section of your Grow Students dashboard.

### HOW TO PREP FOR THIS SERIES

## WHAT TO GET

If you want to try all of our suggestions for this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

#### WEEK 1:

- Chairs
- Music
- Sound effects
- The image provided in your Week 1 folder
- [Apple](#) and [Android](#) charging cables (plus any extra charging cables you have laying around)
- The song "[Forever Reign](#)" by Hillsong United
- Pens

#### WEEK 2:

- [Sample cups](#)
- A variety of soda flavors, bottled water, potato chips, or whatever food or drink you'd like
- The handout provided in your Week 2 folder
- The Distinct Challenge, from the Discipleship section of Grow Students (Volume 5)

#### WEEK 3:

- [Paper bags](#) or boxes
- A variety of foods with different textures (like mashed potatoes, bologna, Jell-O, fried chicken, pudding, a kiwi fruit, dry rice, or ice cream)
- The image provided in your Week 3 folder
- The handout provided in your Week 3 folder

#### WEEK 4:

- Two almost identical photos
- A video clip from a [Beatbox Battle](#)
- The handout provided in your Week 4 folder

## WHAT TO MAKE

### WEEK 1:

- Print and cut the **handout** provided in your Week 1 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.
- Set up a space and materials to play **Distinct Sounds**.

### WEEK 2:

- Set up a space to play **Distinct Flavors**. Fill your sample cups with the food or drink samples of your choice.
- Print and cut the **handouts** provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.

### WEEK 3:

- Set up a space to play **Distinct Textures**. Place a different food in each bag or box.
- Find a handful of volunteers or church members who have a unique talent or skill and are using it to serve others. Interview them on camera beforehand or prepare them for a live interview during your teaching time.
- Print and cut the **handouts** provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.

### WEEK 4:

- Take two almost identical images for the **Distinct Sights** activity.
- Print and cut the **handouts** provided in your Week 4 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.

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## WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so there are probably some things you'd like to change about this series before you start teaching. Here's what you'll need to update if you make changes . . .

- **TEACHING:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group. You can edit each message using the Word documents provided or the [Grow Message Builder](#).
- **SMALL GROUP:** If you make any changes to your teaching, make sure your small group questions reflect those changes. You can edit these using the Word documents provided.
- **APP:** If you make changes to your teaching or small group questions, don't forget to update your content in the [Grow App](#) for your team!
- **GRAPHICS:** We've provided graphics in your [Graphics & Video folder](#) already, but we've also provided a blank slide in case you need to make your own.
- **EMAILS:** Customize and send the [volunteer and Parent Emails](#) we've provided for this series.

## WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your students, volunteers, and families are in the loop . . .

- **STUDENTS:** Throughout the month, post the [Graphics & Video](#) we've provided on social media, like the Big Idea images and Bumper Video. Post the [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) we've provided or use the One-Minute Sermon Scripts to film a recap video each week and post it on social media.
- **FAMILIES:** Before you begin teaching this series, send families the [Parent Email](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). After each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to families online. You can also copy and paste the social media examples we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Before you teach each week of this series, send volunteers the weekly [Volunteer Emails](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). Before each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to volunteers online. You can also copy and paste the social media posts we've included in your [Social Media Posts](#).

For a more in-depth digital communication strategy, **customize the** [Social Media Plan spreadsheet](#) we've provided. And hey! When you post on social media, **don't forget to use the #growcurriculum hashtag** to share your ideas and stories with our team and with other churches who are using Grow!

## HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with special needs, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique and diverse audience.

## HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

 by Shala Graham and Porfirio Caldera

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for middle schoolers, here's what to adjust . .

**In Week 1, turn the "Jesus Is . . . " reflection into a public (but anonymous) poll.** Your middle schoolers might benefit from seeing each other's responses, but might be too shy to give their own responses out loud. So a tool like [Mentimeter](#) or [Poll Everywhere](#) will let them share who Jesus is to them publicly but anonymously. If tech is a problem for you, have middle schooler submit sticky notes or index cards anonymously instead.

**In Week 3, consider turning the "A Map to Serving Distinctly" reflection into a small group activity.** If left to do this alone, some middle schoolers might get lost. Processing out loud might be helpful for students who like to hear the thoughts of others or need a little extra guidance from an adult.

**In Week 4, give more examples of how they can celebrate people's distinctions.** Your middle schoolers usually need a little more help figuring out their next steps than your high schoolers do, but that's especially true in situations that require more empathy and emotional intelligence than your middle schoolers might currently have. For each of the application points, provide a few specific examples your middle schoolers can imitate.



### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

**In Week 1, replace the image of the Trinity with your favorite Trinity-related metaphors or object lessons.** If the concept of the Trinity is challenging even for adults to understand, it's definitely going to be a challenge for middle schoolers. To help them grasp it, make your teaching as hands-on as possible. You might even want to share multiple metaphors or object lessons to give students several opportunities to understand. While all metaphors fall short in explaining the nature of God, this will at least point middle schoolers in the right direction.



### REMEMBER

**Remember middle schoolers are still early in the process of discovering who they are.** They'll need some extra help from you or an adult leader to define their unique gifts and imagine how to use them for the benefit of others. Throughout this series, don't assume middle schoolers know much of anything about who they are yet. Chances are, some of them have hardly thought about it!

## HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS by Travis Bannon and Jada Price

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for high schoolers, here's what to adjust . . .

**Every week, turn the opening activities into upfront games or front door activities.** If your high schoolers might not be interested in participating in these opening activities, make some adjustments. In order not to force students to participate, you can turn the Week 1 and 3 activities (Distinct Sounds and Distinct Textures) into upfront games with just a few willing participants. You can turn the Week 2 and 4 activities (Distinct Flavors and Distinct Sights) into optional activities students can participate in before your program starts, as they walk through the door.

**In Week 2, encourage high schoolers to think about their future vocations.** Because you're talking about John the Baptist and the purpose of his ministry, your high schoolers may want to talk about their future vocations or callings. If you think your students may want to explore that subject, go for it! It's a great opportunity to talk about how their unique identities could inform their future vocations, but it's okay if it doesn't!

**In Week 4, lead a more pointed conversation about one specific hot topic.** If you feel prepared and equipped to have this conversation, try focusing on one specific subject where your high schoolers might already be aware of their differences. Depending on your context, you could talk about racial and ethnic differences, political differences, differences in abilities and disabilities, or even theological differences. Whichever subject you choose, explore why our differences in this area make us uncomfortable and examine a relevant recent event.

### REMEMBER

**Keep in mind, the question "Who is Jesus to you?" is crucial for high schoolers.** At this stage, your high schoolers are more equipped than ever to think about and verbalize who Jesus is to them and why do or don't follow Him. When they were younger, your high schoolers may not have thought about why Jesus was to them personally because they were comfortable following their parents' faith — but all this often changes during the high school years!

# HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

by Addison Roberts and Stephanie Newland

## REVISE

To make this series more accessible for kids with special needs, here's what to adjust . .

**In all four weeks of this series, add a visual to explain what "distinct" means.** For some students with certain special needs, it might be helpful to have an image that represents the word distinct. You might show an image like [this](#) or [this](#). Or you might use an object lesson where you provide a bucket of [rubber duck sensory toys](#), where every rubber duck is a uniquely decorated. Having an image correlating to the word distinct will help students in all stages grasp the material better. For better retention, use repetition and show the image or object every time the word "distinct" is mentioned.

**In all four weeks, be sensitive to the ways your students with special needs will experience the opening activities.** Because these opening activities rely heavily on the senses, be aware of any sensory issues your students might have, as well as any students whose disabilities are related to one of their senses. Can your students play the games even with their disabilities? How can you help your students with sensory sensitivities participate without feeling overwhelmed? Do any of the activities need to be revised or replaced for something else?

**In Week 4, turn on closed captioning when you play the video.** If you have any students with hearing impairments, always be sure the videos you play have subtitles enabled!

## REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

**In Weeks 1 or 4, replace the activities Distinct Sounds or Distinct Sights with Distinct Smells.** If any of your students are hearing or visually impaired, swap that game with a new game involving distinct smells. To play, fill individual paper bags with items that have distinct smells, like a doughnut, cinnamon sticks, beef jerky, peppermint, or pickles. Have students smell what's inside the bag (without looking at it or touching it) to see if they can identify what they're smelling.

## REMEMBER

Throughout this series, there will be plenty of opportunities to help students with special needs think about how their disabilities are related to their identities. Each week, keep those students in mind as you teach. Affirm them with your words, the examples you show, the stories you tell, and the types of people you choose to represent or elevate throughout this series. Especially in Week 4, use this series as an opportunity to celebrate them!



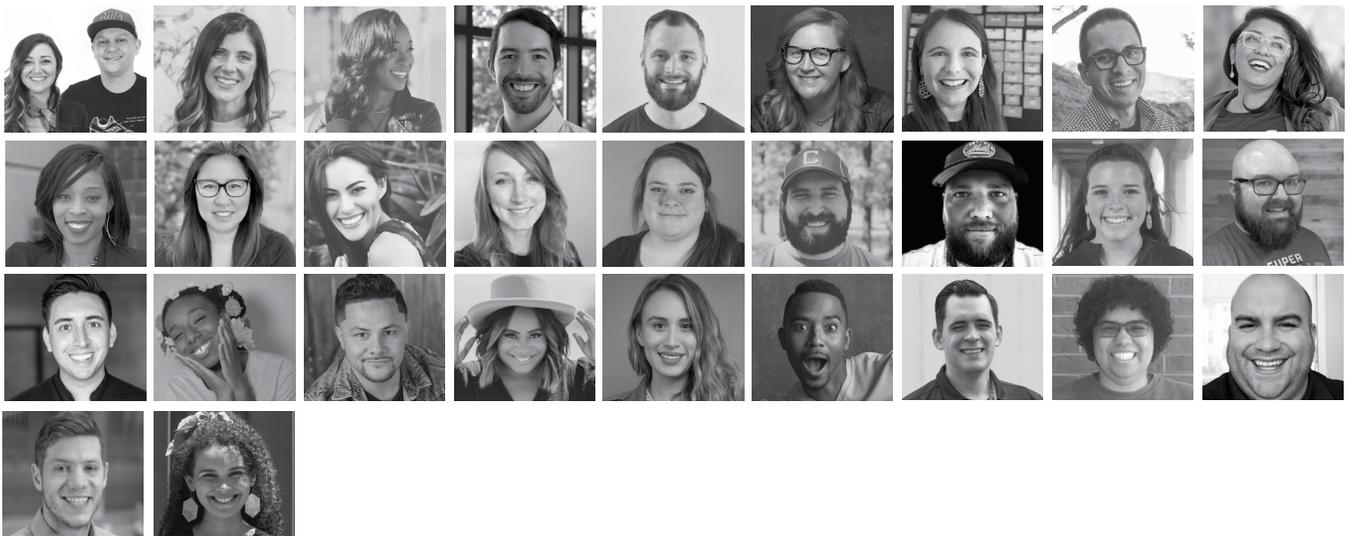
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Mashni has been in youth ministry for the better part of 18 years. He currently serves as the High School Pastor of Oak Pointe Church in Novi, Michigan. He loves turning Biblical Truth into practical handles that teenagers can grab onto and use to live their every day life. If you'd like to chat with Adam about effective teaching, slowing down as a way of life (or anything by Pete Scazzero), or how everyone should be a Michigan Football fan, reach out! He would love to connect with you.

**CONNECT WITH ADAM!**



## ALONG WITH . . .



**SERIES DEVELOPMENT:** Adam Mashni, Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Amber Stephens, Stephen Switzer, Candace Williams, Crystal Quintero, Josh McLemore, Tim Synan

**HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS:** Shala Graham, Porfirio Caldera

**HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS:** Travis Bannon, Jada Price

**HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Addison Roberts, Stephanie Newland

**GAMES:** Jeremiah Herring, Tyler Grant, Jordan Floro

**ONE-MINUTE SERMONS:** David Magallanes, Elle Campbell, Jose Rodriguez, Erica Rodriguez, Vanessa Serrano Cruz, Damean Easter, and the Rescue a Generation team

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Amber Gaddis

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Elle Campbell

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Linda Moon, Ali Anne, Kellee Gentry, Emily Acton, Jada Smith, Jay Logan, Eddie Irvin, Daniel Wallis

# DEVOTIONAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

# DISTINCT



## STUDY

"Copy cat culture" is a thing. It starts young when we mimic and steal the speech patterns of those around us. It continues into adolescence when we look to our peers to tell us what's acceptable and worthy of love. And yes, it continues on into adulthood too. If we're not careful with our copy cat tendencies, we'll start to lose the distinct nature, traits, and gifts God has given us. Toning down who we are and how we've been created might be valued in some cultures, but the culture Jesus created would rather highlight our distinctions, because those distinctions are beautiful. Before you help students take a look at their distinct identities, consider yours, because **Jesus is distinct** and **made you distinct** so you could **serve in distinct ways**. As you prepare for this series, **celebrate your distinctions** so you can better help students celebrate theirs. To get ready for this series about identity, **spend a few minutes reading the stories you'll be teaching students this month**. As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

**WEEK 1:** Jesus is distinct. (John 1:1-18; I Corinthians 8:5-6; Hebrews 13:8)

**WEEK 2:** God made you distinct. (John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14)

**WEEK 3:** We can all serve in distinct ways. (I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10; Proverbs 11:25)

**WEEK 4:** We can celebrate our distinctions. (I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10; Psalm 139:13-14)



## PRAY

Have you updated your resume lately? It's a weird sport, isn't it? On our resumes, we're meant to create a highlight reel of all of the things that qualify us to do a job, just like all the other people in our field . . . but we have to do so in a way that makes us appear distinct, with unique contributions only we can make. We're told to "be the same, but different." That might be the message of the company you'd like to work for, but the message of Jesus is that you are distinct. Who you are in Christ changes who you are everywhere else. So before you begin this series, talk to God about who you are and who you're becoming. **Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now?** Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.



## GROW

Make a list of things that make you distinctly different from everyone else. Then wonder about how those things equip you to serve in distinct ways. Talk to God about how you can serve more in these capacities in the future and then go for it! What's your next step toward living distinctly? **Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.**

## WEEK 1 SERMON GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus is distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:1-18; I Corinthians 8:5-6;  
Hebrews 13:8

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Distinct Sounds

- Welcome to our brand new series, *Distinct*, where we'll be looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things – like sounds.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this new spin on Musical Chairs, you'll need some chairs, music, and sound effects. To play, bring a few students to the front or play with your whole group if you can. Make sure you have one more player than you have chairs. Like you would in a typical game of Musical Chairs, have students walk around while music is playing, but instead of simply having them sit when the music stops, give them a few sound effects with different actions associated with them. Call the players out if they fail to (or are the last to) pair the right action with the sound effect, like . . .*
  - **COWBELL:** *Sit on a chair.*
  - **DUCK CALL:** *Sit on the floor.*
  - **BULLHORN:** *Keep walking.*

#### POLL | Distinct Senses

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have your students respond to the following poll by raising their hands or responding out loud if they can relate.*
- Some of you detail-oriented people are better than others at noticing the distinctions between things a little more quickly than others, but we're all capable of identifying things that are different, unique, or don't belong. **Does this sound like you? Maybe you . . .**

- Can identify your favorite songs from one-second audio clips.
- Are great at that Spot the Difference game where you compare two pictures that are almost the same.
- Always notice the distinct smells of the rooms you walk into – and you always let people know when they smell weird.
- Are really particular about textures, so when you find the perfect t-shirt or pair of socks, you never go back.
- Are a macaroni and cheese connoisseur. You've tasted them all and know exactly which brand is best.
- The official definition of "distinct" is when something is "recognizably different" or "distinguishable by the senses." We use our senses (and brains) to determine when something is a little different from everything else.

### QUESTION | "Who is Jesus to you?"

- For the next few weeks, we're going to be talking about some of the things that make you and me "distinct." But before we talk about how you and I are uniquely created, I want to talk about the Person who created us that way.
- Many people think Jesus was simply a good man who lived, died, and that's it. Some think He taught and did some great things. Some don't believe He existed at all. But others believe Jesus not only existed, but He was distinct from any person who has ever lived.
- **So who is Jesus to you?** Not just what you've heard from your family or at church. What do you think?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- There were a lot of unique things about Jesus, but the most distinct thing about Him is this: He claims to be God.
  - He forgave sins only God could forgive.
  - He claimed to be the Son of God.
  - He performed miracles.
  - He said He was the Savior God had promised.
- So is it true? Is Jesus fully God and fully human like the Bible says? And if He is, what difference does it make for us and for the world?

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

### STORY | Talk about a time you realized Jesus was distinct.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when you were struck by the way Jesus was different from anyone else. This could be the first time you realized Jesus was God, or a time an aspect of Jesus' character stood out to you or transformed your faith.
- There's a lot about Jesus that's distinct, but knowing Jesus isn't about learning facts about Jesus. It's about knowing Him. The things that make Jesus who He is aren't just interesting facts. They actually have the power to change us.

## REFLECTION | Jesus is . . . (Part 1)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 1 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.
- As we talk today, I want to invite you to write down who Jesus is to you. It can be one word or lots of words. You might think of more words to describe Jesus as we read, talk, or discuss. As you do, write down anything that sticks out to you.
- By the time we're done, none of our pages will look the same and that's okay, because we've all encountered Jesus in different ways.

## SCRIPTURE | John 1:1-18

- One person who encountered Jesus in a distinct way was John, was one of the earliest followers of Jesus. John hung out with Jesus, saw what Jesus did, heard what Jesus said, and was one of Jesus' closest friends.
  - The Gospel of John is a book in the Bible attributed to John. In it, he says his primary reason for writing the book of John was so that everyone who reads it later (that's us!) would believe Jesus is who He said He is.
  - There were other people who saw the things Jesus did and heard the things Jesus said – that's why we have four similar books in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). But there was only one John. The book of John captures his unique perspective on Jesus.
  - Let's look at the very beginning of John's writings. It's his introduction to the whole story of Jesus, so you know he's going to put some of the most important ideas first. What does John want us to know about who Jesus is? Let's find out!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read John 1:1-18.
- This first statement alone is distinct from any other description of Jesus in Scripture. Jesus as described as "the Word." In Greek, the word "word" is *logos*, which means "divine reason."
  - "Divine," means, "God, being like God, or having God-like powers."
  - "Reason" means, "having the ability to think, make decisions, and form thoughts."
  - So "divine reason" means Jesus was "one with the ability to think and act like God."
- John is making it pretty clear how he views Jesus, isn't he? From the get-go, he makes sure his readers know Jesus is God!
  - He wasn't just a normal man.
  - He wasn't just a good teacher.
  - He wasn't just someone who did great things.
  - He was indeed God!

## IMAGE | The Trinity

- Jesus equals God. So does God equal Jesus? Well . . . yes? And no. This is a difficult concept to grasp, let alone explain, so let's see what we can do.
  - **JESUS EQUALS GOD.** How is that possible? Well, by human standards, it's not. But Jesus isn't just human, and that's the point. Jesus is fully human and fully God at the exact same time.

- **GOD EQUALS THE TRINITY.** Jesus is fully God, but God isn't fully Jesus. I know, I know — this is kind of mind-bending. There is only one God, but God is actually three "persons." There is God, Jesus, *and* Holy Spirit. Together, they are God. Separately, they are also God. And there is only one God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 1 folder as you teach.*
- It's okay if you can't wrap your brain around this. We humans have been trying to do it for ages. It's difficult to explain because God is so much bigger than our minds and imaginations.

### SCRIPTURE | John 1:3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Re-read John 1:3.*
- Jesus is God, but not only that — Jesus was there in the very beginning of all creation, when only God existed! Jesus is God and Jesus is also our Creator! Through Him, everything was made that we can see and touch.
  - Yes, Jesus was born just like you and me, but Jesus also existed before He was born.
  - How? Well, God kind of invented time, so it makes sense that Jesus can exist eternally outside of time. He always has existed and will always exist, with no beginning and no end. Mind . . . blown.

### SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 8:5-6

- There is no one like Jesus. Other gods, ideas, people, and even objects have been worshiped over time, but there is only One who has stood the test of time.
- Besides John, there's another follower of Jesus named Paul wrote a letter to a local church about who Jesus is. In this letter, he laid out some truth about Jesus and some other "so-called gods."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I Corinthians 8:5-6.*
- Paul made it very clear that, even though some people will try and worship fake "gods," there is only one God who is different from them all — Jesus.
  - Paul wrote letters like this one to teach and help early followers of Jesus understand all of the new ideas and thoughts that were circulating about Jesus' identity.
  - When this was written, the Roman empire was in charge. In Rome, they believed their emperor was divine — a "son of God." That's why Paul wanted to make this clear: "Look, there may seem like there are many 'so-called-gods' out there, but Jesus is the only God."
- Both John and Paul proclaimed and trust this truth: there is no one like Jesus. He's fully God, fully human, and fully capable of changing our lives. **Jesus is distinct.** He's in a class of His own. There is no one like Him.

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

### OBJECT LESSON | Charging Cables

- Because Jesus is distinct from anyone else, He has the distinct ability to change our lives in distinct ways.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show students a variety of phone charging cables, like an [Apple charger](#) and an [Android charger](#), as well as any other charging cables you have laying around. Just make sure one of them is actually compatible with your phone. As you teach, attempt to plug the cables into your phone until you find the one that fits.
- Isn't it funny how whenever you need a charger, you're offered one that doesn't match your phone? No? Just me? Cool. Well, these charging cables are all distinct and serve distinct purposes. You can't charge an iPhone with an Android charger, and you can't charge an Android phone with the charger for video game controllers.
- This is how Jesus is for us. Because there is only one Creator, you and I are created with only one source of life, power, and purpose. When we're "plugged into" our one and only source, things change.
  - Our relationship with God changes.
  - The way we see ourselves changes.
  - The way we see others changes.
  - The way we see our lives changes.
  - The way we get through our lives changes.
- We were created by Jesus to know Jesus. Our distinct Creator created us distinctly and with a distinct purpose – to know Him.

### MUSIC | “Forever Reign” (Hillsong United)

- We began our time together today by using our ears to identify some distinct sounds. Let's use that same sense of hearing to identify some of the distinct characteristics of who Jesus is. While we're singing, you might want to . . .
  - Add a few more words to that page of reflections.
  - Ask this question: “If this is true about Jesus, what should I do about it?”
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play the song “Forever Reign” (Hillsong United), or any other song that lists some of the distinct characteristics of God, but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a link to [preview the song](#) for your personal use.

### REFLECTION | Jesus is . . . (Part 2)

- So we've talked about how Jesus is distinct from anyone else who has ever lived, but what do we do about this claim? We can . . .
- Be honest about any doubts we may have about who Jesus says He is.  
 Ask God for help trusting Jesus is who He says He is.  
 Choose to receive, believe, and trust that Jesus is everything He says He is and more.  
 Let Jesus change us from the inside out.
- So if Jesus is God, what do you need to do about it? What's your next step? Do you need to be honest about your doubts? Ask for help? Choose to trust? Let Jesus change you or your relationship with God?
  - **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have students return to their handout and find a space to write down one action step they need to take.
  - **Who is Jesus to you? And what are you going to do about it?**

- If you don't already know Jesus or you've never really made a decision to trust Him before, maybe today is the day you start. Jesus said He came to save us, and His salvation is kind of like receiving a gift you didn't ask for or expect. The gift is undeserved, but it's yours anyway. We didn't earn God's love through Jesus, but we have it — just because.
- If you already know Jesus, but your relationship with God isn't what you wish it could be, maybe today is the day you start again. Just like you didn't earn God's love in the first place, there's nothing you can do to lose it either. Maybe today's the day you decide to come back to that love.
- And if you're following Jesus and have a faith that's growing, that's great! Maybe your next step can be to reflect on what makes Jesus distinct to you so you can better share who He is to you. Or maybe you wrote down an observation about who Jesus is, but there's something you could do to respond more intentionally to that truth. If Jesus is a healer, what do you need Him to heal? If He's your friend, how can you spend more time with Him?
- Jesus wasn't just a good man or a good teacher. He was, and still is, so much more than that. As God, He's impossible for us to fully understand. But as a human, He understands us perfectly. Who Jesus is to you is a question only you can answer, but I'll tell you this — there's no one like Him. **Jesus is distinct.**

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus is distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:1-18; I Corinthians 8:5-6;  
Hebrews 13:8

- **Which sense is your favorite and why: smelling, tasting, hearing, seeing, or feeling?**
- **Which of your senses is best at noticing the differences between things? Give us an example!**
- **When do you think being different is a good thing? When do you think it's a bad thing?**
- **In what ways do you think Jesus is a lot like you and me? How is He different from everyone else?**
- **Why do you think John and Peter wanted to make it clear that Jesus is God?**
- **Read Hebrews 13:8. Who is Jesus to you? Share why you chose the words you did.**
- **How has knowing Jesus changed your life so far?**
- **On a scale of 1-5, how hard is it for you to believe Jesus is everything He's said to be?**
- **What questions do you still have about what Jesus is like?**
- **If there is no one like Jesus, what are you going to do about it?**

# WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers

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Jesus is distinct.

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- **Read Hebrews 13:8. Who is Jesus to you? Share why you chose the words you did.**
- **If there is no one like Jesus, what are you going to do about it?**

## WEEK 1 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus is distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:1-18; I Corinthians 8:5-6;  
Hebrews 13:8

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

#### ACTIVITY | Distinct Sounds

- Welcome to our brand new series, *Distinct*, where we'll be looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things – like sounds.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this new spin on Musical Chairs, you'll need some chairs, music, and sound effects. To play, bring a few students to the front or play with your whole group if you can. Make sure you have one more player than you have chairs. Like you would in a typical game of Musical Chairs, have students walk around while music is playing, but instead of simply having them sit when the music stops, give them a few sound effects with different actions associated with them. Call the players out if they fail to (or are the last to) pair the right action with the sound effect, like . . .*
  - **COWBELL:** *Sit on a chair.*
  - **DUCK CALL:** *Sit on the floor.*
  - **BULLHORN:** *Keep walking.*

#### POLL | Distinct Senses

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have your students respond to the following poll by raising their hands or responding out loud if they can relate.*
- Some of you detail-oriented people are better than others at noticing the distinctions between things a little more quickly than others, but we're all capable of identifying things that are different, unique, or don't belong. **Does this sound like you? Maybe you . . .**

- Can identify your favorite songs from one-second audio clips.
- Are great at that Spot the Difference game where you compare two pictures that are almost the same.
- Always notice the distinct smells of the rooms you walk into – and you always let people know when they smell weird.
- Are really particular about textures, so when you find the perfect t-shirt or pair of socks, you never go back.
- Are a macaroni and cheese connoisseur. You’ve tasted them all and know exactly which brand is best.
- The official definition of “distinct” is when something is “recognizably different” or “distinguishable by the senses.” We use our senses (and brains) to determine when something is a little different from everything else.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
  - **Which sense is your favorite and why: smelling, tasting, hearing, seeing, or feeling?**
  - **Which of your senses is best at noticing the differences between things? Give us an example!**
  - **When do you think being different is a good thing? When do you think it’s a bad thing?**

## QUESTION | “Who is Jesus to you?”

- For the next few weeks, we’re going to be talking about some of the things that make you and me “distinct.” But before we talk about how you and I are uniquely created, I want to talk about the Person who created us that way.
- Many people think Jesus was simply a good man who lived, died, and that’s it. Some think He taught and did some great things. Some don’t believe He existed at all. But others believe Jesus not only existed, but He was distinct from any person who has ever lived.
- **So who is Jesus to you?** Not just what you’ve heard from your family or at church. What do you think?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- There were a lot of unique things about Jesus, but the most distinct thing about Him is this: He claims to be God.
  - He forgave sins only God could forgive.
  - He claimed to be the Son of God.
  - He performed miracles.
  - He said He was the Savior God had promised.
- So is it true? Is Jesus fully God and fully human like the Bible says? And if He is, what difference does it make for us and for the world?

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

**STORY | Talk about a time you realized Jesus was distinct.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when you were struck by the way Jesus was different from anyone else. This could be the first time you realized Jesus was God, or a time an aspect of Jesus' character stood out to you or transformed your faith.*
- There's a lot about Jesus that's distinct, but knowing Jesus isn't about learning facts about Jesus. It's about knowing Him. The things that make Jesus who He is aren't just interesting facts. They actually have the power to change us.

**REFLECTION | Jesus is . . . (Part 1)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 1 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.*
- As we talk today, I want to invite you to write down who Jesus is to you. It can be one word or lots of words. You might think of more words to describe Jesus as we read, talk, or discuss. As you do, write down anything that sticks out to you.
- By the time we're done, none of our pages will look the same and that's okay, because we've all encountered Jesus in different ways.

**SCRIPTURE | John 1:1-18**

- One person who encountered Jesus in a distinct way was John, was one of the earliest followers of Jesus. John hung out with Jesus, saw what Jesus did, heard what Jesus said, and was one of Jesus' closest friends.
  - The Gospel of John is a book in the Bible attributed to John. In it, he says his primary reason for writing the book of John was so that everyone who reads it later (that's us!) would believe Jesus is who He said He is.
  - There were other people who saw the things Jesus did and heard the things Jesus said – that's why we have four similar books in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). But there was only one John. The book of John captures his unique perspective on Jesus.
  - Let's look at the very beginning of John's writings. It's his introduction to the whole story of Jesus, so you know he's going to put some of the most important ideas first. What does John want us to know about who Jesus is? Let's find out!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 1:1-18.*
- This first statement alone is distinct from any other description of Jesus in Scripture. Jesus as described as "the Word." In Greek, the word "word" is *logos*, which means "divine reason."
  - "Divine," means, "God, being like God, or having God-like powers."
  - "Reason" means, "having the ability to think, make decisions, and form thoughts."
  - So "divine reason" means Jesus was "one with the ability to think and act like God."

