

UNIDENTIFIED

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE

SESSION 4: IDENTIFIED FOR A PURPOSE

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Students will learn that God gives them a new identity for the purpose of fulfilling His mission on Earth. Even though they may believe they are unqualified to participate in God's work, they will discover that Jesus has been given all authority, and His power will work through them to fulfill the purpose He gives us.

SCRIPTURE: John 3:16-17; Matthew 28:16-20

SESSION SNAPSHOT: We all have big dreams. We have passions and goals, and we can spend a lot of time planning out exactly how we're going to accomplish them. The world tells students that they need to find their purpose in life and do whatever it takes to fulfill it, but if their identity is in Christ, they won't need to look for long. God's mission in the world has always been to save it through His Son, Jesus, and when we're identified in Him, we get to participate in His work. We may feel ill-equipped or unqualified, but because our identity is in the One who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, we are empowered to be His witnesses even to the end of the earth.

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 4 Teacher Prep Video, click on the link below:

- <https://youtu.be/EzesVhPfw2A>

THE DETAILS

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."

MATTHEW

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point for this lesson is found in Matthew 28:19-20, where Jesus commands all of His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. As we see in John 3:16-17, God's mission in the world has always been to redeem it through the sacrificial death and resurrection of His Son. If God loves the world enough to do this, then, as those who find our identity in Christ, we are called to do the same. God doesn't make us wait until the end of our lives for our reidentification to matter. He identifies us for a purpose and invites us into His work of bringing near those who are far off through faith in Jesus.

THE TAKEAWAY

Students will see that their reidentification doesn't have only eternal ramifications but present-day effects as well. They will learn that, though they may be tempted to go to great lengths to fulfill their self-made purpose and mission, God has given them a purpose much bigger and more significant than anything they could come up with on their own. The gift of a brand new identity in Jesus is not meant to be kept to ourselves; it's meant to be shared. They will discover that God doesn't require them to be smart enough, talented enough, charming enough, or _____ enough but that, through their identity in Jesus, He empowers them to accomplish the task He has set before them. Students will evaluate their individual spheres of influence and be challenged to be Christ's witnesses in each 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 29-33 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.
 - This activity will use pages 29-30.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - 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, ask your students to turn to page 29 and, if you think it would be helpful, read or have a student read the session intro. If you choose not to do this, direct their attention to page 30, where they'll find the Getting Started activity. This activity will first ask your students to write down their greatest goal in life. Encourage them to dream big, think out of the box, and jot down whatever comes to mind, no matter how impossible it may seem. Tell them to start thinking through each and every detail of how they're going to achieve that goal, but make sure they don't start writing just yet. Have some fun with this and get them excited and eager to write out their plans.

NEXT, when students have had a little bit of time to think, tell them to toss their books in a pile in the middle of the room and mix the pile up. Then, have students draw a random book out of the pile and turn to page 30 without looking at the name on the book. If a student draws their own book, throw a few back in and reshuffle. Tell your students that they now have a set amount of time (1-2 minutes) to thoroughly plan out and accomplish someone else's life goal and mission. This activity is meant to be difficult for your students to complete, so lean toward setting a shorter time.

THEN, when the set amount of time has passed, tell your students to pass the book back to its owner. Give each student time to read through the plan that was written for them, and feel free to have a few students share. Once finished, lead students in a short discussion. **Ask:**

- **How hard was it to have to try to accomplish someone else's big dreams?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Was it difficult to get as excited about someone else's goals as it was yours? Why?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How successful were you at accomplishing someone else's mission? How successful was someone else at accomplishing yours? What do you think would have helped?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, begin transitioning to the Digging In section of your lesson by **saying something like:**

- We can spend a lot of our time dreaming of all the great things we're going to do with our lives. We have big plans and big goals. We're often very focused and on a mission to accomplish our own plans, goals, and purpose. And the world around us only fans that flame. Our culture tells us that we should do whatever it takes to achieve and be successful. But when Jesus gives us a new identity in Him, we're given a different purpose. We're given a new mission. As we saw in the activity we just did, it's hard to get excited about, much less accomplish, a goal, mission, or purpose if we don't personally identify with it. That's why, in this last session, we're going to discover what our new purpose is and how we can start doing it.

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 31-32 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, further introduce the idea of this session. Try to get your students thinking about the purpose behind being identified in Christ. The world leads us to believe that God's way of living is just a list of do's and don'ts, and the only thing that really matters to Him is that we're nice people, don't do bad things, and don't spend eternity in hell. But that's not true! God certainly cares about how we live and our eternal destination, but He also has exciting plans for our lives that extend far past mere rules. Being identified in Him doesn't resign us to boring, mundane lives. He brings us into His own mission and lets us take part in a bigger purpose, one that's far better than anything we could dream up ourselves. **Say something like:**

- In our last session, we learned that our God-given identities require us to identify with Jesus' death by denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily so that we can also identify with Jesus' resurrection and eternal life. But maybe that makes you wonder if God only cares about your future or if He has a plan for your today, too. Make no mistake, God doesn't give us His identity to simply make us wait for eternity to do something with it. He has a plan. He has a mission. And when we're identified in Him, we get to take part in that mission here and now. But in order to do that, we have to first know what His mission is. Let's take a look at John 3.

THEN, encourage students to turn to John 3 and page 31 of their Student Books. Explain that this story happens very early on in Jesus' ministry. In two short verses, we discover God's mission on Earth. Once we understand what God's mission is, our ability to identify with and live out our new purpose greatly increases. Once we know what He's up to, it's much easier to know what we need to be up to. Read or have a student read John 3:16-17.

