

# Fake You Out: A Lesson Plan on Popularity and Authenticity

## Come Together

Play a game which focuses on the characteristics of each person, such as [Getting to Know You Bingo](#).

After the game, ask if they learned anything they didn't know about each other. Have the students give specific examples.

## Hear It

We often don't know each other as well as we think we do. This can be for a number of reasons, but one reason is that we can hide parts of ourselves to reduce the risk of rejection or unpopularity.

It is good to have friends, but our friends should like us for our true selves. God made each of us with unique gifts and talents. When we hide these, we are not being the person God intended us to be.

In Ephesians 2:10 we hear

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

We have each been created for a purpose, and when we hide our true selves in order to be popular, we can compromise our ability to fulfill that purpose.

Do one or more of the following:

- Give some testimony about a time you were not your true self and how that did not work out.
- Or give testimony about a time when you were your true self and that was best.
- Alternatively, you can read Mark 3:1-6. This is an example of Jesus being true to his mission, even though it was not popular with the powerful people of his time.
- Show a video or play a song. See [this list](#) for some suggestions.

When our focus is on being popular, we spend a lot of time and energy trying to fit in. We can engage in gossip or other behavior in an attempt to increase our social status at the expense of others. We waste time worrying about our image or our social media posts. We can even dress and act inappropriately in order to gain the acceptance of others.

When we do these things, we are not our authentic selves. And we lose sight of the fact that God loves us exactly as we are. After all, He created us. If we focus more on becoming closer to God and learning what He wants us to do, then we can be the daughters and sons he created us to be.

So in Romans 12:2 we hear

Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

So rather than conforming to what we think will make us popular, we are called to be our true selves as God made us. Only then can we be transformed through our relationship with Christ and find the joy intended for us.

### **Discuss It**

Break into small groups and discuss. Here are some questions to get you started:

- How important is popularity in your peer group?
- What are some of the dangers of seeking popularity?
- What is the difference between popularity and friendship?
- Are there parts of your true self you are afraid to let others see?
- Which will last longer: a relationship based on popularity or one based on authenticity?
- Do you have any examples of when seeking popularity caused a conflict with your desire to follow Christ?
- What can you do to form relationships based on authenticity rather than popularity?

If time permits, make [affirmation bracelets](#).

### **Pray About It**

Gather together and pray the [Prayer to Be My True Self](#) or another appropriate prayer. Let each youth offer his or her own intentions, focusing on friendship and those who are trying too hard to be popular.

### **Go Forth**

Send the teens out with a reminder to watch for opportunities to be their authentic selves instead of seeking popularity with a fake version of themselves. Give them a reminder they can keep. Here are some suggestions:

- The [affirmation bracelets](#) can serve this purpose if you made them.
- A printed copy of the [Prayer to Be My True Self](#)
- A small piece of [mosaic stone](#). Each stone is different and beautiful in its own way. And when the different pieces are put together they make something beautiful.