

Identity in Christ

10 Weeks of Christian Identity for Preteens (Ages 11-12)

Introduction

This 10-week curriculum helps preteens discover who they are in Christ during a crucial identity-forming stage of development. Through engaging Bible study, honest personal reflection, and interactive group activities, students will explore what it means to find their true identity in Christ rather than in social media, peer approval, achievements, or appearances. Each week builds upon the previous one to create a comprehensive understanding of how being "in Christ" transforms every aspect of who they are.

Week 1: Identity Crisis - Who Am I Really?

Main Focus: Understanding the concept of identity and why it matters

Key Truth: Your true identity comes from God, who created you and knows you perfectly.

Scripture Foundation:

- Psalm 139:13-16 (Fearfully and wonderfully made)
- Jeremiah 1:5 (Known before birth)
- Genesis 1:26-27 (Created in God's image)

Opening Activity:

- "Identity Labels" exercise: Students write down labels others have given them or they've given themselves (both positive and negative), then discuss where these labels come from and how they affect us

Bible Exploration:

- Study God as Creator and what it means to be made in His image
- Examine how God sees us versus how the world sees us
- Discover what it means that God knew us before we were born

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "If I could describe myself in 5 words, what would they be? Where do these descriptions come from?"
- Self-portrait activity: Draw yourself as you think others see you vs. how God sees you

Group Experience:

- "Beyond the Surface" activity: Students share things about themselves that people wouldn't know just by looking at them
- Small group discussion about influences that shape our identity (social media, friends, family, etc.)

Life Application:

- Create a personal "Identity Shield" with sections for talents, values, passions, and dreams
- Begin a "Who I Am in Christ" journal to use throughout the curriculum

Take-Home Connection:

- Family discussion guide: "How has your sense of identity changed as you've grown?"
 - Scripture meditation on Psalm 139 with guided questions
 - Media awareness challenge regarding identity messages
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Week 2: Chosen - You Belong to God

Main Focus: Understanding what it means to be chosen and adopted by God

Key Truth: You have been specifically chosen by God to be His child, giving you belonging and purpose.

Scripture Foundation:

- Ephesians 1:3-6 (Chosen before the creation of the world)
- John 15:16 (You did not choose me, but I chose you)
- 1 Peter 2:9-10 (Chosen people, royal priesthood)

Opening Activity:

- "Choose Me!" game: Various team selection scenarios that highlight feelings of being chosen or not chosen, followed by discussion about how God's choosing differs from human choosing

Bible Exploration:

- Study Biblical examples of God choosing unlikely people
- Examine what spiritual adoption means and its privileges
- Discover the purpose behind God's choosing (to declare His praises)

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "When have I felt left out or not chosen? How does knowing God chose me change that?"
- Create a visual family tree showing spiritual adoption into God's family

Group Experience:

- "Welcome to the Family" celebration with symbolic adoption certificates
- Small group sharing about what family belonging means and how God's family is different

Life Application:

- Write a personal letter responding to God's choice and invitation
- Role-play scenarios of including others as God has included us

Take-Home Connection:

- Family discussion guide: "Share stories of how you became part of our family"
 - Scripture memory challenge: Ephesians 1:4-5
 - Service project idea: Find ways to help others feel chosen and included
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Week 3: Forgiven - You Are Clean

Main Focus: Understanding God's complete forgiveness and its impact on identity

Key Truth: Because of Jesus, your sins are completely forgiven, giving you a clean slate and fresh identity.

Scripture Foundation:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 (New creation)
- Psalm 103:12 (Sins removed as far as east from west)
- 1 John 1:9 (Faithful to forgive)

Opening Activity:

- "Clean Slate" demonstration: Students write regrets or mistakes on small chalkboards, then experience different ways of trying to clean them (ineffective methods first, then complete erasing) as a metaphor for forgiveness

Bible Exploration:

- Study Biblical images of forgiveness (cleansing, debt cancellation, etc.)
- Examine the difference between worldly guilt and godly repentance

- Discover how Jesus provides complete forgiveness

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "How does holding onto guilt and shame affect how I see myself? How does forgiveness change my identity?"
- Private guided prayer experience for receiving forgiveness

