

Who gets to tell you who you are?

Your identity is too important to be built on opinions, popularity, mistakes, achievements, or feelings. Start with what God says is true.

60 minutes / Identity + New Life / 2 Corinthians 5:17

Bring a printed Bible (NKJV), paper, and pens. Use your Bible for full Scripture readings.

LEADER PREP • 5 MINUTES

Go deeper than self-esteem.

Students receive messages about identity constantly: grades, appearance, athletic ability, relationships, social media, popularity, failure, success, family expectations, and their own emotions.

The Christian answer is not simply, "Believe in yourself."

Scripture gives us something much stronger: **know who God is, understand what He says about you, and allow Christ to transform who you are becoming.**

Biblical identity is not permission to invent ourselves. It is the discovery that our lives ultimately belong to God.

THE WIN

Tonight's win is a student beginning to replace "This is who everyone says I am" with "What does God say is true about me?"

TONIGHT'S FLOW

Identify the voices. Then return to truth.

Help students recognize what is shaping the way they see themselves and compare those messages with what Scripture says.

15 MIN / Table Ask students what people their age most commonly use to decide whether they are valuable, successful, attractive, important, or accepted.

15 MIN / Word Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and selected identity Scriptures below. Use the teaching points to establish a biblical foundation.

20 MIN / Talk Help students identify the loudest voices shaping the way they see themselves.

10 MIN / Practice + Pray Replace one false identity statement with biblical truth and pray over students personally.

THE BIG IDEA

You don't discover your identity by looking deeper into yourself. You discover it by looking to Christ.

Jesus does more than improve the old version of us. Through the new birth, He gives us new life. Who we are begins with who He is and what He is doing in us.

SCRIPTURE

A new creation.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Paul says that if anyone is in Christ, **"he is a new creation."**

Christianity is not merely behavior modification. Jesus does not simply help us become a slightly better version of ourselves.

Through salvation, God forgives sin, gives new spiritual life, and begins forming us into the people He created us to be.

Our past matters. Our experiences matter. Our emotions matter. But none of them have the final authority to define us. **Christ does.**

TEACHING GUIDE • 15 MINUTES

Four truths to establish.

Identity should produce humility, holiness, confidence in Christ, and freedom from constantly needing everyone else's approval.

01 You were created by God.

Your life is not an accident. Humanity was created by God and bears His image. Your worth begins with your Creator, not your accomplishments, appearance, popularity, or usefulness to someone else.

02 Sin has affected all of us.

Biblical identity does not pretend everything inside us is automatically good or trustworthy. Scripture says all have sinned. Our desires, decisions, and thinking need redemption. That is why we need Jesus.

03 In Christ, you are made new.

The new birth changes the center of our identity. We are forgiven, reconciled to God, brought into His family, and given new spiritual life. Your worst moment does not have to become your permanent name.

04 God is still forming you.

Salvation does not mean God leaves every part of our lives unchanged. He calls His people into holiness. Through His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, God continues shaping our desires, character, choices, relationships, and conduct.

IDENTIFY THE VOICES

Something is always trying to name you.

PERFORMANCE

"I am what I achieve."

Grades, trophies, followers, accomplishments, and recognition can become measurements of personal worth.

PEOPLE

"I am what they think."

Approval feels powerful. Rejection feels personal. But another person's opinion does not have authority to determine your value.

PAST

"I am what I did."

Failure can become an identity. Jesus offers forgiveness, restoration, and a future that is not imprisoned by yesterday.

FEELINGS

"I am whatever I feel."

Feelings are real and should not be ignored, but feelings change. God's truth gives us an anchor deeper than emotion.

RETURN TO TRUTH

What does Scripture say?

I am created by God.

Genesis 1:26-27 - Human life carries dignity because humanity was created in the image of God.

I need a Savior.

Romans 3:23 - Biblical identity begins honestly: all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.

I can be made new in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Jesus offers more than self-improvement. He gives new life.

I belong to God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - My life is not ultimately my own. I have been called to glorify God with it.

I am called to holiness.

1 Peter 1:15-16 - Grace does not leave us unchanged. God calls His people to reflect His holy character.

God is still working in me.

Philippians 1:6 - Your current struggle is not necessarily the final chapter of what God is doing in your life.

TALK

Ask what is shaping the way they see themselves.

- 01** What do you think people your age feel the most pressure to prove about themselves?
- 02** Which voice is easiest to believe: performance, people's opinions, your past, or your feelings?
- 03** What's the difference between saying "Just be yourself" and asking, "Who is God calling me to become?"
- 04** Why is it important to know both that God loves us and that God wants to change us?
- 05** What is one false statement about yourself that you need God's truth to challenge?

OPTIONAL / KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

- How do you usually respond when someone's opinion of you changes?
- What is the difference between admitting a mistake and letting it define your whole life?
- Which truth in today's Scriptures do you need to remember this week?
- How can we encourage one another without pretending that our struggles are not real?

Choose what helps your group. You do not need to ask every question.

PRACTICE + PRAY

STUDENT PRACTICE

Replace the sentence.

Ask students to privately write one sentence they regularly believe about themselves: "I'm not enough," "Nobody wants me," "I'll always be this way," "I have to prove myself," or another honest statement.

Then have them write a biblical truth beside it that speaks more faithfully about who they are and what God can do in them.

PRAYER

"God, tell me what's true."

Give students quiet space to pray: "Father, help me see myself the way Your Word teaches me to. Show me where I have believed something false. Forgive what needs forgiveness. Change what needs changing. Help my life belong completely to You."

LEADER COACHING

Notice this.

- Which students seem to build their identity primarily around achievement?
- Who appears especially affected by the opinions or rejection of other people?
- Is a student carrying shame from a past decision or failure?
- Did anyone reveal an identity struggle that requires a private follow-up conversation?
- Are you reinforcing biblical truth without dismissing students' real emotions and experiences?
- Does a student's disclosure require pastoral or parental involvement beyond the group setting?

BEFORE WEEK EIGHT

Keep replacing lies with truth.

- 01** Encourage students to keep the truth statement they wrote somewhere they will see it this week.
- 02** Ask students to read 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:1-2, and 1 Peter 1:13-16.
- 03** Midweek, ask: "What voice has been loudest in your head this week?"
- 04** Reinforce that biblical identity includes both what Christ has done for us and how He calls us to live.
- 05** Begin listening for the areas where students need biblical convictions rather than borrowed rules. That becomes next week's conversation.

PARENT TABLE TALK

Speak identity before achievement.

Students need homes where they know they are loved while also being continually pointed toward who God is calling them to become.

ASK What makes you feel the most pressure to prove yourself right now?

SHARE Tell your student about a time when your identity became too connected to achievement, another person's opinion, or a failure.

SPEAK Tell your student something you see God developing in their character-not only something they are good at.

PRAY "Father, help us build our lives around Your truth. Make us more like Jesus and teach us to live fully for You."

NEXT

Week 08 - Building Convictions.

Students are learning that God's truth defines who they are. Next, we move from identity to decisions: How do I know what I believe, why I believe it, and how should those beliefs shape the way I live?