

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 8

GOD GIVES HIS FAMILY A NEW IDENTITY

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM IN CHRIST
SERIES: GOD IS HOLY—I AM A SINNER/SAINT

BIG TRUTH: GOD GIVES HIS FAMILY A NEW IDENTITY

Mark 10:35-45; Philippians 3:3-13; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1:26-31; Galatians 3:28

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 2:19

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

BIG IDEAS

- Everyone is defined by something.
- What truly defines us is not what we’ve done or what’s been done to us, but how we relate to God.
- “Redeemed” is an identity word.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 2:11-22

TRANSFORM - I AM IN CHRIST

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a “new creation” in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is holy and we are separated from Him in our sin.
- The gospel transforms sinners into saints.
- The Christian life is about becoming who we already are in Christ.



Every student should feel...

- The depth of their sin against the holy God.
- Wonder and awe at the good news of the gospel.
- Secure in the identity that they now have in Jesus.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of Ephesians
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week during the Ephesians series.
- Learn how to use a commentary.



Every student should want to...

- Be transformed by the gospel.
- Put sin to death and pursue holiness.
- Share the good news of the gospel.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 2:19

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

Through Christ, we are no longer aliens.

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens...”

- Before Jesus, we are all born hopeless. Earlier in Ephesians 2:12, Paul describes our hopelessness when he says the Gentiles were once separated from Christ. We all are born like the Gentiles, separated from Christ. Also in verse 12, Paul speaks of the Gentiles’ alienation from God’s people. We are all born into this reality because of the sin nature that we each inherit and act upon in our lives.
- In verse 19, Paul presents the hope that those who believe have because of Jesus. Because Jesus died on the cross, those who have saving faith in Him are no longer separated from God. We are no longer hopeless because Christ gives hope. We are no longer strangers or aliens to God or His people. God joins those who have saving faith to His family and He makes them His people.

Through Christ, we become citizens with God’s people.

“but you are fellow citizens with the saints...”

- Through Jesus, God offers a new life to those who have saving faith. This new life is one of fellowship with God and citizenship in His eternal kingdom. Those who have saving faith share in this citizenship with God’s chosen people. We are no longer separated or strangers in a foreign land. Instead, we are chosen alongside of God’s people to be a part of His kingdom forever.
- God chooses to give those who have saving faith in His Son citizenship in His eternal kingdom. Where our sin nature once made us aliens and strangers in God’s kingdom, the blood of Jesus makes us fellow citizens and heirs.

Through Christ, we become part of God’s family forever.

“and members of the household of God.”

- Through Christ, our identity changes from alien to family member. Not only are we joined together with God through saving faith in Christ, but we are also joined to God’s family. We are united with other believers to serve as God’s body and the collective place where His Spirit resides.

GOD GIVES HIS FAMILY A NEW IDENTITY

BIG IDEA #1: EVERYONE IS DEFINED BY SOMETHING.¹

[THIS]

Ephesians 2:11-12 is a description of the Gentiles before Christ. The Gentiles were separated from God and His chosen people, the Israelites. We are all like the Gentiles—separated from God. Just as Paul reminded the Gentiles that they were once far away from God, we are far away from God before we have saving faith. The Gentiles were defined by their separation from God. They were known as separate and unclean before God. Their identity was tied to their hopelessness and lack of relationship with God. We are all like the Gentiles. We are defined by our separation from God as sinners and our hopelessness to save ourselves or reconcile ourselves to God in our own power.

[THEREFORE]

How does sin separate you from God?

In Isaiah 59:2, the prophet speaks of the way that sin separates God's people from Him. The same is true of everyone who is born because we are all born sinful. Our sin separates us from God. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 warns of the eternal separation that will come to those who die rejecting Christ. James 4:4 teaches us that those who do the things of the world and are friends of the world are enemies of God. Our sin results in a great chasm between God and us. Lastly, Matthew 6:24 reminds us that we cannot serve two masters. We will hate the one and love the other.

What kinds of false saviors do your friends try to find their identity in?

In Matthew 7:15, Jesus warns His listeners of false prophets who are like wolves dressed as sheep. This means that often we may think the things we are pursuing are harmless, but they lead us away from Jesus. Proverbs 28:26 teaches us the foolishness in trusting in ourselves or even others to find our identity. 1 John 2:15-17 reminds us that love of the things of the world does not bring us true joy or help us truly define ourselves.

[THIS]

Paul continues describing the identity of the Gentiles and all people in verses 11-12 when he says that the Gentiles are “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.” What he means is that Gentiles, and every other person on the earth, are not born automatic members of God's family. The Gentiles were not physically Israelites; therefore, they did not know the promise of the Messiah. This describes every person who is ever born. We are all born not knowing the promise until God opens our eyes to the truth about ourselves and the promise of salvation through Jesus.

[THEREFORE]

How does your life reflect what you are putting your hope in?

Ephesians 2:10 shows us the hope we have in Christ when we have saving faith in Him because we are created for good works. We are new creations through Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30 also serves as a reminder of the hope that we have in Jesus and the connection we have to Him when we have saving faith.

1. Ephesians 2:11-12: We are all defined at first by our sin nature and the separation it causes.

GOD GIVES HIS FAMILY A NEW IDENTITY

BIG IDEA #2: WHAT TRULY DEFINES US IS NOT WHAT WE'VE DONE OR WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO US, BUT HOW WE RELATE TO GOD.²

[THIS]

Ephesians 2:13-18 shows us our condition before Christ and gives us a picture of the glorious work of Christ on our behalf. Because Jesus died on the cross, we are no longer separated from God. We were once far away from God, but through Jesus, we are brought close to Him. We gain access to God through the blood of Jesus. Though we are born sinful and live sinful, rebellious lives, we are not defined by those things in the end. Instead, what matters is our relationship to God. We are known by God and as His son or daughter after we have saving faith. This becomes our new identity in Christ.

[THEREFORE]

How does your life reveal that your identity has changed from sinner to saint?

In Romans 6:6, Paul describes our identity when he says that our old selves have been crucified with Christ. When we have saving faith, our lives look different. In Ephesians 4:22, Paul elaborates upon the deadness of our old life as he describes the process of putting off the old, sinful self. In Galatians 2:20 shows us that our new identity is made possible through Christ and Christ alone.

In what ways is it easy to try to find our identity in something or someone other than our relationship to God?

In Luke 9:23-25, Jesus explains the result of looking for our identity and satisfaction in the world or our old way of living. When we seek to remain the same person we were before Christ or we do not look to Christ for our identity at all, we actually lose our lives. Romans 8:14-15 also warns us about not falling back into our old way of living and seeking our identity in the things of the world.

[THIS]

In Ephesians 2:14-18 specifically, Paul teaches that our identity changes radically when we know Christ. On the cross, Christ's death tore down the wall that stood between man and God. His death fulfilled the debt we all owed and made it possible for us to have access to God. This changed us from aliens and strangers to God to His children. Because of the work of Jesus, we are no longer hostile to God or under His wrath. Instead, we have peace with God because of Jesus.

[THEREFORE]

How are you living a life that reveals the peace you have through Jesus' blood?

Earlier in Ephesians 2:3-5, Paul reminded us that we are children of wrath and through Jesus we are at peace with God. When we live lives that reveal this peace, we are peaceful people. Colossians 3:15 teaches us that we are all called to live at peace with the body of Christ. Hebrews 12:14 connects living peacefully with holiness. This peace is only possible when we have God's Spirit and receiving God's Spirit is only possible through the blood of Jesus.

2. Ephesians 2:13-18: Paul reminds believers of their identity before Christ and their new identity and position after saving faith in Christ.

GOD GIVES HIS FAMILY A NEW IDENTITY

BIG IDEA #3: “REDEEMED” IS AN IDENTITY WORD.³

[THIS]

In Ephesians 2:17, Paul says that peace is given through Jesus. Jesus came to bring peace with Him, which means that through His death on the cross, man can have peace with God because Jesus' death fulfilled the sin debt that we all owe. Jesus made it possible for all who believe in Him to be at peace with God. When Jesus redeemed man, He changed man's identity. We are no longer identified as sinners, but are instead known as the redeemed people of God. We are seen as members of God's family instead of strangers and aliens.

[THEREFORE]

How does your relationship with God reveal you are at peace with Him?

Romans 5:1 speaks to the peace we have with God when we are in Christ. Being in Christ means that we have saving faith in Him. This peace is only possible through the work of Jesus on the cross. Romans 8:6 also speaks to the peace we can have through the Spirit which is available to us through the blood of Jesus. When we are at peace with God, we can rely upon God in all things. Jesus alludes to this peace in John 14:27 when He speaks of the peace He leaves His followers.

[THIS]

Paul shows us how our identity changes in verses 19-22 of Ephesians 2. Because of our redemption, we become citizens of God's eternal home. We are members of His household. We are also part of the building of His kingdom. Through redemption, we are joined to God's body of believers and we become part of His eternal family. We are no longer outcasts or strangers. Instead, we are part of God's redeemed people and together we become the place where His Spirit dwells.

[THEREFORE]

How does the change in your identity help you participate in the body of Christ?

Ephesians 2:10 speaks of the works that Christ prepared beforehand for those who have saving faith in Him. It is these works that we can do in the body of Christ because we have access to the Father. 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are chosen and set aside to proclaim Christ's excellencies. We can proclaim these excellencies through the body of Christ. 1 Peter 4:10 also reminds us that the gifts we receive through the Spirit of God are to be used for the body of Christ.

How can you actively seek to understand and live out your identity as the redeemed of Christ?

In Galatians 2:20, Paul makes the declaration that he no longer lives in his flesh, but in the new life he has in Christ. This new life is every believer's identity as the redeemed of God. Romans 6:1-2 reminds us that living out our new identity means putting off the old self of sin and wickedness. Psalm 107:2 teaches us that the redeemed of Christ should speak of their redemption. Our lives can tell of this when we live according to God's commands.

3. Ephesians 2:19-22: Our identity changes from sinner to saint when we have saving faith in the work of Jesus on the cross.