

Individual Identity & Made in God's Image

Dear Facilitator: In this session, we will focus on how each person has a unique identity and is created special by God. Psalm 139:13-16 says that we are wonderfully made, and we'll again focus on the opening chapters of Genesis to learn the importance of being made in God's image (Gen 1: 26-27).

Being made in God's image means we represent Him in the world through our various roles and responsibilities. This includes our main areas of focus: family and work. We each have a unique identity and purpose in how we display God's image in the world, an approach to our lives that means we're partners with God in bringing wholeness and redemption in the world. To do this best, we need to understand how much God loves us, encourage others in our family to believe in God's plan, and learn to follow Him!


It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Recognize that all family members are valuable because God created them and loves them.
2. Practice helping others build a healthy understanding of who God has made them to be.

Blessings

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Last week we discussed that families are God's idea, and parents are responsible for getting to know their children.


Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family? Are you willing to share? We want to celebrate with you.

As we build on the point that family is God's idea, we will talk today about how families are made up of unique individuals who are called to partner with God's work of redemption in the world through their unique roles. Families are where each person can begin to discover their own individual value, identity, purpose, and ultimately, learn to flourish. Today we want you to recognize that all family members are valuable because God created them in His image, and He loves them. We also want each person to practice helping others build a healthy understanding of who God has made them to be.

Introduction *5 minutes*

Object Lesson: Paper Stack

(Fan out a stack of different colored paper.)

 **Say:** Let's look at these different colors of paper. They all fit neatly into a stack, but each one is also different!

This is kind of like our families. We are each unique (like the different colors), yet we each belong in our family (the stack of paper).

As we eat, we'd like you to talk about what makes each family member special.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

We've written the questions on the whiteboard or printed them on cards at your table for you to discuss and enjoy.

1. Parents: Share something about each of your children that makes them unique and special. This could be an interest, a skill, a personality trait, etc.
2. Children: Share something about your parents that makes them unique and special. This could be an interest, a skill, a personality trait, etc.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

40 minutes

Parent Training

Identity

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

I've often wondered why it's so difficult to believe the good things that people say about me or what God says about me. Have you ever wondered about this?

Tonight, the focus is on knowing that you and your children are loved, valuable, and have a unique purpose in the world. Psalm 139:13-16 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God saw us before we were born and knew what we would be like. Gen 1:26-27 also tells us that we're made in God's image, a wonderful statement that says each person has incredible dignity and worth. It also reminds us that everyone has a unique purpose to partner with God in bringing His wholeness and redemption to the world.

You're valuable because God created you and loves you. He created you to belong in a family and partner with Himself and others in your work in the world. You are valuable because God has a calling and purpose for your life, whether at home, at work, or in your community. How you fulfill that calling will be a unique journey as you learn to partner with God and develop the gift He has placed inside you. Sometimes people say nice things about us, and other times we get criticized or

hear negative things. We are often influenced by what we see on TV or in the movies, and we can lose sight of our value. Sometimes, we get the wrong idea about who we are, but what God says about us is what is important.

Therefore, knowing who you are from God's perspective is important. The Bible says that we are loved by God. You are valuable to God. To demonstrate this, I'm going to give a one-dollar bill to one of you, but first, let me do this... (Facilitator crumples up the bill into a small ball and holds it up again). Now, who wants this?

Well, what if I do this... (Drop the wadded-up bill on the floor, step on it, and then hold it up again). Who still wants this even after it's been through so much?

Here is the valuable lesson: No matter what I did with the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It is still worth one dollar.

At many times in our lives we may feel that we've been dropped, crumpled, and walked on by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way in life. We may feel we are worthless or lose our sense of dignity; however, understand that no matter what has happened or will happen, you will never lose your value to God. You have incredible worth and dignity, a unique purpose to fulfill in your family and in your work!

Parents: Your child's first experience of God's unconditional love is through you.

How can you show love to your children even when they are "crumbled"?

Each of you is loved and valued by God, and it's within the family that we begin to understand how God values and loves us. As good parents, we want to help our children build a healthy understanding of who they are.

