

UNIDENTIFIED

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE

SESSION 1: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Students will learn why we all lack a true, purposeful identity, where we are meant to find one, and how they can go about doing so.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:26-27, 3:1-19; John 1:1-3, 14

SESSION SNAPSHOT: Students are not strangers to the fact that they lack an identity. They long for something to give them worth, value, importance, and significance, but often, they feel the opposite...unidentified. God created all of us in His image, gave us His name, and declared us worthy, priceless, and significant, so why don't we feel that way? We all struggle with this problem of being and feeling unidentified, but because Jesus took on flesh and dwelt among us, we can find our rightful identity in Him. In this session, your students will discover this truth and learn how it changes everything they do.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.



TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Leader's Guide comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Unidentified* Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video, click on the link below:

- <https://youtu.be/cDf3B1q7w8U>

THE DETAILS

GENESIS

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Time frame:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). Most of the material originated from Moses himself, and depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC.
- **Purpose:** Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eve's fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

JOHN

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, *"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name."*

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is found in Genesis 1 and 3. In Genesis 1, we see that God created us in His image, and Adam and Eve found their identity in Him, but we've all experienced that this is not so easy for us. Everyone will, at some point, wonder why it's so hard to "find themselves," and Genesis 3 shows us that it's because we are separated from God and disconnected from the identity He created us to have. Sin has taken away and hidden our true identity found in a right relationship with God, and this is why we try to find worth, value, and importance in so many other things. Students should leave this lesson having learned that, separated from God, we're all unidentified, but through Jesus, we gain access to true identity in Him.

THE TAKEAWAY

Students look to things such as sports, relationships, positions, and status to fulfill their need for identity. While these things are not inherently wrong, we're only ever meant to find our identity in God. Use these passages to show your students that the only satisfying, fulfilling identity is found in Jesus, God the Son. This doesn't mean they can't participate in sports, clubs, or relationships, but that their identity in Christ changes how they operate in every area of their lives.

LESSON PLAN

THE LESSON PLAN CONTAINS THREE ELEMENTS:

- **Getting Started** - An interactive way of kicking off your time by introducing the lesson's general focus
- **Digging In** - The section where you'll settle down and dig through Scripture
- **Wrapping Up** - The section where you'll give students practical takeaways to apply in their lives

GETTING STARTED

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This lesson will utilize pages 5-9 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.
 - This activity will use pages 5-6.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Since this is the first Small Group session, you may want to communicate any specific instructions, announcements, or details to your group.
 - If you're staying in a host home, make sure your students know the "house rules."
 - Pass along any other need-to-know info about the event.
 - Make sure your students have a Bible, their Student Books, and something to write with.
 - You may want to have some extra Bibles in case a student forgets theirs.

FIRST, welcome students to their first Small Group Session. If there are students in your group who may not know others that well, have a time where you go around and introduce each other. When you're finished, have students turn to page 5 in their Student Books. Read or have a student read the session intro on page 5.

THEN, direct their attention to page 6, where they'll find the Getting Started activity, and split them up evenly into groups. Explain to your students that they're about to have a chance to see if they can identify some of the world's most famous people. But there's a catch. It won't be as simple as looking at a picture and writing down the right name. Explain to your students that they have to figure out who each person is based solely on their achievements, failures, heroic acts, endeavors, etc.

NEXT, give them a time limit, maybe 2-3 minutes, to work together and write down a guess for each person. Feel free to have some fun with this. Play some music, limit how many of the clues they can use for each person, or make it a race to see who can finish first with all the correct answers.

THEN, once each group is done or the time limit has been reached, reveal the correct answers and declare one of the groups the winner. If there's a tie, consider having some sort of tie-breaker. Again, have fun with this. The correct answers are...

- Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson
- Nikola Tesla
- Taylor Swift
- SpongeBob SquarePants

FINALLY, when you've finished, **say something like:**

- We just found out how good (or bad) we are at identifying people by what they do/have done. It's really easy to think about identity in this way, but we're about to discover that the Bible has something different to say about identity.

IF THERE ARE NO COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, TRANSITION TO THE DIGGING IN SECTION OF YOUR LESSON.