- John is making it pretty clear how he views Jesus, isn't he? From the get-go, he makes sure his readers know Jesus is God!
  - He wasn't just a normal man.
  - He wasn't just a good teacher.
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### IMAGE | The Trinity

- Jesus equals God. So does God equal Jesus? Well . . . yes? And no. This is a difficult concept to grasp, let alone explain, so let's see what we can do.
  - **JESUS EQUALS GOD.** How is that possible? Well, by human standards, it's not. But Jesus isn't just human, and that's the point. Jesus is fully human and fully God at the exact same time.
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- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the image provided in your Week 1 folder as you teach.
- It's okay if you can't wrap your brain around this. We humans have been trying to do it for ages. It's difficult to explain because God is so much bigger than our minds and imaginations.

### SCRIPTURE | John 1:3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Re-read John 1:3.
- Jesus is God, but not only that — Jesus was there in the very beginning of all creation, when only God existed! Jesus is God and Jesus is also our Creator! Through Him, everything was made that we can see and touch.
  - Yes, Jesus was born just like you and me, but Jesus also existed before He was born.
  - How? Well, God kind of invented time, so it makes sense that Jesus can exist eternally outside of time. He always has existed and will always exist, with no beginning and no end. Mind . . . blown.

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **In what ways do you think Jesus is a lot like you and me? How is He different from everyone else?**
  - ★ **Why do you think John and Peter wanted to make it clear that Jesus is God?**

### SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 8:5-6

- There is no one like Jesus. Other gods, ideas, people, and even objects have been worshiped over time, but there is only One who has stood the test of time.

- Besides John, there's another follower of Jesus named Paul wrote a letter to a local church about who Jesus is. In this letter, he laid out some truth about Jesus and some other "so-called gods."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Corinthians 8:5-6.*
- Paul made it very clear that, even though some people will try and worship fake "gods," there is only one God who is different from them all — Jesus.
  - Paul wrote letters like this one to teach and help early followers of Jesus understand all of the new ideas and thoughts that were circulating about Jesus' identity.
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**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**OBJECT LESSON | Charging Cables**

- Because Jesus is distinct from anyone else, He has the distinct ability to change our lives in distinct ways.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show students a variety of phone charging cables, like an [Apple charger](#) and an [Android charger](#), as well as any other charging cables you have laying around. Just make sure one of them is actually compatible with your phone. As you teach, attempt to plug the cables into your phone until you find the one that fits.*
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  - The way we see others changes.
  - The way we see our lives changes.
  - The way we get through our lives changes.
- We were created by Jesus to know Jesus. Our distinct Creator created us distinctly and with a distinct purpose — to know Him.

## MUSIC | “Forever Reign” (Hillsong United)

- We began our time together today by using our ears to identify some distinct sounds. Let’s use that same sense of hearing to identify some of the distinct characteristics of who Jesus is. While we’re singing, you might want to . . .
  - Add a few more words to that page of reflections.
  - Ask this question: “If this is true about Jesus, what should I do about it?”
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## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **Read Hebrews 13:8. Who is Jesus to you? Share why you chose the words you did.**
  - ★ **How has knowing Jesus changed your life so far?**

## REFLECTION | Jesus is . . . (Part 2)

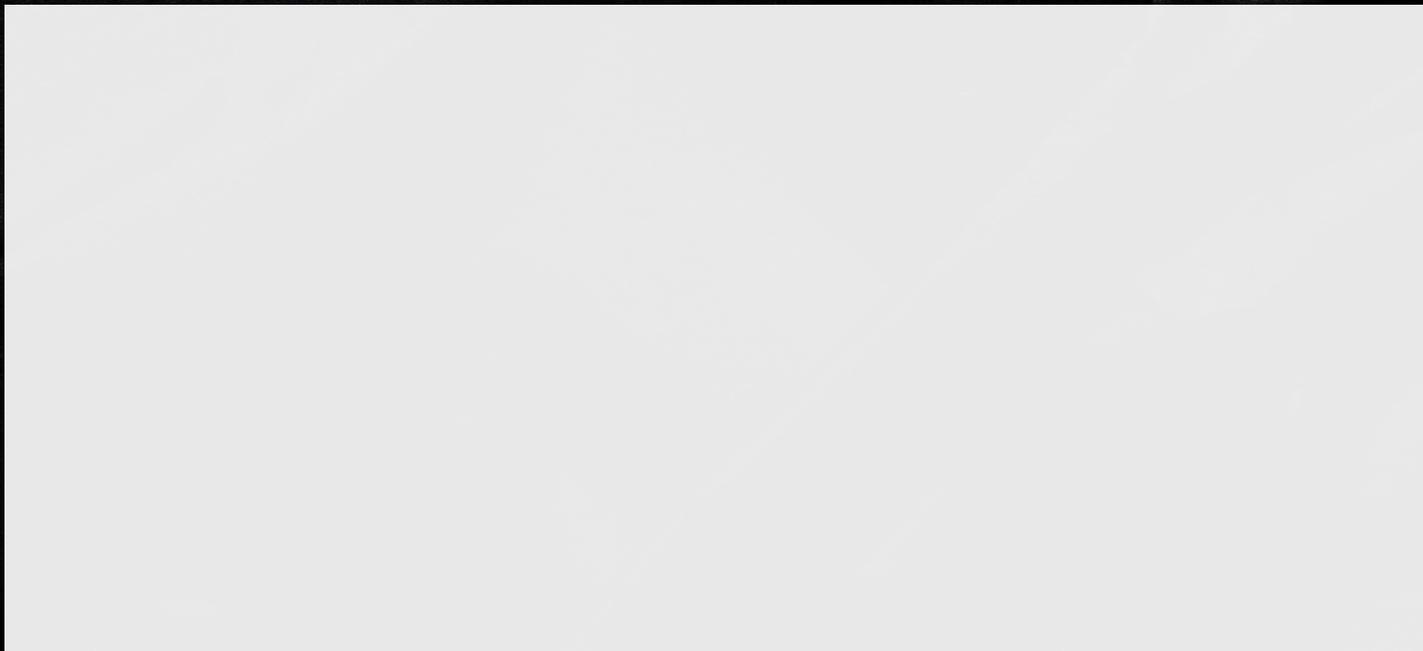
- So we’ve talked about how Jesus is distinct from anyone else who has ever lived, but what do we do about this claim? We can . . .  
Be honest about any doubts we may have about who Jesus says He is.  
Ask God for help trusting Jesus is who He says He is.  
Choose to receive, believe, and trust that Jesus is everything He says He is and more.  
Let Jesus change us from the inside out.
- So if Jesus is God, what do you need to do about it? What’s your next step? Do you need to be honest about your doubts? Ask for help? Choose to trust? Let Jesus change you or your relationship with God?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have students return to their handout and find a space to write down one action step they need to take.*
- **Who is Jesus to you? And what are you going to do about it?**
  - If you don’t already know Jesus or you’ve never really made a decision to trust Him before, maybe today is the day you start. Jesus said He came to save us, and His salvation is kind of like receiving a gift you didn’t ask for or expect. The gift is undeserved, but it’s yours anyway. We didn’t earn God’s love through Jesus, but we have it — just because.
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- And if you're following Jesus and have a faith that's growing, that's great! Maybe your next step can be to reflect on what makes Jesus distinct to you so you can better share who He is to you. Or maybe you wrote down an observation about who Jesus is, but there's something you could do to respond more intentionally to that truth. If Jesus is a healer, what do you need Him to heal? If He's your friend, how can you spend more time with Him?
- Jesus wasn't just a good man or a good teacher. He was, and still is, so much more than that. As God, He's impossible for us to fully understand. But as a human, He understands us perfectly. Who Jesus is to you is a question only you can answer, but I'll tell you this — there's no one like Him. **Jesus is distinct.**

## DISCUSSION

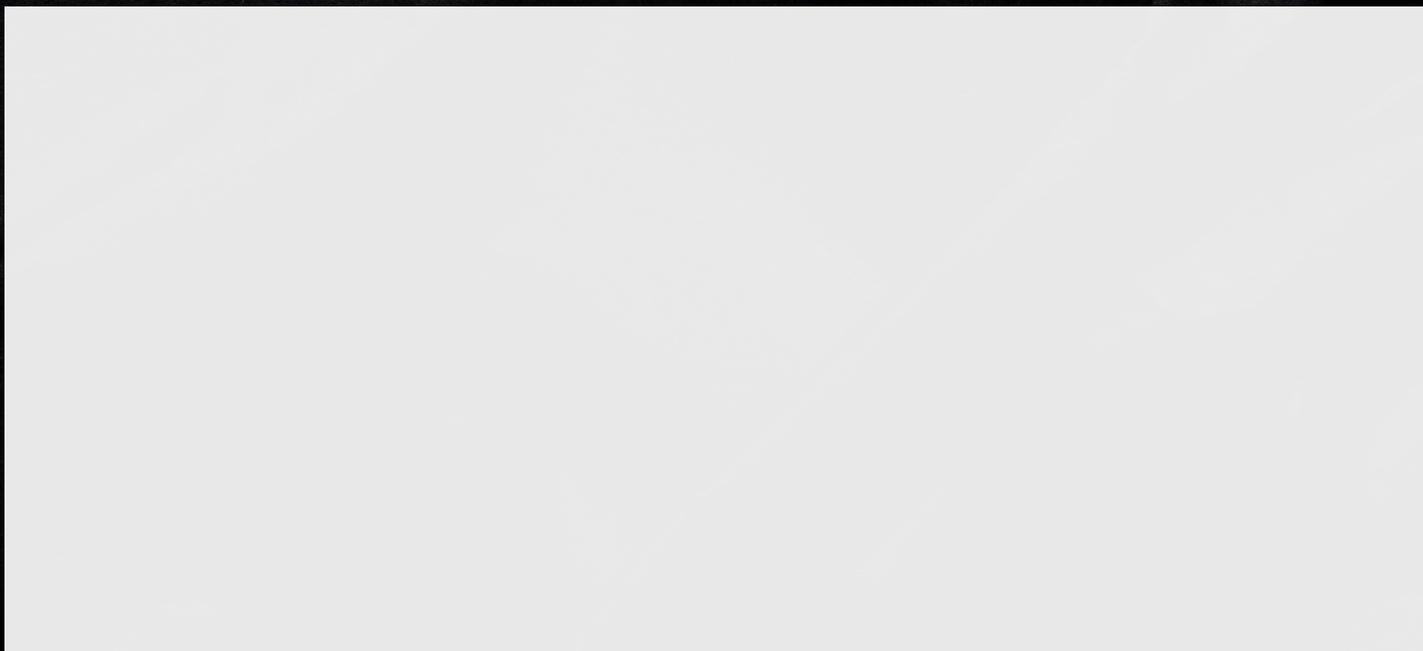
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  - ☆ **What questions do you still have about what Jesus is like?**
  - **If there is no one like Jesus, what are you going to do about it?**

JESUS IS . . .



DISTINCT

JESUS IS . . .



DISTINCT

## WEEK 2 SERMON GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

God made you distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Flavors

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we're looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like flavors.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need [sample-sized](#) cups and several versions of one popular food or drink that is manufactured by lots of brands, like a specific soda flavor (Pepsi, Coke, RC, and generic brands), water (Dasani, Aquafina, tap water, and generic brands), potato chips, ice cream, or frozen pizzas. Whichever item you choose, put one item in the mix that definitely doesn't belong (like an orange soda, or a flavored water, or a slice of fresh pizza from your favorite local pizza place). Then do a taste test with either a few participants or the whole group. Provide samples of each brand and have students try to match the samples with the brands. If you want to recognize a winner, give them what's left of their favorite brand to take home.*
- To some of you, most of these samples tasted basically the same. To others, each of them had unique characteristics that made them different. But I think everyone was able to tell which of these samples was distinct from the rest.

### QUESTION | “Would you rather blend in or stand out?”

- People are kind of like this too, aren't we? Once in a while someone obviously stands out from the crowd, but most people are fairly similar at first glance. Until we really get to know each other, it can be tough to pick up on the distinct flavors of our personalities.

- For some people, blending into a crowd sounds great! But for others, they feel they were born to stand out. So what about you? **Would you rather blend in or stand out? Why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- If you're someone who likes to blend in, you may not have even volunteered to answer that question — and that's okay! We're all unique, and your uniqueness is beautiful . . . even if you don't love it when people notice.
- But if we're honest, this question isn't actually all that easy to answer. In some way, we all want to do both things at the same time: blend in and stand out.
  - We all want to be different and unique to some degree. We want to contribute something to this world that no one else can. We want our lives to mean something.
  - But at the exact same time, we all want to blend in. No matter how loud, weird, or counter-cultural we want to be, we also want to fit in and be accepted — maybe not by everyone, but at least by certain people.
- So how do we balance these things? Is it possible to blend in *and* stand out? Can we be unique *and* be accepted? And if so, how?

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

**STORY | Talk about a time you changed in order to fit in.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you changed something about yourself (or pretended to) to fit in with a person or group. Share why you made that decision, what you wish you would have done instead, and why you regretted it.
- I can't be the only one who's done this, right? Why do you think that is? Why do you think we try so hard to fit in? Maybe we don't want to stick out because we're afraid sticking out will mean . . .
  - Getting unwanted attention.
  - Being labeled as different.
  - Getting mocked or attacked.
  - Feeling vulnerable or ashamed of who we are.
- Of course, it's not bad to want to dress on trend or try out your friends' favorite hobbies. There are times, however, when the pressure to fit in is greater than our desire to be who we are or do what we were made to do.

**SCRIPTURE | John 1:19-23**

- Last week, we saw that Jesus is distinct from any person who has ever lived, because He's God! The fact that Jesus is distinct is really good news for us, but today I want to help you see that . . .
  - You are also distinct from any person who has ever lived.
  - Your distinctness is also good news.
  - Your distinctness could be good news for the whole world too.
- There's a guy in the Bible named John — but not the John we talked about last week. This John, John the Baptist, was . . .

- Jesus' cousin. He was only six months older than Jesus, so they grew up together.
- He was pretty unique — like, the lived-in-the-desert-and-ate-bugs-for-dinner kind of unique.
- And he had a unique mission. He was a messenger sent to prepare people for Jesus' coming. But when John shared the news of Jesus' coming, some people were a little confused.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 1:19-23.*
- When it comes to realizing our own distinctness, John appears to have had it figured out. There are three things we can learn from him as we search to find our own uniqueness.
  - **JOHN KNEW WHO HE WAS NOT.** John owned the fact that he was not the Messiah (which means the anointed or special one). He wasn't Jesus and he didn't need to be. When John heard the rumors people thought he was the coming Messiah, it would have been easy to say, "Yeah, that's me! Everyone come bow down and worship me!" But John didn't need to steal anyone else's identity in order to have meaning or purpose.
  - **JOHN KNEW WHO HE WAS.** He knew God had created him with a distinct purpose — a purpose he and he alone could fulfill. So John was very clear about who he was. He said it for all to hear. He was the guy who was going to tell everyone that Jesus was on the way, and he was confident in that identity. (And no, he wasn't going to apologize for eating bugs either.)
  - **JOHN KNEW HOW HE FIT INTO GOD'S PLAN.** That doesn't mean John knew every detail of his future or waited for God to tell him exactly what to do every five minutes. It just means he understood the big picture of God's big plan.
    - John didn't decide what made him unique and distinct — he looked at how God had made and equipped him.
    - He didn't decide on his role either. He looked at what Scripture said. It contained prophecy that proclaimed John's purpose long before he was ever born. He quoted these parts of the Bible often to let people know he was part of God's plan — he was the messenger that had been promised.

### SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 43:1-7

- John's life and purpose was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. During difficult days in the history of God's people, prophets were sent by God to speak what God wanted people to hear in their times of need.
  - John would have known the words of Isaiah well, since Isaiah predicted John's whole existence. But that's not the only message Isaiah shared with us.
  - Sometimes what the prophets said was hard to hear, but sometimes it was comforting and encouraging. We're about to read some of those comforting words Isaiah shared with the people of God.
- As we read this passage, focus on the language Isaiah uses to talk about God's people.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Isaiah 43:1-7.*

- These words were written specifically to the nation of Israel, God’s chosen people. But the way God loves Israel in this passage is the same way God loves you.
- God, the Creator of the whole universe, who made the stars, planets, and galaxies, the one who made all living things, plants and animals, who created every single person who has lives, is living, and will live – that same God . . .
  - Created and formed you.
  - Is with you.
  - Cares for you.
  - Makes sacrifices for you.
  - Calls you a son or daughter.
- If you’ve ever felt the pressure to change or hide who you are, listen closely to what God says about you. You are beautifully and wonderfully made. You’re deeply loved by your Creator. Just like John the Baptist realized about himself, you weren’t designed to be just like everyone else. **God made you distinct.**

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

**STORY | Talk about a time you discovered one way God made you distinct.**

- When we read the stories of people like John the Baptist, we might find it hard to relate. After all, he’s a guy who had it all figured out, while we’re struggling with insecurity, self-doubt, and confusion about who we are.
  - But realize we don’t have John’s full story – just bits and pieces. We may not know about the struggles he experienced while figuring out who he was and what God had called him to do, but I’m sure they existed.
  - There isn’t a person alive who hasn’t struggled to figure out their own identity in some way. That’s part of everyone’s story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you discovered one way God made you distinct after a period of struggle. Share what difficulties you faced in the process and how God ultimately helped you discover something distinct about who you were created to be. You might talk about struggling to identify a gift or talent, or experiencing a loss of confidence or identity, or accepting something unique about yourself that you previously tried to hide.*

**YOUR DISTINCT JOURNEY**

- The journey to finding who God created us to be isn’t always easy, but most journeys are like that. Your journey toward finding out who God created you to be will take an entire lifetime because who you are is always changing in some way – especially at your age.
- As you continue on this journey of discovering your distinctness, follow John’s example.
  - **DISCOVER WHO YOU’RE NOT.** Just like John, you don’t need to steal anyone else’s identity in order to have meaning or purpose. You don’t have to be just like anyone else.

- **DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE.** Like John, when you find the things that make you distinct, celebrate them! Share them! Be confident in them! The things that make you unique were given to you by your Creator and they're good.
- **DISCOVER HOW YOU FIT INTO GOD'S PLAN.** Like John, you'll never know every detail of your future, so stop waiting for God to tell you exactly what to do every five minutes. Instead, look for the big picture of God's plan for you. What mission has God called you to do? How has God told you to live? What do you care about? And how do all of those things fit together?
- The Bible might not tell you which elective to sign up for this semester, or whether you should play soccer or lacrosse, or the name of the person you're going to marry. But it does tell you this:
  - You are created and formed by God.
  - Your uniquenesses were created for a purpose.
  - You are loved by God.
  - God is with you.
- When you really believe those things, your confidence in who God made you to be will grow.

## REFLECTION | Gratitude List

- So what if you took some time this week to focus on the ways God has made you distinct — even the unique things about yourself that you're not sure you like? What if you actually made a list? Then, what if you thanked God for those things — all of them?
  - **PHYSICAL:** They could be physical traits, like your specific hair type, or that you're ridiculously tall, or that you use a wheelchair to get around.
  - **CHARACTER:** They could be character traits, like how you find it easy to be patient with people, or you're a natural leader, or you tend to give your friends good advice.
  - **SKILLS:** They could be talents or skills, like your love of writing poetry, or interest in science, or ability to make a successful YouTube channel.
  - **EXPERIENCES:** They could even be unique experiences that have shaped you, like the kind of family you've grown up in, or that difficult thing you survived, or an awesome opportunity you've had.
- All of these things shape who we are. Some are things we were born with. Others are things that developed over time. But all of them are important parts of who you are (and who you're not).
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Play some music quietly while students fill these out with a friend, a small group, or on their own.*
- But don't let this discovery process end here! Talk to some trusted friends and adults who . . .
  - Know you well.
  - Can point out the distinct things about you that you may have missed.
  - Speak truth when you begin to believe the lie that your distinctness isn't important, beautiful, or lovable.
- Sometimes we all lose sight of the ways God has made us unique — or maybe we never took the time to identify what makes us unique in the first place. Instead of finding peace and purpose in the distinct ways we're designed, we feel pressure to conform, hide, or change who we are. This week, if those feelings start to creep in, let me remind you what God says about you.

- You are beautifully and wonderfully made.
- You're deeply loved by your Creator.
- You're on a journey to learn more about who God made you to be.
- And you weren't designed to be just like everyone else. **God made you distinct.**

## RESPONSE | The Distinct Challenge

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In the Discipleship section of your downloads, we've given you an activity called The Distinct Challenge. This workbook is meant to give students an opportunity (on their own, with a small group, or with a friend or mentor) to learn more about who they are and how their identity is currently forming. If you're using it, this week is a great time to introduce this challenge!*

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

God made you distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14

- **What's the weirdest food you really like?**
- **What's something weird about you that you really like?**
- **Would you rather blend in, stand out, or a little bit of both? Why?**
- **Have you ever changed or hidden who you are to fit in? What happened and what did you learn from it?**
- **What's one thing about you that often makes you feel different from other people?**
- **Why do you think John the Baptist was so confident in his identity? How do you think we can get some of his confidence?**
- **How do you think a person figures out who they are (and who they aren't)?**
- **How long do you think it takes to figure out who you are? How close do you think you are?**
- **Read Psalm 139:13-14. What are some of the ways God has made you distinct?**
- **This week, what's one way you can show you're thankful for the unique way God made you?**

## ACTIVITY

Make a plan to do The Distinct Challenge together! And remind everyone to keep their reflection cards or take pictures of them. You'll want to look at them again next week.

# WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

God made you distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14

- **What's the weirdest food you really like?**
- **What's something weird about you that you really like?**
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- **Why do you think John the Baptist was so confident in his identity? How do you think we can get some of his confidence?**
- **Read Psalm 139:13-14. What are some of the ways God has made you distinct?**
- **This week, what's one way you can show you're thankful for the unique way God made you?**

### ACTIVITY

Make a plan to do The Distinct Challenge together! And remind everyone to keep their reflection cards or take pictures of them. You'll want to look at them again next week.

## WEEK 2 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

God made you distinct.

### THE BIBLE

John 1:19-23; Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 139:13-14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Flavors

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we're looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like flavors.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need [sample-sized](#) cups and several versions of one popular food or drink that is manufactured by lots of brands, like a specific soda flavor (Pepsi, Coke, RC, and generic brands), water (Dasani, Aquafina, tap water, and generic brands), potato chips, ice cream, or frozen pizzas. Whichever item you choose, put one item in the mix that definitely doesn't belong (like an orange soda, or a flavored water, or a slice of fresh pizza from your favorite local pizza place). Then do a taste test with either a few participants or the whole group. Provide samples of each brand and have students try to match the samples with the brands. If you want to recognize a winner, give them what's left of their favorite brand to take home.*
- To some of you, most of these samples tasted basically the same. To others, each of them had unique characteristics that made them different. But I think everyone was able to tell which of these samples was distinct from the rest.

### DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*

- **What's the weirdest food you really like?**
- **What's something weird about you that you really like?**
- **Would you rather blend in, stand out, or a little bit of both? Why?**

### QUESTION | "Would you rather blend in or stand out?"

- People are kind of like this too, aren't we? Once in a while someone obviously stands out from the crowd, but most people are fairly similar at first glance. Until we really get to know each other, it can be tough to pick up on the distinct flavors of our personalities.
- For some people, blending into a crowd sounds great! But for others, they feel they were born to stand out. So what about you? **Would you rather blend in or stand out? Why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- If you're someone who likes to blend in, you may not have even volunteered to answer that question — and that's okay! We're all unique, and your uniqueness is beautiful . . . even if you don't love it when people notice.
- But if we're honest, this question isn't actually all that easy to answer. In some way, we all want to do both things at the same time: blend in and stand out.
  - We all want to be different and unique to some degree. We want to contribute something to this world that no one else can. We want our lives to mean something.
  - But at the exact same time, we all want to blend in. No matter how loud, weird, or counter-cultural we want to be, we also want to fit in and be accepted — maybe not by everyone, but at least by certain people.
- So how do we balance these things? Is it possible to blend in *and* stand out? Can we be unique *and* be accepted? And if so, how?

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

### STORY | Talk about a time you changed in order to fit in.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you changed something about yourself (or pretended to) to fit in with a person or group. Share why you made that decision, what you wish you would have done instead, and why you regretted it.
- I can't be the only one who's done this, right? Why do you think that is? Why do you think we try so hard to fit in? Maybe we don't want to stick out because we're afraid sticking out will mean . . .
  - Getting unwanted attention.
  - Being labeled as different.
  - Getting mocked or attacked.
  - Feeling vulnerable or ashamed of who we are.
- Of course, it's not bad to want to dress on trend or try out your friends' favorite hobbies. There are times, however, when the pressure to fit in is greater than our desire to be who we are or do what we were made to do.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - ⊕ **Have you ever changed or hidden who you are to fit in? What happened and what did you learn from it?**
  - ⊕ **What's one thing about you that often makes you feel different from other people?**

## SCRIPTURE | John 1:19-23

- Last week, we saw that Jesus is distinct from any person who has ever lived, because He's God! The fact that Jesus is distinct is really good news for us, but today I want to help you see that . . .
  - You are also distinct from any person who has ever lived.
  - Your distinctness is also good news.
  - Your distinctness could be good news for the whole world too.
- There's a guy in the Bible named John — but not the John we talked about last week. This John, John the Baptist, was . . .
  - Jesus' cousin. He was only six months older than Jesus, so they grew up together.
  - He was pretty unique — like, the lived-in-the-desert-and-ate-bugs-for-dinner kind of unique.
  - And he had a unique mission. He was a messenger sent to prepare people for Jesus' coming. But when John shared the news of Jesus' coming, some people were a little confused.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read John 1:19-23.
- When it comes to realizing our own distinctness, John appears to have had it figured out. There are three things we can learn from him as we search to find our own uniqueness.
  - **JOHN KNEW WHO HE WAS NOT.** John owned the fact that he was not the Messiah (which means the anointed or special one). He wasn't Jesus and he didn't need to be. When John heard the rumors people thought he was the coming Messiah, it would have been easy to say, "Yeah, that's me! Everyone come bow down and worship me!" But John didn't need to steal anyone else's identity in order to have meaning or purpose.
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    - John didn't decide what made him unique and distinct — he looked at how God had made and equipped him.

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## SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 43:1-7

- John's life and purpose was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. During difficult days in the history of God's people, prophets were sent by God to speak what God wanted people to hear in their times of need.
  - John would have known the words of Isaiah well, since Isaiah predicted John's whole existence. But that's not the only message Isaiah shared with us.
  - Sometimes what the prophets said was hard to hear, but sometimes it was comforting and encouraging. We're about to read some of those comforting words Isaiah shared with the people of God.
- As we read this passage, focus on the language Isaiah uses to talk about God's people.
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- God, the Creator of the whole universe, who made the stars, planets, and galaxies, the one who made all living things, plants and animals, who created every single person who has lives, is living, and will live — that same God . . .
  - Created and formed you.
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- If you've ever felt the pressure to change or hide who you are, listen closely to what God says about you. You are beautifully and wonderfully made. You're deeply loved by your Creator. Just like John the Baptist realized about himself, you weren't designed to be just like everyone else. **God made you distinct.**

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

## DISCUSSION

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  - **Why do you think John the Baptist was so confident in his identity? How do you think we can get some of his confidence?**
  - ★ **How do you think a person figures out who they are (and who they aren't)?**

## STORY | Talk about a time you discovered one way God made you distinct.

- When we read the stories of people like John the Baptist, we might find it hard to relate. After all, he's a guy who had it all figured out, while we're struggling with insecurity, self-doubt, and confusion about who we are.
  - But realize we don't have John's full story — just bits and pieces. We may not know about the struggles he experienced while figuring out who he was and what God had called him to do, but I'm sure they existed.
  - There isn't a person alive who hasn't struggled to figure out their own identity in some way. That's part of everyone's story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you discovered one way God made you distinct after a period of struggle. Share what difficulties you faced in the process and how God ultimately helped you discover something distinct about who you were created to be. You might talk about struggling to identify a gift or talent, or experiencing a loss of confidence or identity, or accepting something unique about yourself that you previously tried to hide.*

## YOUR DISTINCT JOURNEY

- The journey to finding who God created us to be isn't always easy, but most journeys are like that. Your journey toward finding out who God created you to be will take an entire lifetime because who you are is always changing in some way — especially at your age.
- As you continue on this journey of discovering your distinctness, follow John's example.
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  - You are loved by God.
  - God is with you.
- When you really believe those things, your confidence in who God made you to be will grow.

## REFLECTION | Gratitude List

- So what if you took some time this week to focus on the ways God has made you distinct — even the unique things about yourself that you’re not sure you like? What if you actually made a list? Then, what if you thanked God for those things — all of them?
  - **PHYSICAL:** They could be physical traits, like your specific hair type, or that you’re ridiculously tall, or that you use a wheelchair to get around.
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- But don’t let this discovery process end here! Talk to some trusted friends and adults who . . .
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  - Speak truth when you begin to believe the lie that your distinctness isn’t important, beautiful, or lovable.
- Sometimes we all lose sight of the ways God has made us unique — or maybe we never took the time to identify what makes us unique in the first place. Instead of finding peace and purpose in the distinct ways we’re designed, we feel pressure to conform, hide, or change who we are. This week, if those feelings start to creep in, let me remind you what God says about you.
  - You are beautifully and wonderfully made.
  - You’re deeply loved by your Creator.
  - You’re on a journey to learn more about who God made you to be.
  - And you weren’t designed to be just like everyone else. **God made you distinct.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **How long do you think it takes to figure out who you are? How close do you think you are?**
  - **Read Psalm 139:13-14. What are some of the ways God has made you distinct?**
  - **This week, what’s one way you can show you’re thankful for the unique way God made you?**

## RESPONSE | The Distinct Challenge

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In the Discipleship section of your downloads, we've given you an activity called The Distinct Challenge. This workbook is meant to give students an opportunity (on their own, with a small group, or with a friend or mentor) to learn more about who they are and how their identity is currently forming. If you're using it, this week is a great time to introduce this challenge!*

I AM...