Group Experience:

- "Forgiveness vs. Shame" discussion: How shame says "you ARE bad" while conviction says "you DID something bad"
- Small group conversation about living as forgiven people

Life Application:

- Create "Identity Cards" with "I was... but now I am..." statements based on Scripture
- Practice extending forgiveness to others through guided scenarios

Take-Home Connection:

- Family forgiveness activity: Dissolving colored water (representing sin) with bleach (representing forgiveness)
 - Scripture memory work: 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Daily forgiveness prayers for the week
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Week 4: Valued - You Have Infinite Worth

Main Focus: Understanding your value and worth in God's eyes

Key Truth: Your value comes from God's love for you, not your performance, appearance, or popularity.

Scripture Foundation:

- Matthew 10:29-31 (Worth more than many sparrows)
- Luke 12:6-7 (Hairs of your head are numbered)
- Romans 5:8 (Christ died for us while still sinners)

Opening Activity:

- "What's It Worth?" game: Students guess the value of various items, leading to discussion about how worth is determined in our world vs. in God's economy

Bible Exploration:

- Study the price Jesus paid for us and what that says about our value
- Examine how God values what the world often overlooks
- Discover God's intimate knowledge and care for every detail of our lives

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "Where do I look for my value and worth? How does God's perspective differ?"
- Create a "Treasured by God" artwork with personal meaning

Group Experience:

- "You Are Worth..." affirmation circle where students speak Biblical truths about each other's worth
- Small group discussion about social media and self-worth

Life Application:

- Develop personal response to negative self-talk or harmful comparisons
- Practice seeing others' value through specific affirmation and encouragement

Take-Home Connection:

- Family discussion guide: "How do we show each other we are valued in our family?"
 - Value-affirming Bible verse cards to post in personal spaces
 - Media fast challenge with reflection questions
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Week 5: Gifted - You Have Something to Offer

Main Focus: Discovering and using your unique spiritual gifts and natural abilities

Key Truth: God has intentionally given you specific gifts and abilities to serve others and glorify Him.

Scripture Foundation:

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (Varieties of gifts for the common good)
- Romans 12:4-8 (Different gifts according to grace)
- 1 Peter 4:10-11 (Using gifts to serve others)

Opening Activity:

- "Gift Discovery" stations: Interactive experiences highlighting different spiritual gifts and natural abilities, with students rotating through to identify areas where they excel

Bible Exploration:

- Study how spiritual gifts work within the body of Christ
- Examine Biblical examples of people using their unique gifts
- Discover the purpose behind spiritual gifts (hint: not self-promotion)

Personal Reflection:

- Age-appropriate spiritual gifts assessment
- Journal prompt: "When do I feel most alive and purposeful? What might this reveal about my gifts?"

Group Experience:

- "Body of Christ" group activity demonstrating how different gifts work together
- Small group affirmation circle identifying gifts peers see in each other

Life Application:

- Create a personal gifts action plan for using abilities to serve others
- Practice using identified gifts in safe, structured environment

Take-Home Connection:

- Family gifts discussion: "What gifts do you see in me? What gifts do I see in you?"
 - Weekly service challenge using personal gifts
 - Gift-spotting activity: Identifying gifts in Bible characters
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Week 6: Loved - You Are Deeply Cherished

Main Focus: Understanding the depth and constancy of God's love

Key Truth: God's love for you is unconditional, unending, and unshakable—nothing can separate you from it.

Scripture Foundation:

- Romans 8:38-39 (Nothing can separate us from God's love)
- Jeremiah 31:3 (Loved with an everlasting love)
- 1 John 3:1 (What manner of love the Father has given us)

Opening Activity:

- "Love Languages" experience: Students identify how they best receive and express love, followed by exploration of how God expresses His love in multiple ways

Bible Exploration:

- Study the depth dimensions of God's love in Ephesians 3:18
- Examine Biblical metaphors for God's love (father, mother, shepherd, etc.)
- Discover how God's love differs from conditional human love

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "When is it hardest for me to believe God loves me? What truth counters this doubt?"
- Create a personal "love timeline" noting experiences of God's love

Group Experience:

- "Love That Won't Let Go" physical challenge illustrating God's grip on us
- Small group sharing about moments when God's love felt most real

Life Application:

- Develop a list of "love truths" to combat specific doubts or insecurities
- Practice extending God's type of love to difficult people

Take-Home Connection:

- Family love affirmation activity
- Scripture meditation on Romans 8:38-39
- Love-motivated service challenge for the week

Week 7: Secure - You Are Protected and Safe

Main Focus: Finding security and safety in your relationship with Christ

Key Truth: Your relationship with God provides unshakable security no matter what happens in life.

Scripture Foundation:

- John 10:27-29 (No one can snatch them out of my hand)

- Romans 8:31-32 (If God is for us, who can be against us?)
- Psalm 91:1-16 (Dwelling in the shelter of the Most High)

Opening Activity:

- "Security Test" simulation: Various scenarios where typical sources of security (popularity, achievements, etc.) fail, contrasted with God's unchanging presence

Bible Exploration:

- Study Biblical promises of God's protection and presence
- Examine the difference between physical and spiritual security
- Discover how faith provides courage even in difficult circumstances

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "What makes me feel insecure? How does my identity in Christ address these insecurities?"
- Create a visual reminder of God's protective promises

Group Experience:

- "Trust Fall" variations demonstrating reliance on God's promises
- Small group discussion about facing fears with faith

Life Application:

- Develop personal "security statements" based on Scripture
- Practice moving from anxiety to trust through prayer and truth meditation

Take-Home Connection:

- Family security discussion: "What makes you feel safe/unsafe? How does faith help?"
- Scripture memory work focusing on God's protection
- Bedtime prayer practice focusing on security in God

Week 8: Purposeful - You Have a Mission

Main Focus: Discovering your unique purpose and calling in God's kingdom

Key Truth: God created you with a specific purpose that gives your life meaning and direction.

Scripture Foundation:

- Ephesians 2:10 (Created in Christ Jesus for good works)
- Jeremiah 29:11 (Plans to give you a future and a hope)
- Matthew 5:13-16 (Salt and light in the world)

Opening Activity:

- "Mission Discovery" simulation: Students navigate interactive stations representing different aspects of God's mission, identifying which resonate most with their passions and abilities

Bible Exploration:

- Study how Biblical characters discovered and lived out their purpose
- Examine the overall mission of God and our part in it
- Discover how our specific gifts connect to God's greater purposes

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "What problems in the world break my heart? What joys make my heart sing? How might these connect to my purpose?"
- Create a personal mission statement draft

Group Experience:

- "Purpose Interview" pairs where students help each other explore potential callings
- Small group brainstorming about how preteens can live purposefully now

Life Application:

- Develop a "purpose experiment" - a small project to explore a potential calling
- Practice living purposefully in everyday environments (school, home, etc.)

Take-Home Connection:

- Family purpose discussion: "What do you see as my strengths and potential callings?"
- One-week purpose journal tracking moments of meaning and impact
- Research project about a Christian role model who lived purposefully

Week 9: Connected - You Are Part of Something Bigger

Main Focus: Understanding your place in the body of Christ and God's family

Key Truth: You belong to God's family and play a vital role in the community of believers.

Scripture Foundation:

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (One body, many parts)
- Ephesians 2:19-22 (Members of God's household)
- Hebrews 10:24-25 (Not giving up meeting together)

Opening Activity:

- "Better Together" challenges: Team activities that can only be completed with everyone's participation, demonstrating interdependence

Bible Exploration:

- Study Biblical images of the church (body, family, building, etc.)
- Examine how early Christians did life together
- Discover the importance of community for spiritual growth

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "Where do I feel most/least connected to the body of Christ? What helps me feel like I belong?"
- Create a relational map showing connections to various parts of the Christian community

Group Experience:

- "Body Building" simulation where students experience being disconnected then reconnected to the group
- Small group commitment creation for supporting each other

Life Application:

- Develop a personal plan for deeper church involvement
- Practice using gifts to strengthen the community

Take-Home Connection:

- Family church history sharing: How they became part of God's family
 - Intergenerational connection challenge with older church members
 - Community service project participation
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Week 10: Becoming - You Are a Work in Progress

Main Focus: Embracing the ongoing transformation of your identity in Christ

Key Truth: Your identity in Christ is both complete now and still developing—God is continually transforming you to become more like Jesus.

