

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

Who am I?

BIG IDEA

Each person is uniquely made in God's image.

SCRIPTURE USED

Genesis 1:26-27 *Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

Colossians 3:1-4 *Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.*

Matthew 9:9-12 *As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him. Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do."*

For this lesson you will need:

- Notecards or squares of scratch paper with writing utensils for each student
- Paper cups (*two for each student*) and Sharpies or fine tip markers to write on the cups. (*Make sure to acquire cups that you can write on; cups that are coated will not accept the markers.*)
- OPTIONAL: Copies of the handout "Who Am I?" found at the end of this lesson - one for each student (*Use this as a reference as you ponder and plan the message.*)
- OPTIONAL: Offer a prize to the winner (e.g., candy, gift card, T-shirt)

OPENER

GAME

Play “Who Am I?” Divide your students into two teams (*or however many teams your youth group may need*), and include leaders in this game. Give individuals a notecard or uniform piece of scrap paper and ask them to spend about 3 minutes coming up with three unique things (*called clues*) about themselves that no one else in the room is likely to know. For example, *I have never had a pet, I was born in Florida* and *I am afraid of clowns* might all be things other students may not know about each other. The more obscure or odd the fact is, the better.

Collect the cards in two separate piles, being sure to keep the teams’ piles separate. When it is Team 1’s turn, draw a clue from Team 2’s pile. Read only one clue (*you can increase the difficulty of the game by reading the most obscure fact on each card, first*). If Team 1 can guess which Team 2 member is being described with just one clue, they receive three points. If they cannot guess it, read the next clue but then only two points will be earned. If all three clues must be read, only one point is awarded. If they have to be told and cannot guess after all three clues, then no points are received. The team with the most points wins! (If the group is larger and has multiple teams, just call on whichever team raises their hand first.)

[While the students are filling out their cards, have the leaders give every student two paper cups. Once they’re done filling out their cards, ask students to flip them upside down, and on each cup write the two potential barriers to understanding their true identities: “False Labels” and “Sin”. Tell them the cups are for later.]

EXPLAIN

So, even though some of the things we learned about each other were a little bit crazy, I think it is fair to say we probably know things about each other now that we did not know when we first walked in here. When you stop and think about it, people are really complex, aren’t they? Even your closest friends do not know some things about you—some of your thoughts, desires and feelings. There are things your parents or families do not know about you. Truthfully, there are even things we do not know about ourselves—not yet. Still, who you are is very unique and very important. There is only one, completely unique you, and you have a special identity; an identity not defined by the world, but by God! And that is worth talking about!