THANK YOU...

I AM NOT...

DISTINCT

I AM...

THANK YOU...

I AM NOT...

DISTINCT

## WEEK 3 SERMON GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

We can all serve in distinct ways.

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10;  
Proverbs 11:25

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Textures

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we're looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like textures.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need containers that can't be seen through, like [paper bags](#) or boxes, and a variety of foods with different textures (like mashed potatoes, bologna, Jell-O, fried chicken, pudding, a kiwi fruit, dry rice, or ice cream). To play, bring at least two students to the front to compete. Without looking, have them put their hand into the container, touch the food inside, and race to see who can be the first to identify it correctly. Have the same players continue with all of the foods or choose new players for each food.*
- To some of us, food is basically all the same. We're not picky. We'll eat whatever! To others, food is a big deal. If it's not the exact right temperature, consistency, color, or blend of flavors, we don't want it.
- It's a good thing there's so much variety in the things that are available for us to eat — not just because it's more fun that way, but because every food serves a unique purpose.
  - Some foods give us essential vitamins and minerals.
  - Other foods give us *other* essential vitamins and minerals.
  - Some foods give us protein, or fat, or fiber, or energy.
- If we didn't have a variety of foods to choose from, we wouldn't just be bored. We'd be malnourished too. All food serves a distinct purpose — and the fact that those purposes are different is actually a good thing!

## QUESTION | “Have you ever been a member of a team?”

- **Have you ever been a member of a team? What was your role?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- Whether you’ve been a part of a sports team, debate team, leadership team, or a cast in a play, you know this is true: on a team, everyone has a distinct role to play. But if we’re honest, sometimes we’re less than thrilled about the roles we’re given.

## STORY | Talk about a time you weren’t happy with a role you were given.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were chosen for a role because of your gifts, but weren’t happy about it. Try to choose a situation where you were well-suited for the role, but didn’t want it. Maybe you were cast for a great part in a play but wanted the lead, or were made the leader of a group project because of your leadership skills but felt self-conscious, or were given an award for a weird thing you were interested in but were afraid people would tease you for it.
- The lie we oftentimes believe is that the qualities, skills, and interests that make us distinct aren’t the best or most important things. Instead of seeing the value of the unique things we already contribute, we instead wish we could contribute something else. Instead of being content with our unique role, we get jealous of the roles other people play.
- But what if I told you . . .
  - The idea that some skills, abilities, or roles are “better” or more “important” than others is a lie?
  - The best role for you to play is the distinct role only you can play?
  - By playing your role to the best of your ability, you could help change the world?

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

## SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 12:1-11

- We’ve been talking about what it means to be “distinct.”
  - First, we talked about how Jesus is distinct because He’s unlike anyone else who has ever lived – He’s God!
  - Second, we talked about how you and I are made distinct too, because we were made by God.
  - Today I want us to think about what we can actually do with our distinctness, because it’s one thing to know we’re unique, but it’s another thing entirely to act like we believe it.
- There’s a guy named Paul who wrote a lot of the New Testament of the Bible, and he has a lot of helpful things to say about this.
  - Paul had a pretty unique faith journey. Before He started following Jesus, he was so opposed to Christianity that he chased down Christians, threw them in prison, and even had some of them murdered.
  - But then he had an encounter with Jesus that changed everything. When he realized Jesus really was God, Paul made it his mission to tell everyone who would listen.
- Paul’s distinct mission from God had two parts:

- To help spread the good news of Jesus throughout the world so God’s family could grow wider. Specifically, Paul’s mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus to people who were not Jewish — and thanks to his background and experience, he was equipped to do that.
- To help the faith communities who were already following Jesus continue to grow deeper. Paul was chosen by God to help lead the early Jesus movement and guide local faith leaders.
- Here’s one of the things Paul wrote to one of those faith communities, the church in Corinth, addressing a few issues that were going on there.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.*
- In Corinth, it seems as though people were struggling with their roles in the church. There were some distinct gifts, talents, and roles that were being elevated as if they were better than others, leading to jealousy, hurt feelings, and an unnecessary desire for people to have certain roles and gifts — even if those roles and gifts weren’t natural fits for them.
  - But Paul knew God had created everyone with certain things that made them distinct, and it was a tragedy for anyone to ignore their God-given distinctiveness because they didn’t think it was good enough.
  - Paul also knew no one person in that community was more important than the other. But because they had elevated certain gifts as more important, they had also begun to elevate certain people as more important. That was a tragedy too.
- So Paul needed the Corinthians to understand this: each of our unique gifts come from God. Even when it seems random, or the gifts we receive aren’t the ones we wish we had, God gave us our gifts on purpose, for a purpose.

## SCRIPTURE | 1 Peter 4:10

- So what is that purpose? To answer that question, let’s look at what the apostle Peter wrote to another church around the same time Paul wrote to the church at Corinth.
  - Peter was one of the very first followers of Jesus. He spent over three years walking side-by-side with him.
  - Peter’s history with Jesus was an experience Paul didn’t have, which means Peter was equipped to lead in ways that were different (but no more or less important) than the ways Paul was equipped to lead.
  - Peter had a history of being pretty outspoken — sometimes even hot-headed. Although this feature of Peter’s personality got him into trouble at times, his passion and enthusiasm were also really important tools for the mission God gave him.
- With that in mind, let’s see what Peter had to say about the distinct gifts God gives to each of us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Peter 4:10.*
- Well, this is pretty to-the-point, right? Peter reminds us the gifts God gives us aren’t just for fun or to build up our egos. They’re not trading cards we collect and keep hidden away in a box. They’re meant to be used . . . to serve God and others!
  - Peter and Paul had very different backgrounds, temperaments, experiences, and areas of expertise. Their differences even resulted in a huge fight when they had a disagreement over each other’s leadership.

- But Paul and Peter were both used by God in significant ways to spread the good news of Jesus all over the world — not despite their distinct gifts, but because of them.
- Peter and Paul understood that our gifts are all meaningful because they can all be used to help love others and make a difference in the world. Because of our distinct gifts, **we can all serve in distinct ways.**

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

#### STORY | Share the stories of people serving uniquely in your community.

- So where do we go from here? We're not Peter or Paul, and we might not have any of those gifts Paul was describing in his letter to the Corinthians. So how can we use our gifts to serve those around us?
  - Let's hear from a few folks who have already figured out some of the ways God made them distinct and then partnered with God to serve others with their gifts.
  - As they share, don't think of this as a multiple choice test where you can only choose from a predetermined list of ways you can use your gifts to serve. Instead, think of it as a blank page. With your creativity, combined with God's creativity, your options are endless.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Find a handful of volunteers or church members who have a unique talent or skill and are using it to serve others. Interview them briefly or make a prerecorded video highlighting their stories. You might interview a person who knits hats for people undergoing chemotherapy, or distributes supplies to people experiencing homelessness, or uses their TikTok account to advocate and raise awareness for an important cause.*
- So you see, it's not just people like Peter and Paul who can figure this out. It's people like you and me. It's people within our own community!
  - We can all make a distinct difference in the world . . .
  - Because we can all serve in distinct ways . . .
  - Because we were all created by God with distinct gifts.

#### REFLECTION | A Map to Serving Distinctly

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 3 folder on screen. Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen and encourage students to write as you walk through each stop on the map.*
- If you're still wondering what this might look like in your life, I've got a map that might help us get there. If you want to serve others in distinct ways . . .
  - 1. FEEL IT:** Start by thinking about your passions. You have a lot of things that are unique about you, after all — so where should you start? Ask the question, "What makes me excited and brings me tons of energy?" That's usually a good place to start. Write it down. And if you're not sure how to answer . . .
    - Ask God! If you were created on purpose and for a purpose, then try asking your Creator to point you in the right direction. You may not hear an audible voice, but oftentimes, God brings ideas to us.

- Ask someone who loves you! I know your friends and family members would love to have a conversation about what they see as your gifts, talents, and ways God has made you distinct. Sometime this week, ask them what they see!
2. **OWN IT:** You have to believe distinct things can happen through your distinct relationship with Jesus and the distinct gifts He has given you. So what do you need to own right now? Do you need to believe your gifts are valuable? That God can use you? That you matter? Write it down.
  3. **TRY IT:** If you want to use your gifts to serve others, the solution is often easier than we think it is. You have to try something. Write down one thing (or ten things) you want to try.
    - The more things you try, the closer you'll get to finding out how your gifts and passions are best used. If you think you have a passion or interest God might want to use, then try it! Get involved. Learn a new skill. Sign up to volunteer somewhere. Just try it.
    - After you try something, you might realize it's not for you. That's okay! Try something else! Did that volunteer role not work out for you? No problem – try a new one. Did you find out you're not actually as good at playing guitar as you thought you would be? Don't worry – if it's not working for you, move on to the next thing. Did that cause you were passionate about recently take a back seat to a new cause you're even more passionate about? Okay! Head that direction instead.
  4. **IMPROVE IT:** When you've found something that seems like it's working, dig in deeper and get even better at it. Whether it's a cause you believe in, a ministry or organization you love, a group of people you care about, or a skill you want to master, do everything you can to grow in that area. Write down a few things you could do, like . . .
    - Learn everything you can about the thing you care about.
    - Get better at the skills that help you contribute.
    - Surround yourself with people who can help you grow in that area.
  5. **LIVE IT:** Sometimes we can get so caught up in preparing to do something that we never actually do it. We hide behind our plans and "visions" for our lives, but never get around to living them out. Don't get stuck in that trap. Write down something specific you want to do to serve others with your distinct gifts. Then go do it.
    - And don't let these ideas never make it past the paper you wrote them on. Share them with the people in this room! Encourage each other! Brainstorm together! Helping each other make these plans a reality might be one of the ways we serve each other.
    - When we respect one another's differences and learn from each person's unique giftings, we become the Church we were meant to be. Remember, we were all made distinct by our Creator, which is why **we can all serve in distinct ways.**

# WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

We can all serve in distinct ways.

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10;  
Proverbs 11:25

- **What's the weirdest talent you have?**
- **If you could immediately improve any one of your talents right now, what would you pick and why?**
- **Like the Corinthians, have you ever been jealous of someone else's gifts or arrogant about your own? Tell us about it.**
- **What do you think Paul meant when he said "spiritual gifts"?**
- **What are some ways you've seen people use their unique passions and talents to serve others?**
- **Read Proverbs 11:25. When we use our gifts to serve others, what do you think we get in return?**
- **How do you think a person figures out what they're passionate about? Do you think your passions can change?**
- **What are some of your passions right now? What are some creative ways you could use your passions to serve others?**
- **Do you think there's one right way to combine your passions with serving others? Why or why not?**
- **This week, what's your next step on your journey toward serving others in distinct ways?**

### ACTIVITY

Compare your reflection cards from last week with this week's map. Talk about them together and ask, "**What are some ways you could turn your uniquenesses into to creative ways to serve?**" Work together to help each other brainstorm!

# WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

We can all serve in distinct ways.

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10;  
Proverbs 11:25

- **What's the weirdest talent you have?**
- **If you could immediately improve any one of your talents right now, what would you pick and why?**
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- **Read Proverbs 11:25. When we use our gifts to serve others, what do you think we get in return?**
- **What are some of your passions right now? What are some creative ways you could use your passions to serve others?**
- **This week, what's your next step on your journey toward serving others in distinct ways?**

### ACTIVITY

Compare your reflection cards from last week with this week's map. Talk about them together and ask, "**What are some ways you could turn your uniquenesses into to creative ways to serve?**" Work together to help each other brainstorm!

## WEEK 3 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

We can all serve in distinct ways.

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:1-11; I Peter 4:10;  
Proverbs 11:25

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Textures

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we're looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like textures.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need containers that can't be seen through, like [paper bags](#) or boxes, and a variety of foods with different textures (like mashed potatoes, bologna, Jell-O, fried chicken, pudding, a kiwi fruit, dry rice, or ice cream). To play, bring at least two students to the front to compete. Without looking, have them put their hand into the container, touch the food inside, and race to see who can be the first to identify it correctly. Have the same players continue with all of the foods or choose new players for each food.*
- To some of us, food is basically all the same. We're not picky. We'll eat whatever! To others, food is a big deal. If it's not the exact right temperature, consistency, color, or blend of flavors, we don't want it.
- It's a good thing there's so much variety in the things that are available for us to eat — not just because it's more fun that way, but because every food serves a unique purpose.
  - Some foods give us essential vitamins and minerals.
  - Other foods give us *other* essential vitamins and minerals.
  - Some foods give us protein, or fat, or fiber, or energy.
- If we didn't have a variety of foods to choose from, we wouldn't just be bored. We'd be malnourished too. All food serves a distinct purpose — and the fact that those purposes are different is actually a good thing!

## QUESTION | “Have you ever been a member of a team?”

- **Have you ever been a member of a team? What was your role?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.
- Whether you’ve been a part of a sports team, debate team, leadership team, or a cast in a play, you know this is true: on a team, everyone has a distinct role to play. But if we’re honest, sometimes we’re less than thrilled about the roles we’re given.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you’re working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What’s the weirdest talent you have?**
  - **If you could immediately improve any one of your talents right now, what would you pick and why?**

## STORY | Talk about a time you weren’t happy with a role you were given.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were chosen for a role because of your gifts, but weren’t happy about it. Try to choose a situation where you were well-suited for the role, but didn’t want it. Maybe you were cast for a great part in a play but wanted the lead, or were made the leader of a group project because of your leadership skills but felt self-conscious, or were given an award for a weird thing you were interested in but were afraid people would tease you for it.
- The lie we oftentimes believe is that the qualities, skills, and interests that make us distinct aren’t the best or most important things. Instead of seeing the value of the unique things we already contribute, we instead wish we could contribute something else. Instead of being content with our unique role, we get jealous of the roles other people play.
- But what if I told you . . .
  - The idea that some skills, abilities, or roles are “better” or more “important” than others is a lie?
  - The best role for you to play is the distinct role only you can play?
  - By playing your role to the best of your ability, you could help change the world?

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

## SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 12:1-11

- We’ve been talking about what it means to be “distinct.”
  - First, we talked about how Jesus is distinct because He’s unlike anyone else who has ever lived — He’s God!
  - Second, we talked about how you and I are made distinct too, because we were made by God.

