

Series: The Born Identity

Lesson 4: Twilight

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Compare intrinsic value and instrumental value
- Identify that they have intrinsic value in God's eyes
- Identify Sabbath as God's way of reminding his people of their intrinsic value

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Materials for building a tall structure (could be anything such as boxes, tape, toys, building blocks, and art supplies)
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Two items or more that belong to you. One must be something that is very functional, such as your day timer, night stand clock, stapler, moisturizing cream, and so on. The second one must be something that has personal but not functional value, such as a drawing from your child, a gift from a special friend, a trinket from your grandmother, and so on. Bring a few items if you like.

Location and Set Up:

This final session of the series deals with the way that we value people and things. The human experience that is highlighted is that of seniors. You could choose a number of ways to highlight this. One possibility is that you hold the lesson in a seniors' residence or a senior friend's home. Another possibility is that you invite seniors to come to the lesson and participate with the students. Another possibility is that you take the week before the lesson to visit a senior's residence or individual home to serve. Encounters and relationships between youth and seniors are often beautiful, restorative, and life-giving. Both are dealing with issues of personal value, societal fit, and physical change. Many youth do not have grandparents or older adults in their own families who can teach them, love them, and care for them. The same is true in the inverse. Here are some further possibilities that could enhance this lesson and possibly your youth ministry.

- ☐ Set up interviews between students and seniors. Have the students ask questions such as what are some of your fondest memories, the most interesting people you met, the most interesting things you did? What do you wish you knew when you were my age? And so on.
- ☐ Debrief with the students by asking questions such as what did you find interesting about the person you interviewed? What did you learn that you didn't previously know? What is his/her outlook on life, do you think? Do they feel valued? Why or why not?
- ☐ Search out a way to serve the seniors that you are interacting with. If this is at a seniors' residence, offer to lead a short chapel service with hymns and a short message. Ask if there are other needs that you can fill for groups or individuals.

Lead In:

You are going to stage a competition. Begin by asking for two or three volunteers who will be in the judges. Divide the remaining students into teams of three to five. Give each team a variety of materials such as boxes, tape, toys, building blocks, art supplies, or whatever else you can find. Make sure to heighten the competitive spirit of the game. Get teams excited to compete and win but don't tell them the parameters of the competition. Be vague with the instructions (build a tower) and move quickly so that they won't ask too many questions about it. Give the signal to begin and then give three minutes for the teams to complete their structures. When the three minutes are done, have the judges work together to choose the winner. Don't give them criteria just encourage them to choose a winner.

When the judges have announced the winner, ask the winning group how it feels to win. Ask the other groups how it feels not to win. Ask the judges how they chose the winner.

Transition by saying something like, *We love to judge people and things. We do it when we are watching sports, going to school, and just sitting around. We judge people, clothes, buildings, hockey teams, houses, and everything else. In this competition, I didn't tell you what defines a winner, I just asked the judges to choose one. You selected the winner based on (height, structural soundness, or whatever else). You chose this group to be the winner, which made them feel that they had succeeded. And you didn't choose the other groups, making them feel disappointed or angry. Often how we feel is greatly affected by our ability to succeed and win and be useful in the world around us. Today we are going to look at two kinds of value that people and things have, one is called intrinsic and the other is called instrumental. Those are big words. Don't worry if you don't know what they mean. We're going to work together to find out.*

Instrumental Value:

Ask students to stay in their teams and look up Exodus 5:6-18 in their Bibles. Ask them to read the passage and answer the question, what was an Israelite's value based on?

When the groups are done, solicit some answers. The answer is that an Israelite's value was based on the number of bricks he or she could make. From the time Israelite children were ready to make bricks (around age 10 and up) they made bricks until they died, for 16-20 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. If they made their quota they were considered worth keeping. If not they were either beaten, traded or killed. So to an Egyptian, an Israelite was only worth as many bricks and she or he could make.

Intrinsic Value:

Now have the groups look up Exodus 20:8-11 and answer the question, What did God command these same slaves after he led them out of slavery in Egypt?

When the groups are done, solicit some answers. The answer is that God commanded them to rest one day a week.

Comparison One:

Tell the students that in one of these passages the Israelites were valued *intrinsically* and in the other one they were valued *instrumentally*. Ask them which one is which. If they need some help, give them a clue ("think of what the word instrumental or instrument means"). The goal of this is for students to be able to contrast instrumental value (being valued for function or productivity) and intrinsic value (being valued regardless of function or productivity). Allow for some discussion and questions. Push them to elaborate their answers.

Finally, ask them who they would choose as a leader for themselves, Pharaoh or God? Ask them why. Move on when you think that students understand that God values them intrinsically and that God proves it by mandating rest for human society.

Comparison Two:

Say something like, *I know these words are pretty big, intrinsic and instrumental. But I have faith that you can learn them. I have brought two of my own items here with me today.* Display your own two items that you brought to the lesson. Tell them why you value both items. *One of them has intrinsic value and the other has instrumental value. Which is which?*

Conclude by saying something like, *Instrumental value is when you value something because of what it can do for you. Once it can't perform that function, you don't value it anymore. Intrinsic value is when you value something because of the item itself. Even though it doesn't do anything anymore, you still value it.*

Sometimes, we value people instrumentally but not intrinsically. When you talk to some seniors, especially in retirement homes, they don't feel valued because they don't produce things in society the way they once did. In the second Bible passage we read today, God reminds the Israelites to let their servants and animals take a rest because we also tend to value other humans based on what they can do for us, not because they have value in and of themselves.

Closing:

Based on that passage and on what we've been talking about today, how do you think that God sees you? And if you visited with senior people, How does God see them? Do seniors and youth have anything in common? Solicit some answers. Bring the discussion and the lesson to a close.