DISCUSS

(Ask the following question and write it on a chalkboard/whiteboard.)

- Does anyone have an example you would be willing to share about how you struggled with believing that God loves and values you, and how you overcame that struggle?

We need to teach children who they are in God—valuable, but in need of Christ.

The Bible tells us that God created us, values us, and wants us to be His children. It's our choice to accept Him or not.

When you follow Christ you become part of God's family in a new way. Consider where you want to be and make your choices based on the results you wish to see. You are valuable because God created you and loves you.



Scripture SUPPORT

Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

Notes

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in this lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Recognize that all family members are valuable because God created and loves them.
2. Practice helping others build a healthy understanding of who God has made them to be.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Identity

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

Objectives

- Help children to be aware that God created each person to be unique.
- Help children to be aware that each family member has a unique, individual identity.
- Help children to be aware of how they can receive a special identity as a child of God.
- Help children to be aware of who the Holy Spirit is.
- Help children to be aware of the gifts they receive as a child of God.

Did you know that as children of God, we have two identities? Today we will talk about your individual identity and a very special identity you can have when you ask God's Son, Jesus, to be in your life.

Every detail about you is important to God.

Your identity as a unique person is how you are different from others.

God says He thought about you and planned everything about you. He knows who you are, who you will become, and what you'll do in your life.

In the Bible, God said that before He created you, He knew everything about you (Jeremiah 1:5). For instance, God

created you to be just how He wanted you to be—and no one else is like you! Also, God has placed a special gift inside you to bring to the earth, and your gift is different from anyone else's. No one can do the work God created you to do as well as you can. This is the idea of "calling" where God has a special purpose for you!

God wanted each person He created to be like no one else. Even in your family, no two people are alike—not even your parents, you, or your siblings. God places each person in a family that is just right for them. That's what is so beautiful about each family!

The Bible says that when God created Adam and Eve, He decided it would be

good to make them in His likeness (Genesis 1:26). Even though all of God's children were created to be unique, He also wanted them to have some things about them that were like Him. God wants us to imitate who He is to others by loving and caring for them. This way, others will see a glimpse of what God is like because of our actions.

God also wanted to have a special family of His children so that He could fellowship with them. This is where a second identity becomes available. We get this special, second identity when we ask Christ to be our personal Savior. When you ask Jesus to be in charge of your life, you become a child of God, a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). God adopts you into His very own family, calls you His child, and gives you the most beautiful welcome gift that you can imagine—the Holy Spirit!

When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, He causes us to think and act like God and become like Him. The Holy Spirit comes to help us love and honor Jesus, to teach us to choose right over wrong, to encourage us to praise and worship God, to give us the courage to witness for Christ, and to help us understand the Bible and do what it tells us to do. We can also enjoy other good things God gives us that come with the gift of the Holy Spirit, like His love, joy, peace, and strength!

When God finished His creation of man and woman, He called them His masterpiece—His greatest work, His showpiece! God's creation of man and woman was His favorite part of creation because He was creating them to be in a very special relationship with Him. Each of us has our own personal identity, and when we have Christ in our life, we also have an even more important and powerful identity in Christ! So, no matter how many times we have failed or made mistakes, and no matter what we or others say or think about ourselves, our identity as a child of God is the truth about us. God says we are forgiven and a new creation.

God values us and lets us know it in His Word. In the Bible, He calls you His chosen, beloved child. The Bible says God delights in you and will never leave you alone or turn His back on you. He says you are bold

and victorious and have a bright future. God has set you apart to do a very special job for Him. He created us to bestow His great love upon us (1 John 3:1). We can bring Him pleasure by loving, praising, worshiping, and working for Him to make the world a better place.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in discussion about their individual identity.
- Lead children in discussion about how they can have a second identity as a child of God.
- Lead children in discussion about the gifts made available to children of God through a new identity in Christ Jesus.
- Lead children in a discussion of how the Holy Spirit helps us.
- Lead children in discussion of what God says about children of God.