- Today I want us to think about what we can actually do with our distinctness, because it's one thing to know we're unique, but it's another thing entirely to act like we believe it.
- There's a guy named Paul who wrote a lot of the New Testament of the Bible, and he has a lot of helpful things to say about this.
  - Paul had a pretty unique faith journey. Before He started following Jesus, he was so opposed to Christianity that he chased down Christians, threw them in prison, and even had some of them murdered.
  - But then he had an encounter with Jesus that changed everything. When he realized Jesus really was God, Paul made it his mission to tell everyone who would listen.
- Paul's distinct mission from God had two parts:
  - To help spread the good news of Jesus throughout the world so God's family could grow wider. Specifically, Paul's mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus to people who were not Jewish — and thanks to his background and experience, he was equipped to do that.
  - To help the faith communities who were already following Jesus continue to grow deeper. Paul was chosen by God to help lead the early Jesus movement and guide local faith leaders.
- Here's one of the things Paul wrote to one of those faith communities, the church in Corinth, addressing a few issues that were going on there.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.*
- In Corinth, it seems as though people were struggling with their roles in the church. There were some distinct gifts, talents, and roles that were being elevated as if they were better than others, leading to jealousy, hurt feelings, and an unnecessary desire for people to have certain roles and gifts — even if those roles and gifts weren't natural fits for them.
  - But Paul knew God had created everyone with certain things that made them distinct, and it was a tragedy for anyone to ignore their God-given distinctiveness because they didn't think it was good enough.
  - Paul also knew no one person in that community was more important than the other. But because they had elevated certain gifts as more important, they had also begun to elevate certain people as more important. That was a tragedy too.
- So Paul needed the Corinthians to understand this: each of our unique gifts come from God. Even when it seems random, or the gifts we receive aren't the ones we wish we had, God gave us our gifts on purpose, for a purpose.

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **Like the Corinthians, have you ever been jealous of someone else's gifts or arrogant about your own? Tell us about it.**
  - ☆ **What do you think Paul meant when he said "spiritual gifts"?**

## SCRIPTURE | I Peter 4:10

- So what is that purpose? To answer that question, let's look at what the apostle Peter wrote to another church around the same time Paul wrote to the church at Corinth.
  - Peter was one of the very first followers of Jesus. He spent over three years walking side-by-side with him.
  - Peter's history with Jesus was an experience Paul didn't have, which means Peter was equipped to lead in ways that were different (but no more or less important) than the ways Paul was equipped to lead.
  - Peter had a history of being pretty outspoken — sometimes even hot-headed. Although this feature of Peter's personality got him into trouble at times, his passion and enthusiasm were also really important tools for the mission God gave him.
- With that in mind, let's see what Peter had to say about the distinct gifts God gives to each of us.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I Peter 4:10.*
- Well, this is pretty to-the-point, right? Peter reminds us the gifts God gives us aren't just for fun or to build up our egos. They're not trading cards we collect and keep hidden away in a box. They're meant to be used . . . to serve God and others!
  - Peter and Paul had very different backgrounds, temperaments, experiences, and areas of expertise. Their differences even resulted in a huge fight when they had a disagreement over each other's leadership.
  - But Paul and Peter were both used by God in significant ways to spread the good news of Jesus all over the world — not despite their distinct gifts, but because of them.
- Peter and Paul understood that our gifts are all meaningful because they can all be used to help love others and make a difference in the world. Because of our distinct gifts, **we can all serve in distinct ways.**

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

### STORY | Share the stories of people serving uniquely in your community.

- So where do we go from here? We're not Peter or Paul, and we might not have any of those gifts Paul was describing in his letter to the Corinthians. So how can we use our gifts to serve those around us?
  - Let's hear from a few folks who have already figured out some of the ways God made them distinct and then partnered with God to serve others with their gifts.
  - As they share, don't think of this as a multiple choice test where you can only choose from a predetermined list of ways you can use your gifts to serve. Instead, think of it as a blank page. With your creativity, combined with God's creativity, your options are endless.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Find a handful of volunteers or church members who have a unique talent or skill and are using it to serve others. Interview them briefly or make a prerecorded video highlighting their stories. You might interview a person who knits hats for people undergoing chemotherapy, or distributes supplies to people experiencing homelessness, or uses their TikTok account to advocate and raise awareness for an important cause.*

- So you see, it's not just people like Peter and Paul who can figure this out. It's people like you and me. It's people within our own community!
  - We can all make a distinct difference in the world . . .
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## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - **What are some ways you've seen people use their unique passions and talents to serve others?**
  - **Read Proverbs 11:25. When we use our gifts to serve others, what do you think we get in return?**

## REFLECTION | A Map to Serving Distinctly

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image provided in your Week 3 folder on screen. Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen and encourage students to write as you walk through each stop on the map.*
- If you're still wondering what this might look like in your life, I've got a map that might help us get there. If you want to serve others in distinct ways . . .
  1. **FEEL IT:** Start by thinking about your passions. You have a lot of things that are unique about you, after all — so where should you start? Ask the question, "What makes me excited and brings me tons of energy?" That's usually a good place to start. Write it down. And if you're not sure how to answer . . .
    - Ask God! If you were created on purpose and for a purpose, then try asking your Creator to point you in the right direction. You may not hear an audible voice, but oftentimes, God brings ideas to us.
    - Ask someone who loves you! I know your friends and family members would love to have a conversation about what they see as your gifts, talents, and ways God has made you distinct. Sometime this week, ask them what they see!
  2. **OWN IT:** You have to believe distinct things can happen through your distinct relationship with Jesus and the distinct gifts He has given you. So what do you need to own right now? Do you need to believe your gifts are valuable? That God can use you? That you matter? Write it down.
  3. **TRY IT:** If you want to use your gifts to serve others, the solution is often easier than we think it is. You have to try something. Write down one thing (or ten things) you want to try.
    - The more things you try, the closer you'll get to finding out how your gifts and passions are best used. If you think you have a passion or interest God might want to use, then try it! Get involved. Learn a new skill. Sign up to volunteer somewhere. Just try it.

- After you try something, you might realize it's not for you. That's okay! Try something else! Did that volunteer role not work out for you? No problem — try a new one. Did you find out you're not actually as good at playing guitar as you thought you would be? Don't worry — if it's not working for you, move on to the next thing. Did that cause you were passionate about recently take a back seat to a new cause you're even more passionate about? Okay! Head that direction instead.

**4. IMPROVE IT:** When you've found something that seems like it's working, dig in deeper and get even better at it. Whether it's a cause you believe in, a ministry or organization you love, a group of people you care about, or a skill you want to master, do everything you can to grow in that area. Write down a few things you could do, like . . .

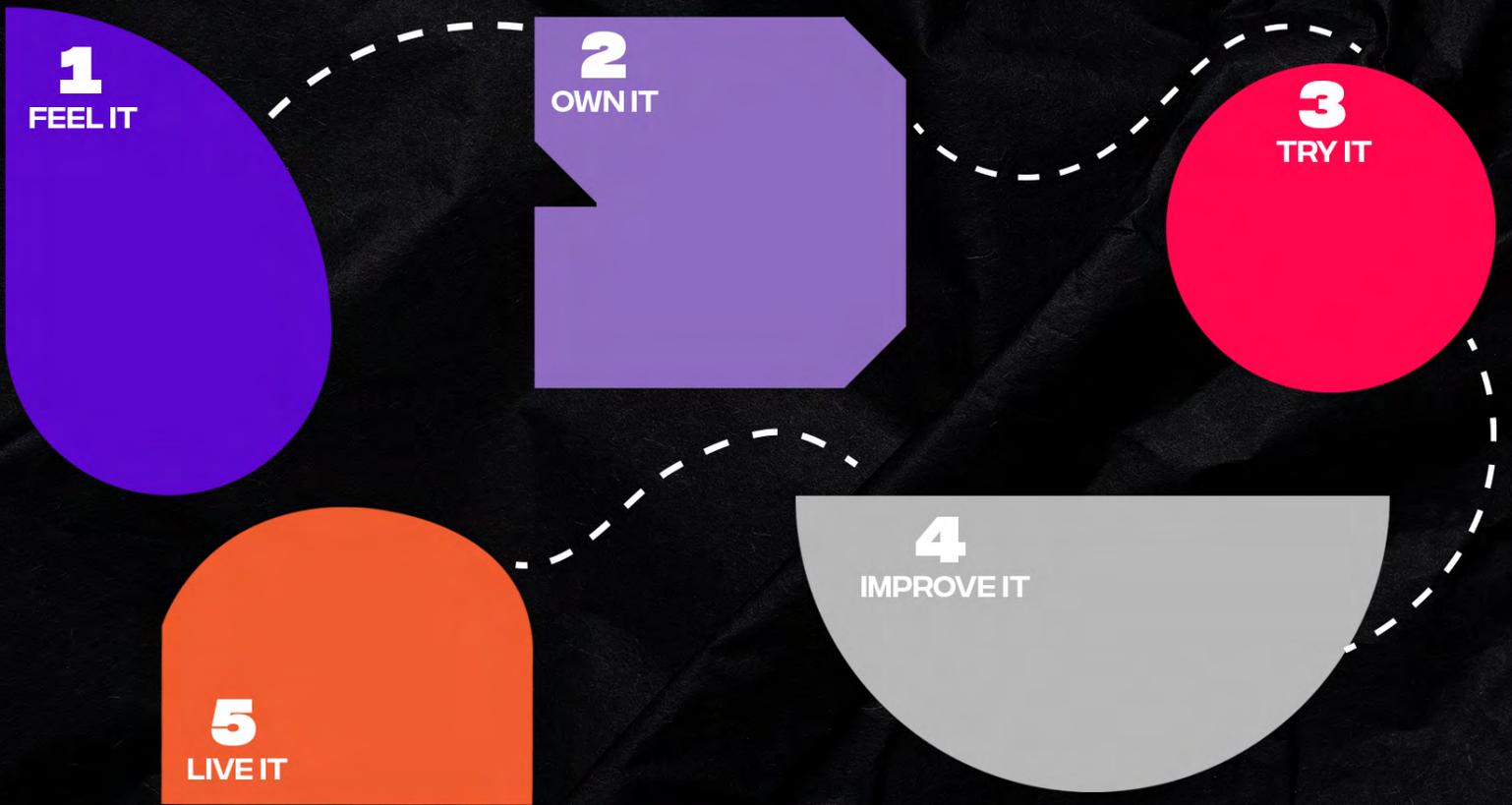
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- Get better at the skills that help you contribute.
- Surround yourself with people who can help you grow in that area.

**5. LIVE IT:** Sometimes we can get so caught up in preparing to do something that we never actually do it. We hide behind our plans and "visions" for our lives, but never get around to living them out. Don't get stuck in that trap. Write down something specific you want to do to serve others with your distinct gifts. Then go do it.

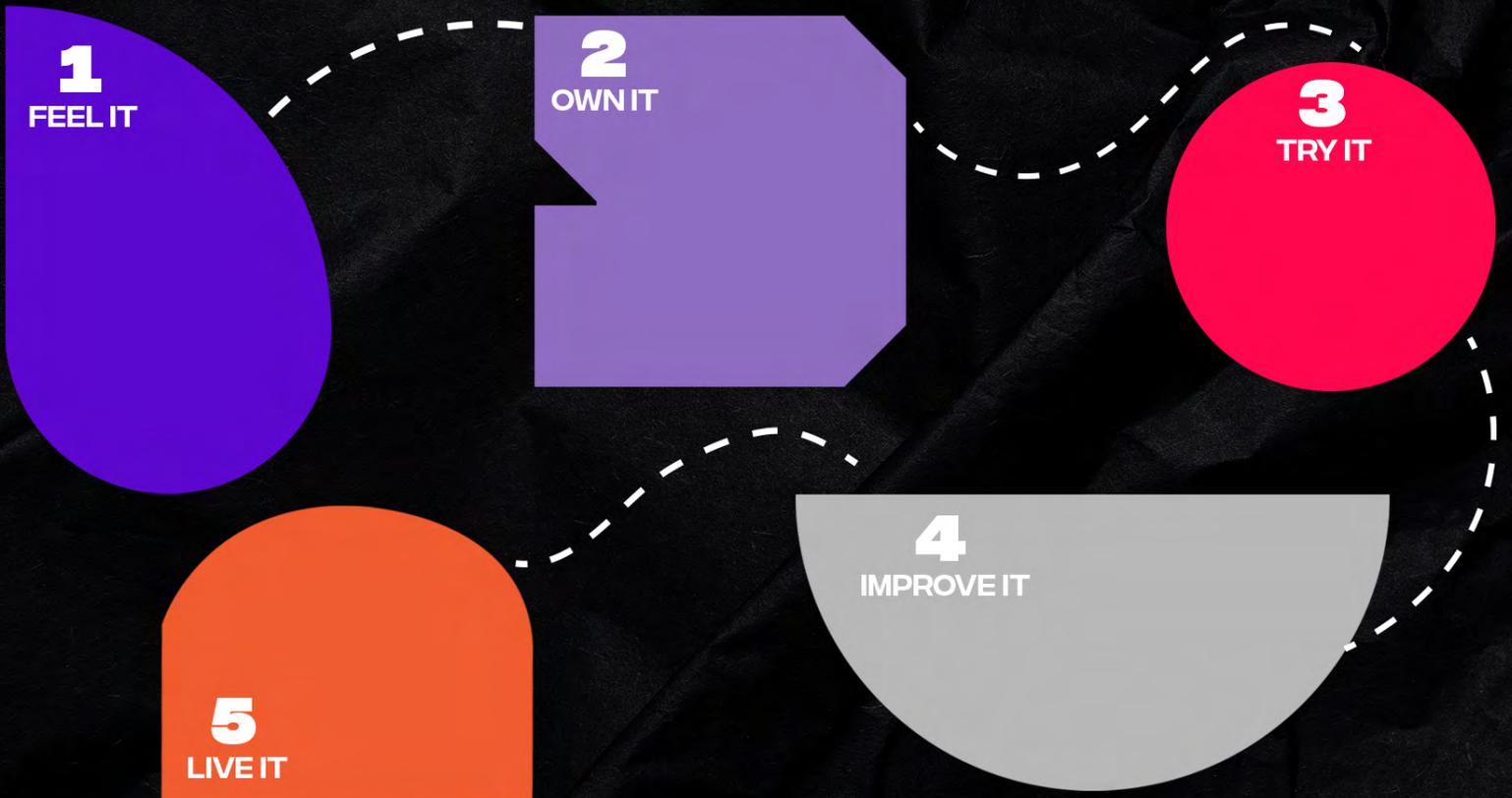
- And don't let these ideas never make it past the paper you wrote them on. Share them with the people in this room! Encourage each other! Brainstorm together! Helping each other make these plans a reality might be one of the ways we serve each other.
- When we respect one another's differences and learn from each person's unique giftings, we become the Church we were meant to be. Remember, we were all made distinct by our Creator, which is why **we can all serve in distinct ways.**

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ☆ **How do you think a person figures out what they're passionate about? Do you think your passions can change?**
  - **What are some of your passions right now? What are some creative ways you could use your passions to serve others?**
  - ☆ **Do you think there's one right way to combine your passions with serving others? Why or why not?**
  - **This week, what's your next step on your journey toward serving others in distinct ways?**



DISTINCT



DISTINCT

## WEEK 4 SERMON GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

We can celebrate our distinctions..

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10;  
Psalm 139:13-14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Sights

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we've been looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like these two images.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, get some or all of your volunteers together to help you create two almost identical photos with whatever props, supplies, and weird objects you have handy. The pictures can be group photos of your team or they can just be photos of weird stuff you find in your storage closet. Either way, take two photos with at least ten differences between them. Then display them side by side on your screen and have your students try to spot the differences. If you want to turn this game into a competition, break your students into teams, tell them how many differences there are, and have them race to identify them all.*
- Every week throughout this series, we've been testing your skills to see how good you are at spotting the differences between things.
  - Sometimes the differences are easy to catch. Sometimes they're hard to find. And sometimes we play this game in real life by comparing ourselves to others. When we do, the differences we spot are usually seen as negatives.
  - We criticize others when they seem a little too "different," and we criticize ourselves when we feel like we're the "different" ones. But what if, instead of criticizing our differences, we learned to celebrate them instead?

## VIDEO | A Clip from a Beatbox Battle

- Is anyone here an incredible beatboxer? Some of you might be, but most people aren't. That's why, when this father and daughter showed off their unique skills on James Corden's show, the audience loved it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:45-1:45) of a father and daughter battling in a beatboxing competition. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Do you hear those celebrations coming from the audience? What if, when we noticed someone with a skill, trait, or quality that was different from ours, that's how we chose to respond?
  - But here's where we face some problems. When those two were first getting into beatboxing, they definitely weren't good enough to appear on a talk show. We might applaud them now for their skill, but I wonder if they faced resistance when they were first getting started. Did anyone tell them they weren't good at it? Or to find a new hobby?
  - Here's another thing to think about. Beatboxing in general is considered pretty cool and interesting. If you're a decent beatboxer, it's not very likely someone is going to tell you beatboxing is weird or laugh at you for liking it. When you have a "distinct" skill that's also cool or trendy, that's great for you!
- But what about when the things that make someone "distinct" are a lot riskier than being weirdly good at beatboxing?
  - What if a person's uniqueness actually makes them the target of people's cruelty?
  - What if, when we spotted differences in the way people talk, look, play a game, laugh at a joke, or interact with others, we didn't react by criticizing or mocking them?
  - What if we could learn to celebrate the things that make us different?

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

## STORY | Talk about a time you were excluded because you were different.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were excluded, mocked, or bullied because you were different. Share how that experience impacted you and how you wish you had been treated instead.*
- For the last few weeks, we've been talking about how great it is to be different, and that's true! But we can't finish this series without also talking about the times when being different is difficult.
  - I don't know if everyone in this room has experienced something like this, but I'm guessing many of us have. It's hard to forget being treated this way because of your differences.
  - Sometimes being excluded because of our differences makes us want to treat other people the same way we were treated. We might not mean to do that, but we do.
- As we wrap up this series today, here's the question I want you to ask yourself: "In my world, who is being hurt or excluded because of their differences and how can we celebrate them instead?"

## SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 12:12-31

- Let's see what Scripture has to say about that.
  - We're picking up where we left off last week, with a passage written by the apostle Paul to the early followers of Jesus in a city called Corinth.
  - If you were here last week, you know that before Paul met Jesus he spent a lot of time hunting down Christians to throw them in prison or have them killed because of their differences in belief.
  - But when Paul met Jesus, everything changed and he started spreading the good news of Jesus and helping lead the early church — sometimes by writing letters of guidance to different faith communities.
- Paul's letter to the Corinthians was one of those letters. In it, Paul helped his fellow Jesus-followers figure out not only how to love God but how to love each other too.
  - In this case, Paul was sending the folks at Corinth a letter of correction because they had been getting some things a little wrong.
  - We don't know all the details of what was going on, but in the section we're about to read, you can tell some people might have had a little bit of a pride problem.
  - It appears some members of this faith community were so impressed with themselves, their gifts, and the things that made them unique that they actually belittled people who weren't like them.
- Here's what Paul said to correct them and get them back on the right track.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I Corinthians 12:12-31.*
- Paul uses the illustration of our bodies to talk about how followers of Jesus (the "Body" of Christ) should function — and in Corinth, things weren't functioning the way they should.
  - The Corinthians were lifting some people higher, and putting some people down, based on the gifts they had and the things they could contribute. They were buying into the culture that some gifts are meant to be celebrated, while others should be ignored.
  - But Paul needed them to see that, in God's kingdom, every person matters and should be celebrated for the unique ways they were created.
- Now, I agree, Paul is using strange language to convey this message. He's doing that on purpose. Obviously an ear can't talk and your foot can't just decide to not be part of your body anymore.
- Paul is making this sound ridiculous because when God's people do this to each other, it is ridiculous! We can't function without each other. Every person in the church community is needed for the whole community to function at its best. No one is more valuable than anyone else because of the gifts they have or what makes them distinct.

## SCRIPTURE | Revelation 7:9-10

- Let's check out another passage. This one is at the very end of the Bible and is meant to give us a glimpse of what heaven could be like. It's a little mysterious and pretty cool.
  - The author of this book, the book of Revelation, was John. He's the same guy who wrote the book of John, but is not John the Baptist who baptized Jesus. I know — so many Johns.

- This John who wrote the book was the same guy who followed Jesus around for over three years and helped start the early church.
- Years after Jesus left earth, God gave John a vision that John then shared with the churches that existed in Western Asia at the time. These were churches that were being persecuted and experiencing all kinds of suffering.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Revelation 7:9-10.*
- Wow. In John's vision of heaven, everyone who showed up to worship God represented a huge diversity of backgrounds, experiences, ethnicities, and more. John saw that in God's kingdom, everyone is welcome.
  - Not just the people who agree about everything.
  - Not just the most powerful people or culture.
  - Not just the good-looking, cool, or influential people.
  - Not just one language, or race, or ethnicity, or culture.
  - Not just people with lots of money, or able bodies, or social media followers.
- It's *every* tribe and *every* tongue. It's *everyone* from *everywhere*! It's unity, but it's not sameness. It's unity and diversity — and both are reasons to celebrate.
- Once we acknowledge what makes us each distinct from one another, *then* we can truly see the beauty within our communities. Just like your body wouldn't work if it was one giant foot, God made each of us with different qualities and abilities. That's why **we can celebrate** (instead of criticize) **our distinctions**.

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

### ACTIVITY | **Spot the Distinctions**

- Every week throughout this series, we've proven we're all pretty good at noticing the distinctions between things like sounds, tastes, textures, or images. In the same way, we're naturally good at spotting certain differences in other people. And that isn't a bad thing!
- The things that make us unique aren't bad, right? So noticing those differences isn't bad either. It's what we do about those differences that matters. When we notice there's something different about someone, we have a choice:
  - We could mock, judge, or criticize them for their differences. Let's be honest — we've all done this before, right?
  - We could try to ignore the thing that makes them different. But why? If the things that make them unique are good, then we shouldn't need to ignore them, right?
  - Or we could notice the thing that makes them different, appreciate it, and celebrate it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have everyone turn their bodies toward the center of the room. Give them five seconds to try and look briefly at everyone else in the room, noticing and appreciating the many differences represented.*
- Imagine if, once we spotted the differences between each other, we focused on actually appreciating and celebrating those differences? That would be a total shift from what normally happens, right?

## REFLECTION | How to Celebrate Our Distinctions

- So how, exactly, can we do this? I have a few ideas. You might want to write them down, along with your own ideas, thoughts, and your questions too. If there's something you're not sure about that you want to talk about, write it down!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handout provided in your Week 4 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.*
- **ADMIT WHEN IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE:** The truth is, sometimes we get uncomfortable with people who are different. Especially if their "distinction" has to do with sensitive topics like race, ethnicity, politics, money, or disabilities.
  - It's okay if you're uncomfortable. It's okay if you feel like one person's differences are a bad thing, while someone else's differences are a good thing. What's not okay is ignoring that feeling and pretending it doesn't exist.
  - Getting outside of our comfort zone is (surprise!) uncomfortable! But if you can step out and get to know people who aren't like you, the borders of your comfort zone will get bigger — and you might make some new friends.
- **LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE'S DISTINCTIONS:** Is there a certain kind of "distinction" that makes you feel uncomfortable?
  - Are you not sure how to talk to someone who comes from a different kind of background, family, culture, or neighborhood than you? Are you unsure of how to interact with someone who has a disability? What about people from different social circles or with interests in things you don't know anything about?
  - When you notice you're uncomfortable with a certain kind of difference, try learning more about it. Sometimes we're scared about things we don't understand, but a little bit of information helps us open up.
  - The more you learn, the more you start to realize so many of our differences aren't "weird" or "not normal." They're just different!
- **CHOOSE TO CELEBRATE PEOPLE'S DISTINCTIONS:** This starts in our mind and hearts, but it can't end there. It has to turn into action too. When you notice someone's distinctions, it means . . .
  - **Spending time together.** You can celebrate someone's distinctions simply by valuing them as a person you want to get to know.
  - **Getting to know them.** You can celebrate their distinctions by actually getting to know them! Find out who they are beyond the thing that makes them distinct . . . but find out who they are because of their distinctions too.
  - **Valuing their perspective.** The things that make them distinct give them distinct perspectives, experiences, and abilities you may not have. So learn from them because they have good stuff to share!
  - **Using your words.** When you want to celebrate someone's distinctions, don't just do it in your head. Do it out loud or in writing! Celebrate people for the things that make them unique, but in ways they would actually want to be celebrated. (That's why getting to know people is so important.)
- So this week . . .

- Who do you typically judge, criticize, or avoid thinking about because their differences make you uncomfortable?
- How could you learn about them, or from them, in order to celebrate them in a way that honors them?
- And how will you celebrate them?
- It's okay that we're not all the same. In fact, it's more than okay. According to Scripture, the fact that we don't all live, think, or look the same is a good thing! We are all welcome in God's presence — distinctions and all.
- There's no one like Jesus, our God and Creator. And since we're made in His image . . .
  - God made us all distinct.
  - Our uniquenesses allow us to serve in distinct ways.
  - And **we can celebrate our distinctions.**

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

We can celebrate our distinctions..

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10;  
Psalm 139:13-14

- **What's the weirdest thing you like (but are kind of embarrassed about)?**
- **What's something weird about you that you're not at all embarrassed about?**
- **When does being different feel like a good thing? When does it feel like a bad thing?**
- **What are some of the differences people tend to judge, criticize, or bully each other for?**
- **What are some examples of differences God created? What are some examples of differences people choose for themselves?**
- **Have you ever believed ignoring someone's differences was the right thing to do? How has your opinion changed or stayed the same?**
- **Read Psalm 139:13-14. How do you think the world would change if we believed God made us all different on purpose?**
- **How is "unity" different from "sameness"? How can God's people be united even when we have differences?**
- **What's one situation where you feel uncomfortable with people who are different than you? Why do you think you feel that way?**
- **This week, what can you do to celebrate someone who is different than you?**

### ACTIVITY

If your group took The Distinct Challenge, share your favorite takeaways, questions, and next steps together.

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

→ for middle schoolers

# DISTINCT

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Or maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? In this 4-week series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus is distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating**.

## THIS WEEK

### THE BIG IDEA

We can celebrate our distinctions..

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I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10;  
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- **This week, what can you do to celebrate someone who is different than you?**

## ACTIVITY

If your group took The Distinct Challenge, share your favorite takeaways, questions, and next steps together.

## WEEK 4 HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE

## DISTINCT

### THE BIG IDEA

We can celebrate our distinctions..

### THE BIBLE

I Corinthians 12:12-31; Revelation 7:9-10;  
Psalm 139:13-14

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Distinct Sights

- Welcome back to *Distinct*, where we've been looking at some things that are different, unique, and . . . well, *distinct*. Let's see how good you are at noticing the differences between things — like these two images.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, get some or all of your volunteers together to help you create two almost identical photos with whatever props, supplies, and weird objects you have handy. The pictures can be group photos of your team or they can just be photos of weird stuff you find in your storage closet. Either way, take two photos with at least ten differences between them. Then display them side by side on your screen and have your students try to spot the differences. If you want to turn this game into a competition, break your students into teams, tell them how many differences there are, and have them race to identify them all.*
- Every week throughout this series, we've been testing your skills to see how good you are at spotting the differences between things.
  - Sometimes the differences are easy to catch. Sometimes they're hard to find. And sometimes we play this game in real life by comparing ourselves to others. When we do, the differences we spot are usually seen as negatives.
  - We criticize others when they seem a little too "different," and we criticize ourselves when we feel like we're the "different" ones. But what if, instead of criticizing our differences, we learned to celebrate them instead?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.
  - **What's the weirdest thing you like (but are kind of embarrassed about)?**
  - **What's something weird about you that you're not at all embarrassed about?**

## VIDEO | A Clip from a Beatbox Battle

- Is anyone here an incredible beatboxer? Some of you might be, but most people aren't. That's why, when this father and daughter showed off their unique skills on James Corden's show, the audience loved it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:45-1:45) of a father and daughter battling in a beatboxing competition. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Do you hear those celebrations coming from the audience? What if, when we noticed someone with a skill, trait, or quality that was different from ours, that's how we chose to respond?
  - But here's where we face some problems. When those two were first getting into beatboxing, they definitely weren't good enough to appear on a talk show. We might applaud them now for their skill, but I wonder if they faced resistance when they were first getting started. Did anyone tell them they weren't good at it? Or to find a new hobby?
  - Here's another thing to think about. Beatboxing in general is considered pretty cool and interesting. If you're a decent beatboxer, it's not very likely someone is going to tell you beatboxing is weird or laugh at you for liking it. When you have a "distinct" skill that's also cool or trendy, that's great for you!
- But what about when the things that make someone "distinct" are a lot riskier than being weirdly good at beatboxing?
  - What if a person's uniqueness actually makes them the target of people's cruelty?
  - What if, when we spotted differences in the way people talk, look, play a game, laugh at a joke, or interact with others, we didn't react by criticizing or mocking them?
  - What if we could learn to celebrate the things that make us different?

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

## STORY | Talk about a time you were excluded because you were different.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you were excluded, mocked, or bullied because you were different. Share how that experience impacted you and how you wish you had been treated instead.
- For the last few weeks, we've been talking about how great it is to be different, and that's true! But we can't finish this series without also talking about the times when being different is difficult.

- I don't know if everyone in this room has experienced something like this, but I'm guessing many of us have. It's hard to forget being treated this way because of your differences.
- Sometimes being excluded because of our differences makes us want to treat other people the same way we were treated. We might not mean to do that, but we do.
- As we wrap up this series today, here's the question I want you to ask yourself: "In my world, who is being hurt or excluded because of their differences and how can we celebrate them instead?"

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ✦ **When does being different feel like a good thing? When does it feel like a bad thing?**
  - **What are some of the differences people tend to judge, criticize, or bully each other for?**

## SCRIPTURE | I Corinthians 12:12-31

- Let's see what Scripture has to say about that.
  - We're picking up where we left off last week, with a passage written by the apostle Paul to the early followers of Jesus in a city called Corinth.
  - If you were here last week, you know that before Paul met Jesus he spent a lot of time hunting down Christians to throw them in prison or have them killed because of their differences in belief.
  - But when Paul met Jesus, everything changed and he started spreading the good news of Jesus and helping lead the early church — sometimes by writing letters of guidance to different faith communities.
- Paul's letter to the Corinthians was one of those letters. In it, Paul helped his fellow Jesus-followers figure out not only how to love God but how to love each other too.
  - In this case, Paul was sending the folks at Corinth a letter of correction because they had been getting some things a little wrong.
  - We don't know all the details of what was going on, but in the section we're about to read, you can tell some people might have had a little bit of a pride problem.
  - It appears some members of this faith community were so impressed with themselves, their gifts, and the things that made them unique that they actually belittled people who weren't like them.
- Here's what Paul said to correct them and get them back on the right track.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read I Corinthians 12:12-31.*
- Paul uses the illustration of our bodies to talk about how followers of Jesus (the "Body" of Christ) should function — and in Corinth, things weren't functioning the way they should.
- The Corinthians were lifting some people higher, and putting some people down, based on the gifts they had and the things they could contribute. They were buying into the culture that some gifts are meant to be celebrated, while others should be ignored.

