



BETTER THAN BASIC: Week 1

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BETTER THAN BASIC

WEEK 1: Better than Basic.

Bible: Genesis 1:27 NLT

Bottom Line: When you realize you are made in God's image, it will affect how you see yourself and others.

SUPPLIES

- Kickball
- 5 Orange cones

OPENING GAME: KICKIN' IT

GAME PREP

This is an outdoor game that should be played in a large field.

Use four orange cones to create “bases” in the field.

Place one cone in the middle of the bases – this is where the pitcher will stand.

Choose one person to begin the game as the pitcher and have them stand by the pitcher's cone.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: Kickball was invented over one hundred years ago and was originally called "Kick baseball."

As a child, you probably played it in P.E., so this game should be familiar... and pretty epic.

Our game will be similar to kickball, except there is only one pitcher and are no outfielders.

So, what does everyone else do?

I will choose one person to be the kicker, and then the pitcher will roll the ball.

When the kicker kicks the ball, EVERYONE will run.

You can run in either direction – from home base to third, or home base to first base – and then continue to run around the bases.

You don't have to stop at each base, just touch it and keep going.

Meanwhile, the pitcher will retrieve the ball and try to tag the people who are running.

If you are tagged with the ball, then you will be in the outfield for the rest of the game.

If you can make it back to home base, before the pitcher returns to the pitcher's mound (their cone), then you are safe.

If you are stuck at a base, the pitcher will go back to his cone and bounce the ball ten times, while everyone counts (out loud) how many times the ball has been bounced.

If you can run home before the pitcher makes it to ten, then you're safe.

If you can't make it home, then you are out and will join the pitcher in the outfield.

The bases must be empty at the beginning of each round.

For all those who have joined the pitcher in the outfield, you are now helping the pitcher by catching the ball when the kicker kicks it.

If someone in the outfield can catch the ball, the kicker is out.

The outfielders can't tag the runners with the ball; only the pitcher can tag runners.

The game is over when all of the runners have been tagged, except one, and then that person will become the pitcher.

Play as many rounds as you would like before you begin the TEACH portion of the lesson.

TEACH

Say: What could be more BASIC than kickball?

It is simple, dull, and to some... even a little boring.

Maybe you have heard the word BASIC, you have been labeled as BASIC, or have even called someone else BASIC.

You are not BASIC.

In fact, you are so **much** more than BASIC.

A BASIC person is someone who lacks characteristics that might make a person interesting, unique, or extraordinary.

They are unwilling or afraid to express individuality, and they are possibly kind of boring.

I don't think any of you fall into that category, but maybe you struggle with your identity, or how you view others.

In the next four weeks, you will discover that the way you view yourself and others will set the tone for the new school year.

One of the great things about a new school year is that it is a fresh start.

There's a reason why everyone looks so different at the beginning of the school year – and it's not just because of new clothes, new hairstyles, or even a new attitude.

You actually grow taller over the summer more than any other time of the year.

Doctors don't know why, but they do know that it's related to how much you sleep, and you most likely get more sleep over the summer.

There are several other ways people grow over the summer, and maybe if you didn't grow taller, you can relate to some of these areas of growth.

Spiritual growth... Many of you went to camp, on a retreat, or you came to youth group and had an experience with God that changed your life.

Now, you're headed back to school, and you don't want to be the same person you were last year.

God can give you the strength to live the life He's called you to... even if you don't have a good reputation and even if people don't understand the changes God is helping you make in how you talk and interact with others.

Mental growth... For some of you, when you escaped the pressures of schoolwork and relationships with your peers over the summer months, it allowed you to take a breather.

You took a mental break, and now you are prepared to start the new school year with a fresh outlook.

Personal Growth... Maybe your personality changed a little over the summer – things that used to bother you don't seem like that big of a deal anymore... you're maturing.

You get to choose how you approach this school year, and that doesn't just happen on the first day of school, or even the first week, or month.

Every day of your life, you are establishing the type of person you want to be and how you want others to look at you.

You might feel locked into acting a certain way because of what other people say about you, but how God feels about you should speak louder than anyone else's voice.

So, who are you?

Ask: Can you tell me words that people use to describe you?

Allow a few responses from students.

As they share, be aware of students who think the answers are funny... it might be painful for some students to share, so set an encouraging environment.

Those words and the way other people describe you probably affects how you feel about yourself, but it shouldn't define who you are – only God can do that.

