

ministry to
 youth

PURPOSE



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Lesson 1



Lesson 1: Unlocking Your True Self



Bible Verses: Ephesians 2:10



Bottom Line: You are uniquely designed
in Christ.

SUPPLIES

- A copy of the handout “1 - Celebrity Impersonations.docx” for your game leader
- A prize for the game-winner (optional)
- Photo of the teacher in 5th grade (optional)

NOTES

All Scripture references are taken from the NLT unless otherwise indicated.

OPENING GAME

Famous Impersonations

GAME SET UP:

Review the handout “1 - Celebrity Impersonations.docx” and make any necessary changes to accommodate your group.

Prepare to show the first 31 seconds of the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEO8tRcpqLY> to your group. (You can also show other/different impersonation clips that resonate more with your group.)

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME:

Say:

- One of the things that I find incredibly funny is celebrity impersonations — when a comedian imitates a celebrity to make a little fun of them.
- Does anyone else like them?
- And they’re even better when the celebrity is there to hear it.
- In case you don’t know what I’m talking about, watch this.

Show the first 31 seconds (or any clip that your group might enjoy more) of the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEO8tRcpqLY>.

Then, continue.

Say:

- I don't know how one learns that one is good at this, but I'm here for it.
- And now you're going to be here for it, too.
- For our game tonight, we're going to have a celebrity impersonation contest.
- First, get into groups of 4 or 5.

Once students are in groups, say:

- We're going to see which group has the best impersonators.
- Take turns and use your best Arnold Schwarzenegger voice to say, "Get to the chopper!"
- Then, you need to pick the best impersonator to send him or her to the front.
- Ready? Go!

Give time for each person to try impersonating Arnold.

Then, have each group send their best impersonator up front.

If you have a really big group, you may want to do multiple rounds in groups before bringing the top 4 to 6 to the front for the final rounds.

Once you have your finalists up front, say:

- Before we start the final round, let's hear each of your Arnold Schwarzenegger impersonations.

Give each finalist a chance to share their "Get to the chopper!"

Then, continue.

- Great job, everyone!

- For this final round, I'm going to let you pick any celebrity from my list and do an impersonation.
- First, we'll see if we can guess who you're impersonating.
- Then, we'll all vote on who we think did the best job.

Invite the finalists over to look at your list of celebrities.

Have them each tell you who they're impersonating, so you don't have duplicates.

Once they're ready, let each finalist do his or her impression and see if your group can guess who the celebrity is.

Once they're all done, vote on the top impersonator, and award a prize to the winner (optional).

TEACH

What's up, everybody?

Welcome to Week One of our new series all about discovering and living out your purpose!

I'm excited about this series because I think it's super-relatable to not only you as teenagers but also to me and the other adults.

We're kicking off the series by talking about your true identity, answering the question, "Who am I?"

Sometimes, we feel like we've got to pretend to be someone we're not — almost like we're impersonating someone else.

There are lots of reasons why we might feel like we need to act like someone other than ourselves: the pressure to perform, the need for approval, the shame of our past.

But the truth is: **You are uniquely designed in Christ.**

Over the next few weeks, we'll talk about how to discover God's will for your life, how God has shaped you to cooperate with his will, and how to overcome obstacles to living out your God-given purpose.

I'm super excited because I think this series has the potential to give all of us more focus in our lives.

Before we jump in, let's have some group discussion time.

Today, we're talking about your identity in Christ, which is your truest identity.

Get in groups of 4 to 5 and answer this question: If you had to describe your identity in Christ using just three emojis, which ones would you pick? And what do they symbolize?

I'll give you three minutes...

Ready? Go!

[Give students a 30-second warning. Then, when time is up, invite several to share, interacting with their responses as appropriate.]

You guys are really creative.

Thanks for sharing!

One fundamental question that every human asks is, "Who am I?"

I'm not talking about what your driver's license says about you.

I'm asking, "Who are you, really?"

As a teenager, you've probably been asking yourself that question for a little while now.

You've probably gone through a few versions of yourself, and you'll probably continue to evolve as you move into adulthood.

For example: raise your hand if you look exactly like you did when you finished fifth grade.

Nobody... just me??

I've actually collected elementary pictures from all of your parents, and we're going to look at them right now...

Just kidding, but wouldn't that be awesome?!

Here's a picture of me in 5th grade... [Optional, if the teacher has a photo to share]

Most of you have different hairstyles.

Some of you have different hair colors.

Most of you are wearing different styles of clothes.

Some of you have very different styles than you did back then.

Most of you are listening to different music, you're watching different shows, and you're using social media that may not have even been invented when you were in fifth grade!

And speaking of identity, social media has had a huge impact on people figuring out who they are — some good, some bad.

But all of these things speak into your journey of discovering your identity.

