

IDENTITY

Session 1—Who Am I?

Key Concepts

1. Each person is unique and special.
2. Scripture tells us what God wants us to be.
3. Each person must discover for himself/herself who he/she is.

Objectives

Students will

1. Share some personal things about themselves.
2. Examine Scripture and report their findings.
3. Define who they are.

Background for Teacher

One of the major dilemmas of the teen years is establishing a sense of identity. The question, “Who am I?”, is a most crucial issue during this time, and the manner in which young people answer that question will influence their openness and response to God and the Church. It will also probably determine their behavior toward others, and the major life decisions facing them.

An important factor in answering the question, “Who am I?” is God’s answer to that question. In this session, students will look at what God has to say by examining Scripture.

This is an important session because it will set the tone for the entire eight-week mini-course. A lot of this depends on you. Try to be supportive and open. Accept student responses without being judgmental and try to maintain the role of a facilitator. This session and the others that follow should be student-centered and not teacher-centered; that is, when someone walks into your room he/she will see students working and talking, and not the teacher lecturing. You will guide students to discover answers for themselves rather than give them the “right” answers.

Materials Needed

- Bibles (have different versions available in the classroom)

Procedure

1. Welcome students. Introduce yourself to the class. Explain that this will be an eight-week mini-course, that you will meet for 1½ hours each week, that the course is entitled “Identity,” and will deal with various aspects of who we are. Distribute books and remind students that they are responsible for them and

should bring them to each class session. (Make sure students write their names in their books.) (5 min.)

2. Pray together. (2 min.)

3. Say: “Since most of us know each other already, instead of re-introducing ourselves, let’s each tell briefly about either the earliest birthday we can remember or our most memorable birthday.” (To make students more comfortable, you begin.) (10 min.)

4. Ask students to fill out the information requested in their textbooks under “Personal Identification Form #1.” (5 min.)

5. When completed, ask: “Does this form answer the question, Who am I? Why?” (Let students respond. It is hoped they will say that it is only part of who they are and, in fact—point out to them—only the most superficial part.) (5 min.)

6. Now instruct students to fill out “Personal Identification Form #2” in their texts. Tell them they don’t have to fill in every line. Stop after only five minutes. (No one will have completed the form—which is OK. They will finish at home.)

7. Ask: “Was this easier or harder than the first form? Why?” (They will probably say it was harder for various reasons—they didn’t have enough time; they’ve never thought about this before; they didn’t understand what they were supposed to do; etc.) (5 min.)

8. Say: “Before we can give some personal answers to the question, “Who am I?”, it might be helpful to take a look at who we are in God’s eyes and that’s what we’re going to do now.”

Bible Study: Divide the class into groups of four. Ask each group to pick a “reporter” who will take notes and report back to the entire class. Write the following passages on the blackboard: Jeremiah 1:4-9; Isaiah 43:1-3; Luke 4:18-19; Ephesians 4:1-7.

Give students the following directions (Also on page 5 of student text.):

- Read the passage aloud in your group.
- Discuss what you think the passage says.
- Explain what you think the passage means in each of your lives today.
- Describe what the verse says we are in God’s eyes.

Make sure students are comfortable in their separate groups. Suggest that they read different versions of the passage. Move around from group to group making sure students are on the right track. (20 min.)

9. After the groups have finished discussing the passages, have the “reporter” relate what the verses meant to different group members. Write their responses to what the verse says we are in God’s eyes on the blackboard as the reports are given. (10 min.)

10. Ask students to turn to their texts and fill in items 1, 2, and 3 on the "Reflection Sheet." (10 min.)
11. Next, have students form pairs and ask them to share their responses to items 1, 2, and 3 with each other. (10 min.)
12. Ask volunteers to complete any of the following sentences spontaneously:
- I learned . . .
 - I was surprised that . . .
 - I hope . . . (3 min.)
13. *Assignment:*
- a. Complete items 4, 5, and 6 on Reflection Sheet.
 - b. Finish "Identification Form #2."
 - c. Bring in magazines for next week's assignment. (See next session's activity.)
14. Close by reading Psalm 139. (5 min.)

Session 2—What Is a Man? What Is a Woman?

Key Concepts

1. Male and female are created in the image of God and as such are equal.
2. In Christ, no individual is of greater importance than any other individual because we are all part of his body.
3. Life presents many dilemmas in which male/female roles will conflict. Many of these conflicts can be resolved by compromise and love and with a little help from Scripture.

Objectives

Students will

1. Define what it means to be male and female.
2. Create a collage depicting femaleness/maleness.
3. Listen and share with each other their feelings and opinions about characteristics and roles of the sexes.

Background for Teacher

As part of their search for identity, our young people will come face to face with their sexuality. How they resolve the question, Who Am I As a Man/Woman?, will depend on what roles they have identified with while growing up, and very little of that can be changed by us.

We can, however, make them aware of the many stereotypes that exist in our society—"a woman's place is in the home," "real men don't cry," etc. And becoming aware of these stereotypes is a step toward discovering the possibility of personal change and growth.

After all, our students will soon be making many decisions about their roles in life—career, marriage, family, etc. Decisions about those roles may affect

them and those with whom they associate for a long time into the future. This session will, we hope, get students to think about some things that are often assumed about people simply because they are born male or female.

Materials Needed

- Two white posters 22" x 17"
- Glue, scissors, felt-tip markers, etc. (enough for your class to work on two group collages)
- Magazines, newspapers (students will bring in their own, but if possible, make sure there is a variety of different types of magazines—news, sports, business, fashion, home, food, professional, etc.)
- Bibles

Procedure

1. Welcome students. Collect the newspapers and magazines which they were to bring in for today's class project. Opening prayer.
2. *Homework:* Students were to complete items 4-6 on the "Reflection Sheet" and finish "Personal Identification Form #2" (the "I Am" list) from last week's lesson. Review the assignment as follows:
 - Divide students into groups of four, and ask them to share their responses to items 4 and 5.
 - When each group has completed sharing, ask students to read aloud their response to item 6 on the "Reflection Sheet," which was: "If you could do anything for God and knew you couldn't fail, what would you do?" Make certain each student has an opportunity to read his/her response. Make comments or ask questions where appropriate.
 - Next, ask for volunteers to share any item(s) on their "I Am" list. Ask: "Was it easier to do the 'I Am' list after you thought about your answers in the 'Reflection Sheet?' Why or why not?" (10 min.)
3. To begin today's lesson, say something like: "On the 'I Am' lists, I noticed that several of you mentioned your sex—I am female/girl/male/boy, etc. Today we're going to look into just what it means to be male and female."

Divide a line down the center of the blackboard. On one side write MALE, and on the other side write FEMALE. Play "word association" by asking students to say words or phrases that come to mind when they hear the word MALE. Write all responses on the blackboard under MALE. Then do the same with FEMALE. (You will probably now have a list of stereotypical characteristics and roles of each sex, but maybe not.) (10 min.)

4. When the responses stop, ask students to comment if they wish. You, however, should not make any comments. (Do not erase the lists.) (5 min.)
5. Collage project. Tell students they are going to think some more about this "male/female thing" by working on two collages. Directions: