

One truth shared: When we see Jesus for who he is and what he's done for us, we realize he's actually the God we want.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29

The God We Need, Not the God We Want

There are times God doesn't do what we want him to do.

Our family member doesn't get better, just worse. Our parents keep fighting and don't reconcile. We don't attract that certain boy or girl we desperately want.

We want God to make us healthy, wealthy, and popular. We want God to bring us happiness and prosperity. And, for us, that usually means we want more fun, less pain, more money, less worry, more ease, less difficulties.

Many of the Jews around Jesus' day were the same. They wanted the Messiah to be a political and military hero who would defeat the Romans and make Israel a political superpower.

The Jews were overly impressed with Jesus' miracles because they viewed him as more of a genie than a Savior. To them, he was someone who would give them material things and a healthy body, which they thought were the keys to their happiness.

John the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God in our verse. Why? Because he wanted people to know Jesus had appeared and he's the God we need, not necessarily the God we want.

A lamb doesn't seem like the appropriate animal to represent the Messiah. Why not a dragon or a T-Rex? But a lamb is what we need. Lambs were used as a sacrificial animal by the Jews—a substitute which sacrificed its life for their sins. But the problem is that those animal sacrifices didn't actually do anything except point ahead to the true Lamb of God.

Jesus is the God you and I need.

He didn't turn away from our messiness and sin. He got right into the thick of it. He didn't come to give us a list of rules to follow. He came to follow every rule in our place. He didn't come to simply show us how to live. He came to die—to die as a substitute in our place.

He's what we needed. And deep down, we know it. We know we can't make it through life on our own. We see the sin in our lives. We see how little control we have in life. And we know we need to be rescued.

That's just what he did.

And when we see Jesus for who he truly is, we realize he's actually the God we want. He gives us the deep joy and happiness we've been searching for.

That's Someone we have no problem telling others about.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for being the God I truly need. Thank you for becoming involved in the messiness of my sin and my life and being my substitute. You give me the deep joy and happiness I've been searching for. Please place others in my life who need to hear about you. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Jesus Appears

One truth shared: When we see Jesus for who he is and what he's done for us, we realize he's actually the God we want.

The God We Need, Not the God We Want

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

If genies actually existed and you had a genie in this room right now, what three things would you wish for?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

What are some of the things we often want God to give us/do for us that he might not actually do?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Read John 1:29-31. Why did John refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God?
- What did John mean when he said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me?"
- When God doesn't give me what I want, what can I do?
- Jesus is the God we actually need because he rescues us and gives us salvation. When we see Jesus for who he truly is, he then becomes the God we want, too. Why is that?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

When we realize Jesus is truly the God we need AND the God we want, it's easier to tell others about him. Why is that?