- But Paul needed them to see that, in God’s kingdom, every person matters and should be celebrated for the unique ways they were created.
- Now, I agree, Paul is using strange language to convey this message. He’s doing that on purpose. Obviously an ear can’t talk and your foot can’t just decide to not be part of your body anymore.
- Paul is making this sound ridiculous because when God’s people do this to each other, it is ridiculous! We can’t function without each other. Every person in the church community is needed for the whole community to function at its best. No one is more valuable than anyone else because of the gifts they have or what makes them distinct.

## SCRIPTURE | Revelation 7:9-10

- Let’s check out another passage. This one is at the very end of the Bible and is meant to give us a glimpse of what heaven could be like. It’s a little mysterious and pretty cool.
  - The author of this book, the book of Revelation, was John. He’s the same guy who wrote the book of John, but is not John the Baptist who baptized Jesus. I know – so many Johns.
  - This John who wrote the book was the same guy who followed Jesus around for over three years and helped start the early church.
  - Years after Jesus left earth, God gave John a vision that John then shared with the churches that existed in Western Asia at the time. These were churches that were being persecuted and experiencing all kinds of suffering.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Revelation 7:9-10.*
- Wow. In John’s vision of heaven, everyone who showed up to worship God represented a huge diversity of backgrounds, experiences, ethnicities, and more. John saw that in God’s kingdom, everyone is welcome.
  - Not just the people who agree about everything.
  - Not just the most powerful people or culture.
  - Not just the good-looking, cool, or influential people.
  - Not just one language, or race, or ethnicity, or culture.
  - Not just people with lots of money, or able bodies, or social media followers.
- It’s *every* tribe and *every* tongue. It’s *everyone* from *everywhere*! It’s unity, but it’s not sameness. It’s unity and diversity – and both are reasons to celebrate.
- Once we acknowledge what makes us each distinct from one another, *then* we can truly see the beauty within our communities. Just like your body wouldn’t work if it was one giant foot, God made each of us with different qualities and abilities. That’s why **we can celebrate** (instead of criticize) **our distinctions**.

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

## ACTIVITY | Spot the Distinctions

- Every week throughout this series, we’ve proven we’re all pretty good at noticing the distinctions between things like sounds, tastes, textures, or images. In the same way, we’re naturally good at spotting certain differences in other people. And that isn’t a bad thing!

- The things that make us unique aren't bad, right? So noticing those differences isn't bad either. It's what we do about those differences that matters. When we notice there's something different about someone, we have a choice:
  - We could mock, judge, or criticize them for their differences. Let's be honest — we've all done this before, right?
  - We could try to ignore the thing that makes them different. But why? If the things that make them unique are good, then we shouldn't need to ignore them, right?
  - Or we could notice the thing that makes them different, appreciate it, and celebrate it.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have everyone turn their bodies toward the center of the room. Give them five seconds to try and look briefly at everyone else in the room, noticing and appreciating the many differences represented.*
- Imagine if, once we spotted the differences between each other, we focused on actually appreciating and celebrating those differences? That would be a total shift from what normally happens, right?

## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ✪ **What are some examples of differences God created? What are some examples of differences people choose for themselves?**
  - ✪ **Have you ever believed ignoring someone's differences was the right thing to do? How has your opinion changed or stayed the same?**
  - **Read Psalm 139:13-14. How do you think the world would change if we believed God made us all different on purpose?**

## REFLECTION | How to Celebrate Our Distinctions

- So how, exactly, can we do this? I have a few ideas. You might want to write them down, along with your own ideas, thoughts, and your questions too. If there's something you're not sure about that you want to talk about, write it down!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handout provided in your Week 4 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen.*
- **ADMIT WHEN IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE:** The truth is, sometimes we get uncomfortable with people who are different. Especially if their "distinction" has to do with sensitive topics like race, ethnicity, politics, money, or disabilities.
  - It's okay if you're uncomfortable. It's okay if you feel like one person's differences are a bad thing, while someone else's differences are a good thing. What's not okay is ignoring that feeling and pretending it doesn't exist.
  - Getting outside of our comfort zone is (surprise!) uncomfortable! But if you can step out and get to know people who aren't like you, the borders of your comfort zone will get bigger — and you might make some new friends.

- **LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE'S DISTINCTIONS:** Is there a certain kind of "distinction" that makes you feel uncomfortable?
  - Are you not sure how to talk to someone who comes from a different kind of background, family, culture, or neighborhood than you? Are you unsure of how to interact with someone who has a disability? What about people from different social circles or with interests in things you don't know anything about?
  - When you notice you're uncomfortable with a certain kind of difference, try learning more about it. Sometimes we're scared about things we don't understand, but a little bit of information helps us open up.
  - The more you learn, the more you start to realize so many of our differences aren't "weird" or "not normal." They're just different!
- **CHOOSE TO CELEBRATE PEOPLE'S DISTINCTIONS:** This starts in our mind and hearts, but it can't end there. It has to turn into action too. When you notice someone's distinctions, it means . . .
  - **Spending time together.** You can celebrate someone's distinctions simply by valuing them as a person you want to get to know.
  - **Getting to know them.** You can celebrate their distinctions by actually getting to know them! Find out who they are beyond the thing that makes them distinct . . . but find out who they are because of their distinctions too.
  - **Valuing their perspective.** The things that make them distinct give them distinct perspectives, experiences, and abilities you may not have. So learn from them because they have good stuff to share!
  - **Using your words.** When you want to celebrate someone's distinctions, don't just do it in your head. Do it out loud or in writing! Celebrate people for the things that make them unique, but in ways they would actually want to be celebrated. (That's why getting to know people is so important.)
- So this week . . .
  - Who do you typically judge, criticize, or avoid thinking about because their differences make you uncomfortable?
  - How could you learn about them, or from them, in order to celebrate them in a way that honors them?
  - And how will you celebrate them?
- It's okay that we're not all the same. In fact, it's more than okay. According to Scripture, the fact that we don't all live, think, or look the same is a good thing! We are all welcome in God's presence — distinctions and all.
- There's no one like Jesus, our God and Creator. And since we're made in His image . . .
  - God made us all distinct.
  - Our uniquenesses allow us to serve in distinct ways.
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## DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
  - ★ **How is “unity” different from “sameness”? How can God’s people be united even when we have differences?**
  - **What’s one situation where you feel uncomfortable with people who are different than you? Why do you think you feel that way?**
  - **This week, what can you do to celebrate someone who is different than you?**



**DISTINCT**



**DISTINCT**

## ONE-MINUTE SERMON SCRIPTS

## DISTINCT

### ONE-MINUTE SERMONS

After you teach each week, we recommend **filming a video of yourself re-teaching your message in one minute or less**. Then post it on social media! We've written the beginnings of a script for you each week, and we've also filmed complete [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) for you too, in partnership with [Rescue a Generation](#). Make your own or post ours – whatever you want!

## WEEK 1

If I were to ask you who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say, "Uh, I'm [your name]" Or, "I'm a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I'm a human!" You're a lot of things, but there's at least one thing you are definitely not. You're not God. There's only one person who has ever lived who could accurately say, "I'm a human!" *and* "I'm God" at the exact same time. That's pretty mind-bending. How can you be fully human *and* fully God? It only happened once, and that person was Jesus. See, Jesus wasn't just good man or a good teacher. He was, and still is, so much more than that. As God, He's impossible for us to fully understand. But as a human, He understands us perfectly. Who Jesus is to you is a question only you can answer, but I'll tell you this – there's no one like Him. **Jesus is distinct.**

## WEEK 2

Question for you. It's kind of a tough one, so prepare yourself. Would you rather blend in or stand out? It's not easy to answer, right? We probably all want to be somewhere in the middle – we want to stand out enough to be interesting, but, uh, not so much that everyone thinks we're too weird to hang out with. But while we try to maintain that balance, sometimes we lose sight of the ways God has made us unique. Instead of finding peace and purpose in the distinct ways we're designed, we feel pressure to conform, hide, or change who we are. If you've ever felt that way, let me tell you what God says about you. You are beautifully and wonderfully made. You're deeply loved by your Creator. So as you learn more about who God made you to be, remember, you weren't designed to be just like everyone else. **God made you distinct.**

## WEEK 3

When's the last time you were super impressed by someone? Maybe it was their singing, or an awesome play they made, or some new music they just dropped. Or maybe you just noticed how funny, or friendly, or confident they were. On a good day, we can notice other people's unique qualities and be happy for them. But on bad days, we might think, "I'll never be that talented," or start feeling jealous or insecure. I get it! You're not alone. There are even people in the Bible who dealt with this. In the early days of the Jesus movement, the apostle Paul even had to write a letter to the Christians in Corinth to remind them that God has given all of us distinct gifts and qualities. Our gifts are all meaningful because they can all be used to help love others and make a difference in the world. Because of our distinct gifts, **we can all serve in distinct ways.**

## WEEK 4

Have you ever played "Spot the Difference"? You know, that game where you have to compare pictures that are nearly identical except for a few tiny differences? Sometimes the differences are easy to catch. Sometimes they're hard to find. And sometimes we play this game in real life by comparing ourselves to others. When we do, the differences we spot are usually seen as negatives. We criticize others when they seem a little too "different," and we criticize ourselves when we feel like we're the "different" ones. But what if instead of criticizing our differences we learned to celebrate them instead? In the Bible, a guy named Paul had something to say about this. He said yeah, we are all different, just like different parts of our bodies all have different purposes. Just like your body wouldn't work if it was one giant foot, God made each of us with different qualities and abilities. That's why **we can celebrate** (instead of criticize) **our distinctions.**

## MARKETING CHECKLIST

## DISTINCT

### BEFORE THE SERIES

#### ✓ TO DO

	Print your <b>Series Promo Poster</b> and <b>Series Promo Cards</b> and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your <b>Volunteer Hub</b> and <b>Family Hub</b> web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the <b>Parent Email</b> for this series.
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the <b>suggested Social Media Posts and Captions</b> for this series.
	Post the <b>Bumper Video</b> on social media with this caption:  Hey you! Did you know that you are unique? You are one of a kind and find out why when we start our new series, Distinct!

### AFTER WEEK 1

#### ✓ TO DO

	Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 1 on social media with this caption:  In case you missed it, Week 1 of Distinct was all about how Jesus is distinct. Here's a recap.
	Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption:  Remember, there is no one like Jesus. He's fully God, fully human, and fully capable of changing our lives. Jesus is distinct. He's in a class of His own. There is no one like Him.
	Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, Week 2 of Distinct was all about how God made you distinct. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, you weren't designed to be just like everyone else. God made you distinct.</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, Week 3 of Distinct was all about how we can serve in distinct ways. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, all our gifts are meaningful because they can all be used to help love others and make a difference in the world. Because of our distinct gifts, we can all serve in distinct ways.</p>
	<p>Send the <b>Volunteer Email</b> for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 4

✓ **TO DO**

	<p>Post the <b>1-Minute Sermon Video</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In case you missed it, Week 4 of Distinct was all about how we can celebrate our distinctions. Here's a recap.</p>
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Week 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>Remember, God made each of us with different qualities and abilities. That's why we can celebrate (instead of criticize) our distinctions.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS

## DISTINCT

Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

### BEFORE THE SERIES



#### **BUMPER VIDEO**

Hey you! Did you know that you are unique? You are one of a kind and find out why when we start our new series, Distinct!

### AFTER WEEK 1



#### **1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 1)**

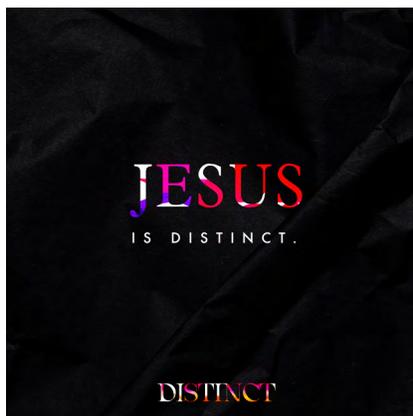
In case you missed it, Week 1 of Distinct was all about how Jesus is distinct. Here's a recap.

### AFTER WEEK 2



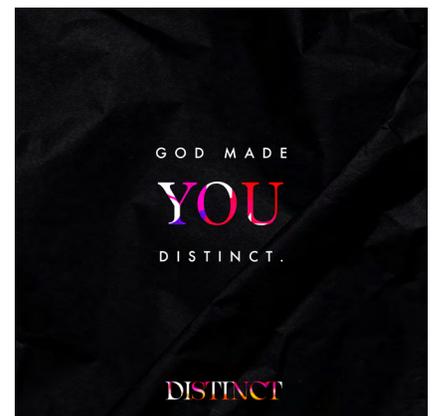
#### **1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 2)**

In case you missed it, Week 2 of Distinct was all about how God made you distinct. Here's a recap.



#### **BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)**

Remember, there is no one like Jesus. He's fully God, fully human, and fully capable of changing our lives. Jesus is distinct. He's in a class of His own. There is no one like Him.



#### **BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)**

Remember, you weren't designed to be just like everyone else. God made you distinct.

AFTER WEEK 3



**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 3)**

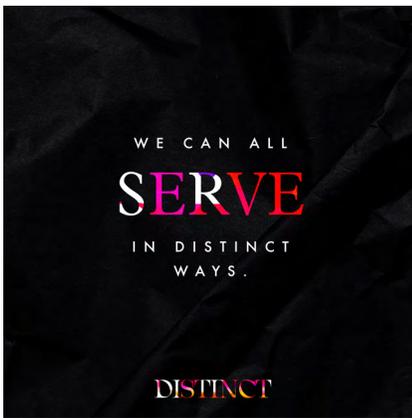
In case you missed it, Week 3 of Distinct was all about how we can serve in distinct ways. Here's a recap.

AFTER WEEK 4



**1-MINUTE SERMON (WEEK 4)**

In case you missed it, Week 4 of Distinct was all about how we can celebrate our distinctions. Here's a recap.



**BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)**

Remember, all our gifts are meaningful because they can all be used to help love others and make a difference in the world. Because of our distinct gifts, we can all serve in distinct ways.



**BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)**

Remember, God made each of us with different qualities and abilities. That's why we can celebrate (instead of criticize) our distinctions.

**What We're Teaching**



*ADD YOUR LOGO HERE*

**What We're Teaching**



*ADD YOUR LOGO HERE*

**What We're Teaching**



*ADD YOUR LOGO HERE*

**What We're Teaching**



*ADD YOUR LOGO HERE*