

Introduction and setting up your event

Kick-off Logistics:

This is the kick-off for all the lessons and the DNow weekend. Spend some time laying the ground rules and explaining the schedule for the event.

Here are some things to consider talking about:

1. Tell students why your church or ministry is doing this event. Cast the vision for students to know why it's important and why the church values them.
2. Let students know what they can expect from this weekend. For example: a chance to worship God, learn more about following Christ, have a lot of fun and eat really good food, get some quality time with friends, have ministry leaders invest in them, and/or get answers to tough questions, etc.
3. Let students know what is expected of them. For example: coming to all the sessions, being honest, and treating the host homes with care.

Speaker's Note: These Large Group Talks are designed to give you a foundation to speak from. They are full of optional illustrations, object lessons, and anecdotes that you can use as much or as little as you'd like.

*Don't forget the Intro Video included in your *Outcast* download to use during this first Large Group Talk!

*View any illustration video clips ahead of time to make sure they will fit well with your audience.

*Also included in your *Outcast* download are presentation backgrounds to use with these Large Group Talks or any other place that will help make your DNow event great!

Transition to Introduction Large Group Talk:

Ask: *What are some of the things people do to fit in (how do they act, what do they do, and what do they talk about)? How can you tell if someone doesn't fit in?*

After a few students have shared their answers, tell a story of a time you worked hard to fit in somewhere. Opening the event with a personal story will build trust between you and the students.

Say Something Like: *People do all kinds of things to feel accepted. It affects how they dress, how they talk, where they go, what they listen to, and pretty much everything they do from the time they wake up to the moment they go to sleep. And if we are brutally honest with ourselves, even the things we do to be different are often meant to gain acceptance.*

But some people never feel accepted, or a part of things—they just feel different in some way. They often get treated poorly: sometimes it’s a cold shoulder, a lonely lunch table, or a joke made at someone else’s expense. Other times it’s being chewed up and spit out by those higher up on the social ladder. We’ve all seen it happen, and it’s awful.

But what about when it happens among Christians? What if we care more about being cool than Christ-like? It may not be as obvious as shoving someone in a locker, but it can be just as devastating. It forces people away instead of inviting them in. It divides us into the “accepted,” and the “outcasts.” And it completely misses the point of what following Jesus is all about.

Jesus is all about the outcast: the lost, the broken, and those on the fringe. Jesus, the Messiah, took time for kids and people with incredibly contagious and deadly diseases. His close disciples included ordinary fishermen with dirt under their nails and even the dreaded tax collector. Jesus saw beyond our groups of “accepted” and “outcasts”—beyond race, gender, or social standing—and into the hearts of people he loved.

That’s what this series and these next sessions are all about: seeing others through the eyes of Jesus and inviting the outcasts in.

Speaker’s Note: After this Introduction, you can jump right into Large Group Talk 1 (*On the Outside*). Or show the intro video as a segue. Remind students that there is space to take notes on **pages 3 and 4** of their Student Book.