Scripture Foundation:

- Philippians 1:6 (He who began a good work will carry it on to completion)
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 (Being transformed into his image)
- 1 John 3:2-3 (When Christ appears, we shall be like him)

Opening Activity:

- "Transformation Station" with before/after examples from nature, art, and Bible stories, leading to discussion about the process of becoming

Bible Exploration:

- Study the process of spiritual formation and transformation
- Examine tension between "already" and "not yet" aspects of our identity
- Discover God's patience and faithfulness in the growth process

Personal Reflection:

- Journal prompt: "What area of my identity in Christ is hardest to believe or live out? Where have I seen the most growth?"
- Create a visual growth timeline with milestones and future hopes

Group Experience:

- "Identity Affirmation Circle" where students speak truth over each other about who they are becoming
- Small group commitment to continue supporting each other's identity development

Life Application:

- Develop ongoing spiritual growth practices for identity formation
- Create a personal "becoming" statement of who they are and who they're growing to be

Final Celebration:

- "Identity in Christ" ceremony with affirmation from leaders and peers
- Presentation of completed identity journals and projects
- Commissioning prayer for continuing identity journey

Take-Home Connection:

- Family blessing ceremony guidelines
 - Long-term identity Scripture reading plan
 - Next steps for continued growth in understanding identity
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Implementation Resources

Weekly Format (60-90 minutes):

1. **Opening Activity (10-15 min):** Engaging experience to introduce the identity concept
2. **Bible Exploration (15-20 min):** Interactive Scripture study related to the identity theme
3. **Personal Reflection (10-15 min):** Individual processing and journaling time
4. **Group Experience (15-20 min):** Collaborative activities reinforcing the identity concept
5. **Life Application (10-15 min):** Practical ways to live out the identity truth
6. **Take-Home Connection (5 min):** Introduction to family extension activities

Identity Journal:

- Provided to each student at the beginning of the curriculum
- Contains guided reflection prompts for each week
- Includes Scripture memory work and daily identity affirmations
- Space for ongoing personal insights and growth tracking
- "Who I Am in Christ" reference pages with Biblical truths

Leader Resources:

- Detailed background on adolescent identity development
- Discussion guide for navigating sensitive identity issues
- Suggestions for adapting activities for different learning styles
- Guidelines for creating emotionally safe environment
- Prayer guide for each identity aspect

Visual Identity Tools:

- Identity in Christ wall display that grows throughout the program
- Personal identity card set with Scripture-based identity statements
- "In Christ" visual metaphors (branch/vine, stone/building, etc.)
- Identity affirmation posters for classroom
- Media examples (positive and negative) regarding identity

Parent Partnership:

- Pre-program parent orientation on identity development
- Weekly parent guides with identity concept explanations
- Family discussion starters and activities
- Guidance for supporting identity formation at home
- Mid-program parent check-in
- End-of-program family celebration

Specialized Activities for Preteens:

- Age-appropriate identity case studies and scenarios
- Social media and identity discussion guides
- Physical and interactive learning components for active preteens
- Peer affirmation structures appropriate for this age group
- Creative expression options for different interests
- Technology integration for digital natives

Assessment Tools:

- Beginning and ending identity perception inventory
- Weekly identity truth integration check-in
- Observed behavior change tracking
- Parent feedback on identity growth
- Student self-evaluation of identity understanding

Supporting Elements:

- Identity in Christ theme song or playlist
- Peer mentoring connections with older teens
- Service opportunities related to each identity aspect

- Identity-based prayer stations
- "Identity Heroes" - Biblical and contemporary examples
- Visual identity reminders for personal spaces (bookmarks, wristbands, etc.)