Notes



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

AGES 4-11

Materials

Identity Web Worksheet

Pencils, markers, or crayons

- Have children create an Identity Web (see handout with example).
- First, tell them to complete the “Self-Description Web.”
- Next, have them complete the “Who God Says I Am” Web (Discuss).

AGES 12-16

Materials

Identity Web Worksheet

Pencils, markers, or crayons

- Have children create an Identity Web (see handout with example).
- First tell them to complete the “Self-Description Web.”
- Next, have them do the “Who God Says I Am” Web (Discuss).



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I ACT LIKE THE PERSON
THAT GOD SAYS I AM?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



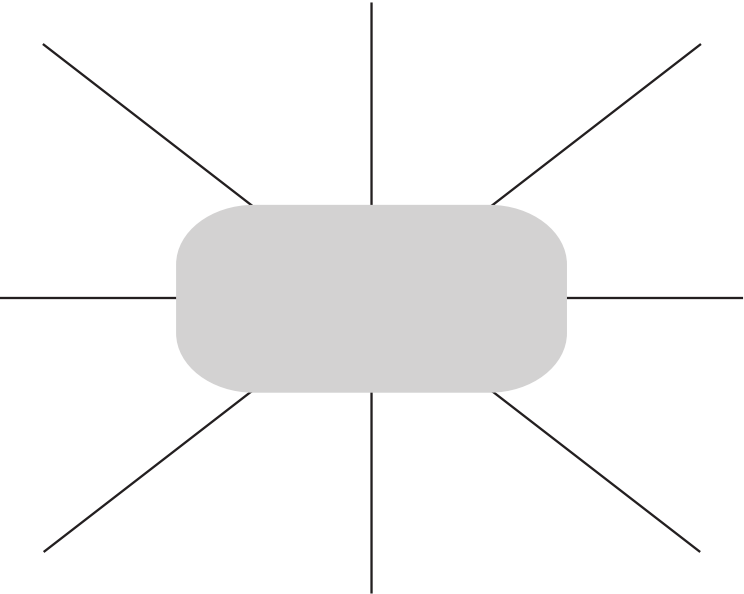
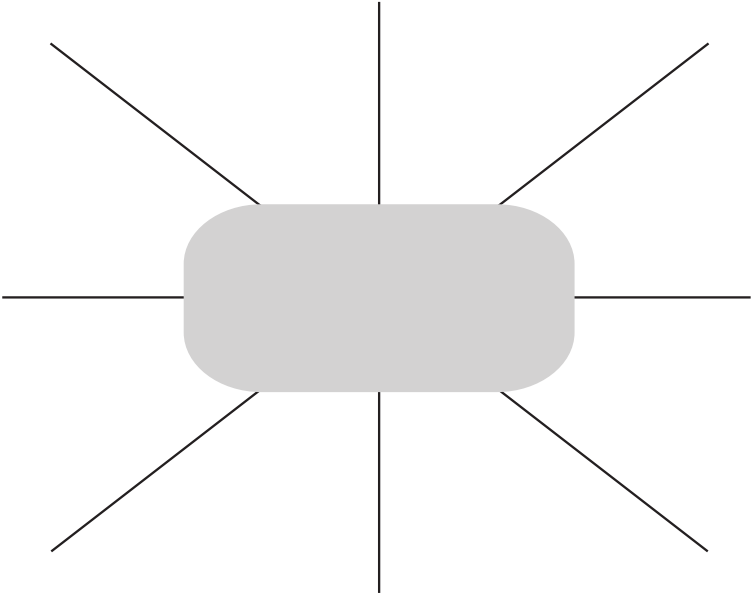
AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God says He made me
exactly like He wanted
me to be!*

Identity Web Worksheet

WHO GOD SAYS I AM

Write your (child's) name in the center of the box. What words do you use to describe who God says you are? Write those along each line coming from the center of the box.



SELF-DESCRIPTION

Write your (child's) name in the center of the box. What words do you use to describe yourself? Write those along each line coming from the center of the box.