

# **More Than a Name**

**Module: THE THREE D'S OF IDENTITY THEFT**

**Lesson 1: INTRODUCTION: WHERE DO WE FIND OUR IDENTITY?**

## **Objectives:**

- Students will examine what is important in their lives
- Students will discover what it means to have an identity in God
- Students will begin to think about where their identity comes from

## **Materials Needed**

- ☐ Rectangular pieces of paper (about 1/3 of a blank page) – one per person
- ☐ Markers (lots of variety of colours)
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Optional: ball of string or something continuous (streamer)
- ☐ Optional: Bristol board, tape/glue

## Minds On

Begin the lesson by handing out strips of blank paper and markers to each student. Let them know that they are to make a personal “bumper sticker” to be placed on their (or their parents) car at the end of the night. Make sure to stress that bumper stickers are seen by many people every day, so your students want to make sure they are sure that what they put on this bumper sticker is what they want their parents, their teachers, their pastor, etc. to see on a daily basis. (Also make a note of being respectful, so no profanity or crude language/pictures). Give the students 5 to 10 minutes to complete their bumper sticker. If they do not have time to complete it in that amount of time, let them know that there will be time provided after the lesson for them to continue with their bumper sticker.

Once you have collected the groups’ attention again, have the students get into groups of three. Within their groups of three, have them letter off with an A, B, and C member. Once they have their letter, have them share within the group their bumper sticker. Have students discuss *why* they chose to include any words or pictures and *what* it means to them.

Once they have finished sharing within their respective groups, collect attention as a whole group again. Then have each small group share each other’s bumper stickers. Have person A share what person B’s bumper sticker is and why it is important. Next have person B share person C’s bumper sticker, and lastly, have person C share person A’s bumper sticker. This way, students are interpreting what they heard and sharing it with the whole group and it helps make for an interesting discussion.

Optional: After everyone has shared, ask students if there are any particular questions to any of the students in the group and their personal bumper sticker.

## Action

Start a discussion about bumper stickers. Start off by *asking questions like*, “What is the point of a bumper sticker? Why do people put bumper stickers on their cars?”

Some answer may include:

- to inform others about what’s in the car (ie. baby on board)
- to let others know who you vote for
- silly sayings that mean something to your life (the people on the outside may not understand unless they know you well)
- to represent something important in your life

This discussion does not have to last very long; it is more important to brainstorm some reasons behind putting something so permanent on the outside of their car. On the topic of permanence, you may want to also reference or bring up the topic of tattoos, and why people get tattoos (for some very similar reasons, believe it or not). Perhaps if someone in the group has a tattoo and is willing to share, they could explain the significance or reason for getting the tattoo.

Once the discussion has died down, and there are no more answers, continue by giving the following analogy of a bumper sticker.

**Say something like:** *Bumper stickers are an amazing way to express who you are. There is everything from what political party you vote for, to what cities or countries you’ve traveled to, to what music you like. There are endless possibilities of expressing to others who you are and what you’ve done. It is a way to make others aware of your identity without them having to get to know you. In fact, you don’t even have to interact with them at all. Using a bumper sticker is a form of telling others who you are.*

Ask them what they think. Ask them if they believe this to be true. You will get some that will answer yes, and some that will answer no. For those that answer no, ask the group as a whole why some bumper stickers might not represent the person inside the car?

Some answers might include:

- they are only putting on bumper stickers they think might attract attention
- they think it is what others want to see (ie. peer pressured)
- bumper stickers can be silly sometimes, so those ones might be as a joke, as opposed to being serious

Overall, you want to get the discussion geared toward the idea that bumper stickers do not reveal the depths of a person's heart; bumper stickers are more of a display of how they want to be seen by others.

**Ask,** *"Is what's on the outside always the same as what's on the inside?"* This will provoke a 'yes' or 'no' answer, to which you can challenge with a question like, *"If I were to look at you right now, and describe to you what I see, is that enough to tell me about your identity and who you are?"* Again, this will produce a 'yes' or 'no' answer, which will most likely result in a 'no' depending on the students. From here, it is important to ask students to think to themselves for a minute about who they are, what is important to them, and what that might mean for their life.

After you have given a short amount of time to think about these three different aspects, number students off starting at one and going to half the number of kids you have (for example, if you have 10 kids, number them off 1-5 twice; if you have 20 kids, number them off 1-10 twice; etc). Have students pair up with their number (numbers 1 together, 2 together, 3 together, and so on) and discuss their personal identities with their partner. Depending on your group, you may want to change this method of getting into groups, as some may not feel comfortable sharing with someone they do not know. With that said, this may be an opportunity to be open and become closer with those the student may not know.

This can be a very sensitive moment, so please judge the next few steps as to whether or not your group would be able to handle it. The last step is to share as a group. This would be voluntary for students to share what is important in their life. You can either do this individually, where you focus on an individual and have them discuss their identity and what is important to them, or you

can do this as a whole group, where people shout out their answers but the focus is not on one person.

***Say something like:*** *It is important to define what it means to have an identity in Christ. Identity on its own is defined as: the individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized (Dictionary.com). An identity in Christ means being known as a Christian and living by the standards that Jesus gave us. Jesus gave us these standards through the Holy Bible, and we talk about them weekly, both in youth group and in church. Our identity in Christ is who we are and where our faith stands. John 15:5 says “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Here, Jesus is telling us that our identity is founded in Christ, and it is only through having a relationship with Jesus that we can have a true identity.*

## **Consolidate/Debrief**

***Ask the students,*** *“Why might our identity outside of church differ from our identity inside the church?”*

Discuss how it is not always easy to have the same identity outside of the church as you do inside the church. Peers pressure you to be a certain way; teachers and parents want you to act a certain way. But ultimately, you need to remember that you are not out to please those people, you are out to please the Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ. Reading 1Samuel 16:7 may be helpful as a way to sum up your time of discussion.

### ***Optional Ending Activity:***

Have students stand up in a circle. One person can start with the ball of string and will toss it to another person. They will toss it to someone and say something nice about something they know and appreciate about this person. That person will then pass it on to another person around the circle. You can only be thrown the ball of string once, and you can only throw it to someone else once. Eventually, the ball should go full circle and there should be a web in the middle. The last

person thrown to should be the first person that threw the ball of string. Encourage your students to avoid using this as a time to be silly or make jokes. The goal is genuine, honest encouragement.

End the lesson off with a prayer. If you chose to do the optional ending activity, have students stay standing in the circle with the strings still in their hands. Pray that the students would find their identity in Christ and will rely on Christ whenever something challenges that identity.

*Note:* At the end you could allow more time for students to finish their bumper stickers. You could also collect the bumper stickers and find a way to display them in your youth area (or on a Bristol board for easy manoeuvrability) as there may be times over the next few lessons where referencing the bumper stickers will occur.