



For Generation Z (those born after 1995), “Instafame” has always been part of their life.

You create some type of media that goes viral, develop your own personal brand, and enjoy your 15 minutes of fame – it’s almost like a rite of passage for our students.

And although God can use our moments of fame for His glory, it shouldn’t be our ultimate goal.

Use this youth group lesson on fame, based on Matthew 5:14-16, to remind students that the ultimate goal of our lives as Christians is to bring glory to God, not to get fame for ourselves.

YOUTH GROUP LESSON ON FAME

Written by Carrie Busch

Bible: Matthew 5:14-16

Bottom Line: The ultimate goal of our lives as Christians is to bring God glory, not to get fame for ourselves.

SUPPLIES

- Paper and pen/pencil for each student

OPENING GAME: RANDOM TRIVIA

GAME PREP

Tell the students that they will be playing a trivia game, but unlike Jeopardy, students will be writing down their answers in silence instead of calling them out.

Give students a sheet of paper, give them a pen or pencil, and have them number their papers (1-10).

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: We're going to play a game called, "Random Trivia."

As you take this trivia quiz, you may not talk to or look at anyone.

You may not ask any questions.

If you don't know an answer, leave it blank.

After the quiz is over, you are not allowed to talk about the questions or your answers with anyone.

The goal of this game is to see who is best at random trivia!

Then, begin asking the following questions (if you have a way to project them or write them on a board, you may).

The answers are provided after each question but don't tell the students the answers until the end.

1. Who was the 16th president of the United States? (Abraham Lincoln)
2. Which Kardashian sister married Kanye West in 2012? (Kim)
3. Who dangled his baby from the third-floor balcony of a German hotel in 2002? (Michael Jackson)
4. What band sings the hit song "Thunder"? (Imagine Dragons)
5. Name three books from the New Testament that Paul wrote. (Ephesians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, among many others)
6. Name one member of the Beatles. (Ringo Starr, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, or George Harrison)
7. What famous actor plays the lead role in *The Greatest Showman*? (Hugh Jackman)
8. What president was assassinated on November 22, 1963? (President John F. Kennedy)
9. Who wrote the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*? (John Green)
10. What sport is Tony Hawk famous for? (Skateboarding)

Once the students have answered all of the questions, remind them to remain completely silent, and have them fold their papers in half and turn them in.

“Grade” their papers by writing the number of correct answers at the top of each paper (let the tension build as they wait to see who is the best).

Once you’re done grading, tell them to remain COMPLETELY silent as you go over the answers.

Silence is of utmost importance!

Once you’re finished reading out the answers, tell them that the game is over, explain that “some” students did well, let them know the highest score (but not who it was who scored best), and then put the papers away and move on to the lesson.

Right about now, the students will probably freak out a little.

When they begin to ask who did well, who “won,” or why you’re not sharing their scores, tell them to answer the following questions (either out loud or in their minds):

Ask: If you already know how many questions you got right or wrong, why does it matter who knows it?

If you did well on the quiz, how does it feel not to be recognized?

Why do people want others to know about their successes?

TEACH

Read Matthew 5:14-16. (ESV)

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Think back to the list of trivia questions I asked you.

Do you notice what they all have in common?

Each of the questions referenced a person who was famous, whether in politics, music, or movies.

As you can probably guess, today’s lesson is about fame.

Our game provided a chance for us to see what our desires are.

Did we want to get the questions right so that others would recognize us or did we want to get the questions right for our own validation?

Either way, we were focused on ourselves.

The desire for self-exaltation (seeking exaltation or praise for yourself) is a common temptation for us as human beings.

Today, we see it everywhere, but it's not a new concept.

"Self" is valued more than "community" and we hear slogans like "express yourself" or "live your truth" or "search for yourself" everywhere we turn.

But God desires for us to use any kind of influence or favor we have to bring glory to *His* name.

Let's be honest - that goes against every instinct we have.

We know that social media perpetuates the love of "self."

We portray our "best selves" through filters and cool angles.

But what purpose does it all serve?

If we add a quick scripture as our caption, does that count as bringing glory to God?

Are we just trying to glorify ourselves?

These are questions that we need to ask.

So... how does God feel about human beings pursuing fame?

Doesn't He want us to be liked?

It's best to answer these questions by spending time in God's word.

Let's go back and **read Matthew 5:14-16**.

It sounds like God wants people to see us, know us, and look up to us.

But is that the same as fame?

In these verses, Jesus is talking about what He wants His followers to be known for.

Jesus wants you to do good works so that people will notice and you can point them to Him... not so that you can receive credit.

It sounds like God is interested not in our fame, but in our influence.

God is all about expanding His Kingdom, and we know this because he has commanded us to make disciples.

How can we do so if we are focused on pursuing likes or followers?

You may be thinking, "But if I'm honest, I don't desire the same things that God wants.

What if I still want more likes and followers, even if I know it's for the wrong reasons?"

If this is you, recognize that seeking to know God in a deeper way always results in wanting to see Him glorified.

As we seek to know Him, His desires become our desires.

God promises that if we seek Him, we WILL find Him, but we have to give Him true devotion.

As you pursue a deeper relationship with God, watch as your desire for His name to be glorified becomes your biggest concern, and the cares and concerns for earthly fame fall away.

Lastly, reflect on this: we cannot take credit for the light that shines from us... we are not "good" on our own, but our goodness comes from Jesus who, when he saved us, gave us HIS righteousness.

That's why God deserves all the glory... because all that is good comes from Him.

Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think we desire love, acceptance, and fame from others?
2. How much time do you spend seeking acceptance and attention from others?
3. Do we use our social media presence to influence others for Christ, or to receive adoration for ourselves?
4. Can you think of anyone you know who, instead of taking credit, gives all the glory to Jesus? Give some examples.
5. Reflect on the past year. How has your relationship with God grown or changed? If it hasn't, what do you think prohibited that growth?
6. Why is God worthy of all fame and all glory?
7. What are some negative consequences of fame?

8. How have you used your influence (at school, at home, in your youth group, at work) to draw others to Christ?
9. What causes us to want to live for ourselves? What do we get out of a self-focused life?
10. Think about a person who has used his/her fame to glorify God. How has our culture reacted to this?