

Lesson 5: “**The Identity I Received**”

A Facilitator’s Guide for Mid-Elementary to Adult Bible Classes

I. Welcome & Prayer (5 mins)

II. Ice-Breaker Questions (no more than 2-3 mins)

- Who has a funny story about a mistaken identity issue with you or someone you know?

III. Discussion & Application (30-35 mins) – write comments on the board to build momentum &

reflection. - You may only get to 3 of the 4 questions. No problem. Choose the ones that are most important for your class or adjust on the fly. Focus on prompts that are provoking stories. Once the stories dry up or have produced an environment where everyone feels their own story, move on to the next question. The goal is inspiration and transformation, which come when one person has learned from another and is ready to share their own story.

1. Those who know their origin story (where they came from) tend to have a stronger sense of identity (who they are) and purpose (where they are going). What are some of the most popular origin stories in the world today (prompts: what were you taught growing up about the origin of the world and how does that compare to what is being taught today in schools/books, on TV, social media, etc.)? What are the popular origin stories of today teaching us (or unteaching us) about our identity & purpose? **(7-10 mins)**
2. What does the creation story in the Bible teach us about our identity and purpose? In other words, what difference does it make whether or not we are: “made in the image of God” (Gen 1:26-27), made “male and female” (Gen 1:26-27; 2:20-23), made “body and soul” (Gen. 2:7), made with inherent value & purpose (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:15, 20)? (Choose 1-2 relevant for your class). **(7-10 mins)**
3. What single factor has shaped your identity the most over the past few years/months? For example, a life experience, memory, family, friends, jobs, school, skills/passions, technology, aging, location? **(7-10 mins)**
4. What is key for helping our friends, family, & neighbors come to appreciate their identity that they received from God? **(3 mins)**

IV. Application (2-3 mins to explain and make sure everyone understands):

Believe: Study the creation accounts in the Bible (e.g. Gen 1-2, Jn 1:3; Col 1:15-16) as well as other passages to find out who God says you are. What does it mean that you are human, male/female, body/heart/soul/mind, made in the image of God, valued and a purpose-filled person?

Act: Make an ID card for yourself. Describe yourself in whatever categories (e.g. name, age, height, habits, interests, etc.), style (e.g. dog tags, index card, digital), length (a few lines, a mini-book), and purpose (e.g. what you were made to do) as you see fit. Decide whether this describes you more as you are today or as you want to be.

Teach: Have others you know do the same thing and then discuss why you chose the categories and descriptions you did. Celebrate who God made you and challenge yourself to grow in any areas you wish to improve. Post your stories on [College Church Chat](#) to encourage all of us.

Lesson Outline for Bible Class (Birth to Mid-Elementary)

Believe: Share the creation story (cf. Gen 1-2, Jn 1:3; Col 1:15-16) with the children using songs, props, pictures, figures, flannel graphs, and anything else you can think of. Emphasize the value and purpose of each one of them as boys and girls, made in the image of God, with value and purpose individually and as

friends, family, church, and other communities. The seven-day creation story and the story of Adam and Eve captivates the mind in different ways.

Act: See if the children can learn the 7 days of creation through song, hand-gestures, or visual aids. Older kids might have fun acting out the 7 days. Emphasize the value and purpose of each day. Act out the story of Adam and Eve for the kids or with the kids so that they can see how important it is that we have each other.

Teach: Take turns having each child recall 1 thing they remember from class. See if they can share that with one another and their parents. Bonus points if they remember the following week their value & purpose.

Lesson Outline for Small Groups & Families

Believe: Discuss the major factors shaping one's understanding or misunderstand of identity today. What does the Bible say about our identity—have everyone share at least 1 passage that adds to the discussion. Write these on a board or on paper to show that everyone's thoughts and passages are being included.

Act: Go down the list and discuss how each belief has an impact on how one lives. For example, if one believes that they were made with a purpose vs. by accident, made male/female or without gender, made by God (in his image) or apart from any deity, made to live forever or only temporary, made to be alone or in community, etc. Let each person choose an area of their identity (as an individual or as part of the family/small group) that they want to appreciate more and take more seriously.

Teach: Let everyone take 30 seconds to 1 minute to share their identity with everyone else. This can include whatever details anyone wants to share (name, age, IQ, favorite music, pet's name, etc.).

Lesson Outline for Individual Study

Believe: Spend some time in deeper reflection on who God made you to be as an image-bearer, male/female, in relationships, purpose-filled, valued, in pursuit of good work. Consider new passages in the Bible that can help you on your journey. Use BibleGateway.com to help you search for keywords or topics.

Act: Celebrate the ways in which you are achieving your identity. Find ways to improve in the other areas.

Teach: Use this new spiritually-informed identity to introduce yourself to others. And live it out daily.

Additional Scriptures & Discussion Questions for Weeks 3-4 (Bible Class, Small Groups, Families, or Individual Study)

General Prompts

1. What is the world teaching us to believe or not believe about our Identity? How is the world teaching us this? What difference does it make if we believe the world?
2. What makes the message of identity in the Bible different from the message of identity elsewhere—whether in movies/tv, books, or told by other religious groups?
3. What *resources* have helped you come to better know, live, & share the identity you have received from God? What *strategies* have you used to help others come to better know, live, and share their identity from God?

Week 3: The 7 Days of Creation—Read Gen 1:1-2:3. What can we learn about the identity and purpose of everything in the world from each of the 7 days of creation—what is the identity/purpose of light, darkness, water, plants, land animals, sea creatures, man, woman, rest, etc.? Why does a seven-day creation week say about God’s purpose for us today? What does it mean to be made in the image of God? To be made male/female? To be made on the sixth day of creation? To have a day of rest? If we only had Genesis 1, what would we emphasize the most about who we are and what we are made for? Can we say the 7 days of creation?

Week 4: Adam and Eve—Read Genesis 2:4-25. What can we learn about the identity and purpose of humanity from the story of God creating Adam and Eve? What were some of the challenges of “man alone”? What are some of the blessings of “man with a helper”? Who is your helper? What is the difference between a protected Garden of Eden and the broader world that Adam and Eve were thrust into? Where is your Garden of Eden? Where is your broader world? What were Adam and Eve made to do? What have you been made to do? How was all of creation intended to work together to bring about the purposes of God before sin entered the world? How can we all work together to bring about the purposes of God now that sin has entered the world? What is your identity and purpose? What is our identity and purpose?