Read Genesis 1:27. (NLT)

So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Here is that same verse in **The Message** version.

God created human beings; he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

You were created in God's image.

In the Bible, you can read about the attributes of God... and none of those qualities sound BASIC.

God is all-knowing, wise, and all-powerful.

God is eternal, unchangeable, and holy.

God is love and everything He does is good.

Humanity was created to be a visible representation of who God is and we should reflect His attributes in how we live.

So, how can we become more like the person God created us to be and less like the image of how others expect us to be?

You begin by realizing your value as God's creation.

There are people that live their entire lives never understanding who they are and the difference they are making in the world around them.

John Quincy Adams was the sixth President of the United States.

He held more political offices than anyone in the history of our country.

He was president, a senator, congressman, the Secretary of State, and the United States minister to the Netherlands, Germany, France, Russia, and England.

After his retirement, he was re-elected to Congress and was active in opposition to the practice of slavery.

John Quincy Adams was a statesman who played a large part in the nation we live in.

When he was 70 years old, he made the following statement: "My whole life has been a succession of disappointments. I didn't have any success in anything I undertook."

John Quincy Adams struggled with his identity.

He never understood the difference that he had made and the success that he was able to achieve.

But that doesn't have to be your story.

Let's take a few minutes and redefine the word BASIC and see how we can look at ourselves and others through God's eyes.

Be secure in the person God created you to be.

Don't allow the negative actions of your past to affect your future.

Not only have you not ever been perfect, but you never will be.

Realize that God has given you unique and special qualities that are different than any person who has ever lived.

You can be secure in your identity because God created you, He loves you, and you belong to Him.

You will never be secure in who you are if you are trying to be someone other than who God created you to be or are disappointed in who you have been in the past.

Ask God to help you see yourself and others the way He sees you.

Our culture often values people based on what they own, how they look, or what they can offer to others.

Hopefully, you demonstrate love to others because just like you, they are made in the image of God.

If you struggle with loving other people it's possible that you don't truly love yourself.

Until you love who you are, it will be difficult to love others.

Seek out ways to encourage those who haven't yet realized they are made in God's image.

You've probably met someone who tore other people down to make themselves look good.

Why? Because when others look flawed and imperfect, it can make your personal flaws seem not quite as bad.

There will always be someone with better looks and more athletic or musical abilities.

You don't have to look far to find someone who is smarter or more dedicated to their studies than you are.

But that doesn't mean you need someone to tell you that.

When you come across someone who is lashing out with insults and criticisms, realize that they haven't discovered how much God values them.

Instead of being hurt or insulted, pray for opportunities to show love and help them realize that they are made in God's image.

Identify areas that you struggle with self-image.

If you have too much pride – you're struggling with self-image.

If you don't think much of yourself – you're struggling with self-image.

An unhealthy view of yourself will remain a part of your life, until you allow God to be with you in your struggles with identity.

Once you have identified the areas that are the hardest for you to accept about yourself, talk with someone who can pray with and encourage you.

Communicate how you feel when you face criticism from others.

No one likes being insulted.

When you receive unfair criticism, it's okay to let people know that they have hurt you.

Bottling up your feelings only causes anger and bitterness to take root in your heart.

God can help you confront those who say things about you in a way that brings healing.

You might discover that the person that hurt you was actually holding hurt in their own hearts.

Each of us are different, unique, and special.

When you begin to understand the way God sees you, it will change how you look at others.

This school year can be different than any other you have ever experienced.

As we close in prayer, let's ask God to give us eyes that see people the way He does.

Instead of looking at others as BASIC, realize that each and every person you meet was created by a unique and amazing God.

Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you "grow" over the summer?

How? Physically? Mentally? Spiritually?

2. What do you think is your best quality?

What do other people say about you – what is your best characteristic?

3. Are you able to see the best in other people or are you critical of others?

4. Think about the words we called out earlier to describe how others would describe you. Could you relate?

How do those descriptions make you feel?

5. Name some of the attributes of God.

How does the Bible describe God?

6. If we were made in God's image, what characteristics of God should be seen in our lives?

7. Before today, did it occur to you that everyone struggles with their identity?

What did you learn about others?

8. What parts of your personality and character would you like to change? Why?

9. Does knowing that everyone is created in the image of God affect how you look at others? In what way?

10. Choose someone in the group that can pray for you this week as you start the new school year.

What would you like to see God do in your life this year?