The reason we're starting this series with a conversation on identity is because, as followers of Jesus, we can look to God's word to help us understand who we really are.

There are a lot of Bible verses that speak to our identity.

They tell us that:

- God created us in His image.
- God loves us unconditionally.
- God accepts us as we are.
- God completely forgives us.

On and on and on, the Bible is filled with truths about who we are.

All these are wonderful and beautiful, and I love them all.

But tonight, I want to focus on a simple truth about our identity that directly connects us to God's will for our lives.

Does anyone remember who Paul is — the guy from the Bible?

Paul was a follower of Jesus who would travel to towns and cities and tell everyone about Jesus.

Then, Paul would help the new followers get organized into a house church, identifying and training some leaders there, and then he'd head to another place.

Occasionally, Paul would send letters back to the leaders of these churches, helping them make sense of challenges or deal with distractions they were facing.

One of those letters, Ephesians, was written to the church in the city of Ephesus.

Would someone read **Ephesians 2:10** out loud for the group?

[I LOVE having students read the Bible out loud, but if it doesn't work for your group, you or another adult can read it.]

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Thanks for reading!

This is a very simple, straightforward verse, but I want to look at each section a little more deeply to see if we can grasp what God wants us to know about ourselves and our purpose.

Let's look at the first few words: "For we are..."

Paul is answering the question, "Who are we?" for all Christ-followers.

If you want to know who you are — who we are as the church — Paul is about to tell us.

And what are we?

God's masterpiece.

Can someone define "masterpiece"?

The definition I found is this: a masterpiece is a work of outstanding artistry, skill, or workmanship, especially one that is considered the greatest work of a person's career.

God doesn't really have a "career" like this, but he is a Creative Artist.

Genesis 1:1 talks about how God began His creation.

Hundreds of thousands of animals, plants, natural wonders, and more, and — get this — we are his masterpiece.

Each of us is a work of outstanding artistry, skill, or workmanship — God's greatest work.

Which means YOU are a work of outstanding artistry, skill, or workmanship.

YOU are God's greatest work.

Then, Paul says that God has "created us anew in Christ Jesus."

"Anew" is a poetic way of saying "new."

So, if you put the first two sentences together, Paul is saying that God created us as His masterpiece.

Then, He created us again in Christ Jesus.

God creates us before we're born.

And God recreates us when we're born again through a relationship with Jesus.

In another passage, 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul says it this way: "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

God created you in perfect oneness with Himself, but our sin broke that oneness.

Jesus broke the power of our sin through his death and resurrection, and when we commit ourselves to him, he restores us to that perfect oneness.

We'll talk about this more in small group later, and I'd love to talk with you if you have questions about it.

Back to tonight's verse, Paul ends by telling us WHY God created us and then recreated us: so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

God is always at work in the world, drawing people to Himself, inviting them to experience the best life has to offer — the abundant life.

And those who are born into His Kingdom, or born again, are invited to cooperate with His work and be a part of others being born into His Kingdom as well.

How do we cooperate with Him?

By obeying Him.

This is the beauty of God's Kingdom: when we live a life of obedience to Him, it's the best life we can live.

PLUS, it's best FOR us.

PLUS, it's best for everyone around us.

If I could summarize this verse, I'd say it like this:

We are the peak of God's creation, and our true identity, broken by sin, is beautifully restored through our faith in Jesus; then, God invites us to cooperate with His Spirit as he invites others to experience a restored identity as well.

You are uniquely designed in Christ.

And this is how our identity is connected to our purpose.

As you head into small group, think about these two questions:

First, have you experienced new life in Christ — have you been born again?

Second, how can your unique identity be a part of God's work to redeem the world?

You'll talk about those questions in a few minutes, so let me pray for you, and then go have a great small group!

[Pray as God's Spirit leads. Then, dismiss the group.]

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you had to describe your identity in Christ using just three emojis, which ones would you pick, and why?
2. What were some of the identities you “tried out” in your journey so far? (Ex: sports, music, clothing style, etc.)
3. What are some typical issues that teenagers run into when trying to understand who they really are? How can they overcome these challenges?
4. What are some of the struggles you’ve faced on your own journey of identity? How have you overcome or how are you overcoming these challenges?
5. Have you experienced new life in Christ? Would anyone like to share their experience?
6. What does Ephesians 2:10 tell us about the connection between our identity and our purpose in Christ?
7. How can a deeper understanding of your identity in Christ help you address and overcome the challenges of your identity journey?
8. How can your unique identity be a part of God’s work to redeem the world? In what ways can embracing our uniqueness benefit both our own faith journeys and our broader church community?
9. In what ways can you help others in their quest to understand their own identities? How might you be a mentor or role model for someone seeking a stronger connection to their faith?