



## Not Just a Loser

Season 1: Episode 1 – “Pilot”

### The Melody – Objective/Lesson Overview

When society tells us that fame and popularity are “so important,” are we all losers for not living up to the impossible standards? Or are all the talents and gifts God has given us important and are what can make us happy?

### The Bridge – Video Clips

*Glee is set in the small town of Lima, Ohio at William McKinley High School. Like most high schools the jocks rule the hallways, and when students don't fit that category they are considered losers. The series focuses on a high school show choir, also known as the Glee Club, “New Directions.” The Glee Club is taken over by Mr. Will Schuester after the former teacher is fired. In the series you will get to know fame-hungry Rachel Berry, diva Mercedes Jones, flamboyant Kurt Hummel, paraplegic electric guitar player Artie Abrams and stuttering Goth Tina Cohen-Chang. In this episode Rachel threatens to leave the club if Mr. Schuester cannot find a male vocalist with talent comparable to hers. So he discovers that starting quarterback Finn Hudson is secretly a talented singer and finds an alternative way of recruiting him, when being in the glee club is not the popular thing to do.*

**NOTE:** These clip times are according to the DVD set of this episode, which for this episode is the Directors Cut with extra footage, different from the one shown on TV.

**Clip 1** – 0:00- 1:36 – For those who aren't familiar with *Glee*, this clip gives a good overview of how the school is ruled by the jocks and how Mr. Schuester is motivated by his old Glee Club teacher. (This clip will set the tone of the discussion.)

**Clip 2** – 5:04-11:08 – Clip begins with students auditioning to be in the Glee Club and gives a glimpse of who some of the students are.

**Clip 3** – 17:58-23:06 – Clip begins with the audition signup sheet that Mr. Schuester posted after speaking with the football team in the locker room. It didn't go so well and Mr.

Schuester is panicking about what to do to help the Glee Club until he hears someone singing in the shower.

**Clip 4** – 38:33-40:18 – Since Finn has been in the Glee Club he has had to miss a football practice, but was too embarrassed to tell his best friend Puck. So he lies by telling Puck that his mom was in the hospital getting her prostate removed. Puck finds out that Finn was lying so he and the football team are mad at him and for being in the Glee Club. Finn is now trying to explain to Puck why he had to lie and get back on the good side with the football team. Puck has an idea of how to make that happen which involves a Porta-Potty and a wheelchair.

**Clip 5** – 43:48-47:25 – Mr. Schuester has told the Glee Club that he has to quit teaching in order to help support his family by becoming an accountant. The high school guidance counselor reminds him that it isn't how much money you make that will make you happy, but what you do. As Mr. Schuester is walking down the hall trying to figure out what makes him happy, he hears music in the auditorium.

## The Chorus – Discussion Questions

### Clip 1

1. What did you notice that is similar to your school? Is it realistic that students get thrown into a dumpster for being different? If not a dumpster, what else?
2. Finn shows a little compassion by letting Kurt take off his Marc Jacobs coat. Do you think he is only throwing Kurt in the dumpster because that's what jocks are "supposed to do"? But if Finn is just playing the part of a mean jock, aren't his actions still wrong? Do you think the bullies in your school are really mean or playing the part?
3. Mr. Schuester looks at the trophy case to a picture of when he was in high school and they won the National Show Choir Competition. He then is inspired by his Glee Club teacher who said, "By its very definition, glee is about opening yourself up to joy." What in your life opens you up to joy?

### Clip 2

1. What does the song ("R-E-S-P-E-C-T" by Aretha Franklin ) that Mercedes chose to audition with say about her?
2. What about Kurt who sang "Mr. Cellophane" from the musical *Chicago*? The chorus says "Cellophane/Mister Cellophane/Shoulda been my name/Mister Cellophane/'Cause you can look right through me/Walk right by me/And never know I'm there..." What is Kurt trying to say?
3. Why do you think Tina chose to sing Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl"? Does she really want to kiss a girl or is she trying to get attention? Is she also making a statement by the way she dresses?
4. Rachel puts a star by her name as a metaphor that she is a star. Is this a reminder to her of what she wants to be or does she hope that other people will see her as one?
5. Rachel said she posts a MySpace video every day to keep her talent alive and growing. Then she says that being anonymous is worse than being poor; why does she think that?

6. Rachel believes that fame is the most important thing in our culture. Do you agree? Why?
7. Rachel wants change in her life now because she feels the clock ticking and doesn't want to leave high school with nothing to show for her time spent there. Have you ever felt like Rachel, tired of being laughed at or that everyone hates you? Or if not, what would it feel like to think that?