- For what 2 reasons did God send Jesus into the world?
 - **Answer:** His love for the world and desire to save it.
- What mission did God want to accomplish by sending Jesus?
 - **Answer:** To save the world through Him. To give eternal life to whoever believes in Him.
- Then, if your identity is in Jesus, what is your mission and purpose in this life?
 - **Answer:** To love the world around you and bring people to know and believe in Jesus.
- What are your initial feelings or thoughts about that?
 - **Answers will vary.**

Before moving on to the next passage, engage your students in the weight and importance of this newfound purpose. Get them thinking about how they're supposed to help accomplish such a mission. They may feel inadequate, unqualified, or powerless to participate in God's plans, so try to meet them in that tension. **Say something like:**

- If Jesus, God Himself, was the only one with the power to save the world, how are we supposed to help? What qualifies us to participate in this mission? What power do we have? You may feel like you don't have the tools, experience, knowledge, or skill required to accomplish the purpose God has given you. You're not alone in feeling that way. But remember that you are created in His image. He is the source of your identity and purpose. So no matter how big, small, or scary whatever He asks you to do is, He will equip you with everything you need to fulfill the purpose He's given you.

NEXT, instruct students to begin turning to Matthew 28 in their Bibles. Explain that this story is at the very end of Matthew's gospel. Jesus has been crucified and resurrected, and He is about to ascend back to Heaven. But before He leaves, He has a crucial message for His disciples. Then read or have a student read Matthew 28:16-20. **Ask:**

- Why do you think Jesus tells His disciples that He has all authority before He sends them out?
 - **Answers will vary.** Emphasize here that the disciples were not extraordinary men. They were regular guys with regular flaws, just like us. They knew they couldn't fulfill this purpose on their own, and so did Jesus. That's why He says this. It is His authority that will empower them, equip them, and guide them in this mission, not their own.
- According to verses 19-20, what is your purpose and mission once your identity is in Jesus?
 - **Answer:** Go, make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that Jesus taught.
- How does Jesus having all authority impact your identity and ability to fulfill God's purpose for your life?
 - **Answers will vary.** Try to get students to realize that if their identity is in Jesus, His authority also empowers, equips, and guides them. They are filled with His power through the Holy Spirit. He is with them in everything they do.

- In your own words, what is a “disciple?” How would you go about making one?
 - *Answers will vary.* Generally, a disciple is a follower and lifelong learner.
- What might this look like in your own life?
 - *Answers will vary but may include:* Serving at church, telling my friends about Jesus, starting a Bible study, showing love to those who are less fortunate than me, etc.

FINALLY, end the Digging In section by reminding your students that God doesn’t unidentify us from sin and reidentify us in Jesus for the sole purpose of eternal life. We don’t have to wait until the end for it to matter. While eternity is a crucial part of His plan, He also gives us spiritual life and a new identity so that we can participate in His mission in the world. Make it clear that God doesn’t need us to accomplish His mission. It’s not like Jesus’ work is unfinished. But God invites us to play a role in something much bigger than ourselves. Explain that Jesus’ command to His disciples still applies to His followers today. Because our identity has been changed through Jesus, we should respond by spreading the Gospel to others. The joy, new life, and new identity we’ve been given in Jesus should make us long to share this life and identity with others. **Say something like:**

- We’ve covered a lot over the last four sessions. We’ve identified the cause of our identity problem. We discovered the truth that, though we were once identified by our sinful nature, Jesus has unidentified us from our sin by taking our sin upon Himself so that we can be identified in Him. We learned that being reidentified in Jesus means living a life like His, one of service and self-sacrifice, because the only way we can identify with His resurrection and life is by identifying with His death. And it all points to what we learned in this session - that God has given us a new identity for a purpose. Our identities are for the sake of making His identity known to the world around us. Because this identity in Jesus isn’t something we keep to ourselves. It’s meant to be shared so that whoever believes in Him will receive the same gift we’ve been given...forgiveness, eternal life, and a new identity in Jesus.

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

WRAPPING UP

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize page 33 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Make sure students have their Bible and something to write with.

FIRST, direct students to page 33 in their books, where they will see Acts 1:8 and three big circles. Jesus commanded His disciples to spread the Gospel, be His witnesses, and make disciples in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. This command is extended to us as well, albeit in a different context. Explain to your students that “Jerusalem” would’ve been the immediate surrounding context - the disciples’ closest sphere of influence. “Judea and Samaria” would be the area of influence right outside of that, and “the ends of the earth” could be someone we would never have contact with normally, or it can be a completely separate people group across the world.

THEN, encourage students to begin thinking about the people in their individual spheres of influence - their Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and ends of the earth. Say that some examples for each category might be: "my uncle, my next-door neighbor, and the people in my city suffering from homelessness." They may not think that they have any influence in their world, so explain that they have more influence than they realize. There have been many spiritual movements kickstarted by young people. Just one small act of kindness, a selfless deed, or a step of faith is enough for God to do miraculous things through them.

NEXT, have students break off individually and write down the people who came to mind in each corresponding circle. Encourage them to be as specific as possible. Below these circles, there will be 3 questions, which are listed below. Have students reflect on how they can take Jesus' mission of bringing a new identity and eternal life to whoever believes in Him to each area of their life.

- **How can you live in your God-given purpose toward the people in your "Jerusalem?"**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How can you live in your God-given purpose toward the people in your "Judea and Samaria?"**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How can you live in your God-given purpose toward the people in your "ends of the earth?"**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, ask students if they are willing to share, and have a few share how they plan to participate in God's mission in their world. Ask if there are any questions or additional comments. Remind 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 final devotion is on page 41.

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