DIGGING IN

- ***Student Book Pages***

- This activity will utilize pages 7-8 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.

- ***Additional Instructions***

- You'll want to make sure students have something to write with and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 7 of their Student Books and give them a few minutes to write down what they or other people would say they are. Answers could include "a daughter, a brother, a baseball player, a dancer, a club president, a good student, a gamer, etc." Give them a few minutes, and then **ask:**

- Take a look at the things you wrote down. Even though you may have not made this connection before, some of us most likely find our identity in these things. Our worth, value, and importance are caught up in being these things that we wrote down. Now, let's take a second and write down what it is about these things that make us feel worth, value, significance, or importance.
 - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, once they finish, have a brief discussion of what the world and/or your students think about their individual identities and why having an identity is so important. Try to keep the conversation centered on where students find or are told to find their worth, value, or importance. Try to get students thinking about what makes them who they are. You don't have to spend a ton of time here; you're just laying the foundation. Then **say something like:**

- We all have a desire to be seen and known, and that leads us all to try and find our identity, our worth/value/importance, in many different things. But God's original plan for our identity and the source of it was quite different. Let's look at Genesis 1 to see what that plan was.

NEXT, encourage them to find Genesis 1 in their Bible. If you think it would be helpful, use the *Details* section of the *Bible Background* to give some context. Then explain to your students that it's important that you set the stage for the passage you're about to study. **Say something like:**

- We're at the very beginning of all history here. God is in the middle of creating all things. He's spent 5 days creating everything from light itself to birds and fish. Now, on the 6th day, God starts by creating "beasts of the earth," as it says in verse 25, but He's saved the best for last. He has just one more thing to create, and that's where we pick up.

THEN, direct their attention to the activity on pages 7-8. Read or have a student

read Genesis 1:26-27. Then, work through the questions below, which are also found in the Student Book. **Ask:**

- **When God was planning to create humans, who or what did He want them to be like?**
 - **Answer:** God wanted to create them in His image! He created humans to be like Him and after His likeness, which means that humans, in many ways, reflect the nature of God.
- **What do you think it means to be created in the image of God?**
 - **Answer:** Help students reach the point of understanding that being created in the image of God means that the source of our identity and our identity itself, who we are, is found in Him. We all have inherent worth and value because we are created in His image and likeness.
- **What do you think being created in God's image says about our relationship with God?**
 - **Answer:** Help students realize that God delighted in creating humanity. Because they were created in His image, Adam and Eve were in perfect relationship with God and lacked nothing, and that's exactly what God wants.

Here, get your students thinking about what must've changed between Genesis 1 and today. **Say something like:**

- **God created humanity in His image to rule over all of His creation. By creating humans in His image, God gave us all worth, value, and importance. He gave us an identity in Himself. Adam and Eve, the first two humans, were perfect in this identity. So what happened between then and now? Why were Adam and Eve able to find their identity in God so easily when the rest of us struggle with feeling unidentified every day? If we turn just two chapters over, we'll see what happened. Let's take a look at Genesis 3.**

NEXT, begin this section by explaining that God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them the authority and freedom to take care of it. They only had one rule: don't eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then read or have a student read Genesis 3:1-19. **Ask:**

- **In your own words, describe what happened in this passage.**
 - **Answers will vary.** Even though Adam & Eve were perfectly identified in God and lacked nothing, their mistake was seeking what they thought was a higher identity. Try to focus on the facts that Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, hid from Him, and then God punished them and cast them out of the Garden. Emphasize that there were consequences for their sin/disobedience.
- **What do you think you would've done if you were in Adam or Eve's place? Do your current decisions and behavior really agree with that?**
 - **Answers will vary.** Try to get students to see that, in Adam and Eve's place, we all would've sinned too.
- **Why did Adam and Eve have to leave the Garden? Why do you think their punishment was so severe?**
 - **Answer:** Make sure students understand that our sin has consequences. When God said they would die, He didn't mean a physical death but a spiritual one. Their spiritual connection and relationship with God were broken

because He is perfectly holy. Being created in His image, Adam and Eve were holy too, but when they sinned, their image, their identity was tarnished.

- **How do you think this impacted their identity?**
 - **Answer:** Adam and Eve lost many things because of their sin, one being their identity. They no longer had a right relationship with God, so their identity in Him was severed. In a word, they were unidentified.
- **What do you think this means for you and your identity?**
 - **Answer:** We've inherited a sinful nature, so, just like Adam and Eve, our God-given identities have also been lost. Unless our relationship with God is as it should be, we can feel unidentified, worthless, unimportant, and invaluable.

Connect the dots for your students and help them see that we all feel unidentified because we have all sinned and separated ourselves from God. Help them understand that this makes us feel like we have to search and find our own identity, worth, and value in other things. But we're not stuck there. **Say something like:**

- This separation wasn't just a problem for Adam and Eve. We're all separated from God, and that's why we all feel unidentified at times. It's why we all want to figure out who we are or what makes us valuable. And that can be frustrating because we weren't at creation, so how are we supposed to know what it looks like to be connected to God or find our identity in Him? How are we supposed to fix our relationship with Him? Thankfully, God has given us an example. Let's jump forward to John 1.

THEN, read or have a student read John 1:1-3, 14. When they have finished, **ask:**

- **Who do you think "the Word" is?**
 - **Answer:** Jesus!
- **Is it hard to believe that He was there at creation in the very beginning? Why or why not?**
 - **Answers will vary.**
- **What does it mean that all things were created through Him?**
 - **Answer:** Help students understand that since Jesus was involved in creation and is God, Adam and Eve were made in His image. Because Jesus is God, all of humanity's identity and worth are rightly found in Him.
- **Why do you think it's important that Jesus, God Himself, became flesh and dwelt among us?**
 - **Answer:** We could never make our relationship with God right, so we could never gain our rightful identity back. Only God could mend our relationship, and Jesus came to do just that. Through Him, we can be forgiven of our sins and recover our identity.

FINALLY, pull this all together for your students. Explain that while other things may offer us an identity, only Jesus can truly provide one, and the truth of the Gospel is that He not only longs to give it to us but will if we only ask. **Say something like:**

- We're all aware that there's a serious problem with the world and how it works. We see it, hear it, feel it, and experience it every day. And if we really thought about it, we'd realize that there's a serious problem with us, too. We know we're missing something deep inside, and we can try to fill that space with a bunch of different things. But whether we try to find our identity in a sport, school, another person, or even our appearance, it's wrong. Those things will never provide a satisfying identity because our identity is and always has been meant to be found in Jesus. It's only through Him that we can once again live in the image of God.

ASK IF ANYONE HAS ANY THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS, THEN TRANSITION TO THE WRAPPING UP PORTION OF YOUR LESSON.

WRAPPING UP

- *Student Book Pages*

- o This activity will utilize page 9 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.

- *Additional Instructions*

- o Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 9 in their books. Explain to them that on this page, they will see three empty boxes. These boxes work together with the three blanks on the previous page where they wrote what they identify with and what about those things makes them feel worth, value, significance, etc.

THEN direct students' attention to the three boxes. Explain that they're going to have a few minutes to take those identities and think about how the truth we've discussed today can change them. **Say something like this:**

- These things that you wrote down aren't inherently bad things. It's only when we find our worth or our identity in them that we stray into bad territory. The only place we can and were ever meant to find true worth, value, and identity is in our relationship with God. So let's think about this. If you were to find your worth, significance, value, and importance in God instead, how would that change the way you do these things? How would it change the way you think about them? What about your perspective would be different?

When enough time has passed, lead them in a discussion about what they wrote down. Allow students to share their answers and respond to other students' answers. When you've finished, **say something like:**

- What we've learned in this session is that due to our sin nature and separation from God, we're all unidentified and searching for an identity to call our own. But the problem is that these things we identify with are not where we're meant to find it. They may satisfy an immediate need or make us feel a certain way, but that never lasts. A fulfilling identity (and the only place where we can find our true worth and value) is found only in God and what He says about us. He is the Creator of our identity. He is the Source of our identity. And our being identified in Him is the only way to be truly satisfied.

FINALLY, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work

through them. The first devotion is on page 35.

IF THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS, CLOSE IN PRAYER FOR YOUR GROUP.