#### Clip 3

1. After Mr. Schuester discovers that one of the most popular students and the starting quarterback, Finn, can sing, do you think it was OK to accuse him of having something he didn't have even if it might work out for the best for Finn
2. Mr. Schuester tells Finn that he expects more out of him. Do all teens feel that burden? Do they feel it all the time, some of the time or most of the time?
3. Finn says that he deals with peer pressure and "backne" as well as his dad dying in Iraq. What are some of the other pressures teens have to deal with these days and what makes it hard to do so?
4. When Finn is helping the Emerald Dream guy paint the grass he says that it was at that moment that he would do whatever it took to make all of his mom's sacrifices worth it. Do you ever think about the sacrifices your parents have made for you to be able to be a part of the drama club, of the football team, to take dance lessons? What about paying for club fees or church camp, for your cell phone or your car?

#### Clip 4

1. Have you ever felt like you had to lie to your friends in order to hide something that you thought they would stop liking you for? Is it easier to hide who you are than to be who you are?
2. At what point does Finn realize that he is a "loser"? What makes him a loser?
3. What does Finn mean by "We're all losers"? Do you agree with him; why or why not?
4. Finn said that he isn't afraid to call himself a loser, but he is afraid to turn his back on something that made him happy for the first time in his life. What's something in your life you don't want to turn away from because it is important to you regardless of what others might think?
5. Finn stands up for what he believes is best for not only him, but for those in Glee and the football team. What have you stood up for that you've believed in?

#### Clip 5

1. What in life have you sacrificed to make others happy which made you push aside what made you happy?
2. What character in *Glee* did you relate with the most in this episode? How did you see yourself in him or her?
3. Try thinking about some of the characters and how it would feel to be in their shoes at your school.
4. How would it be, being yourself in your school and standing up for something you believe in like Finn did? Could you do it? Would you do it? Will you do it?

## **The Verses – Scriptures**

**Read Matthew 12:1-14; Galatians 5:16-26; Isaiah 43:1-7; Ephesians 2:10**

In high school and even in middle school there tends to be an unwritten law of being “cool.” This unwritten law is overseen by those who have defined what “cool” is. Anyone who doesn’t follow along the lines of the so-called “cool” law is seen as a loser, a nerd, a social misfit and even an outcast.

In the Matthew passage Jesus was somewhat of an outcast. He wasn’t following the law in the way the Pharisees saw fit. They wanted to catch Jesus in the act of what they saw as wrong to make him an outcast so that no one would want to listen, follow or pay any attention to what He was trying to do. How is this the same in your school or even in youth group? Are others not accepted for certain things that they do or activities that they take part in? Are the ones who are dictating what is “cool” seeking out those who don’t fit into that category; how so and why? Have you been one who was treated as an outcast or have you treated someone in a way that might make him or her feel like they are one? Like Finn, were you just going along with the crowd?

The Galatians verses remind us that we are not to be led by our selfish desires, but led by the spirit. How can we live out that charge in our day-to-day lives? What might we have to give up to not be led by our selfish desires?

## **The Coda – Final Words**

When we are followers of Christ we are reassured that we have been created by an all-powerful God.

When we read the Isaiah passage we can be reminded that God has redeemed us and we don’t have to be afraid because that redemption is worth so much more than being “cool.” Through every action or step we take, our God is with us.

In the Ephesians passage we are reminded that not only did God create us, but we are a masterpiece. He desires us and plans for us to do good things. Even when those good things may seem like they fall in the “loser” category, know that Jesus was carrying a big L on his forehead, too, and you are not alone.

## **The Rehearsal – Take Home Challenge**

Think of something that you might be afraid of doing because it might make others look at you differently or be categorized as a so-called loser, like when Finn was afraid to admit he was in the Glee Club.

1. Are you secretly taking piano lessons, but afraid to share your gift with others because you may not be as good as you think you should be?
2. Do you not go swimming in the summer because you can't swim well?
3. Are you afraid to read scripture in front of the church because you might stumble on a few words?
4. Do you want to be in the talent show, but afraid your friends might make fun of you?
5. Are you afraid to tell your friends you go to church every Sunday because they might think you are a goody-two-shoes?

Whatever it may be, find a way to overcome that fear of being a “loser.” It may mean that you find others who have that common interest to share it with. It may mean that people make fun of you OR it could inspire them to go out and do the same. It may seem like a “loser” thing to do, but it might be that you can make being a “loser” cool. Be the one who isn't afraid anymore.