CHARIS YOUTH

Series: New Identity

Lesson 1: New Identity Through Faith

About This Lesson

Young people seek to find who they are and their true identity, and sadly, the world loves to distort their God-given identity. This series reminds them that they have a new identity in Christ when they accept salvation. This lesson shows the importance of taking that step of faith that changes one's identity. As we look at Abraham's life, the young people will see someone embracing his new identity and fulfilling God's promises.

Key Takeaway: Through Jesus, we are transformed and given a new identity! We need to be grounded in that new identity through our faith in Jesus and God's promises!

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Teaching Outline:

I. ABRAHAM – THE FIRST MAN TO BE GIVEN A NEW IDENTITY

A. He Knew His Promise & Stepped Out

Genesis 12:1–4 *Now the Lord had said to Abram:*
"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
2 I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him.
And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

1. Verse 1 says, "Get out." You have to trust God. You have to move on and trust that He knows a better way than you.
    a. Share a story about a time when you stepped out into something new.
2. At age 75, Abram obeyed the voice of the LORD. He stepped out. He took action. Faith takes action. You're never too old or too young to enter your new identity.
3. Following God isn't easy and doesn't always make sense, but God keeps His promises!
    a. Abram went from Haran to Canaan, and when he was in Canaan—Famine!
    b. Had to move to Egypt, where his wife Sarai pretended to be his sister. Plagues came upon Pharaoh.
    c. Fulfillment of God's promise in verse 3: "bless those who bless you, curse those who curse you." Abram and Lot went back to Canaan. They were so blessed that they had to split up—too much blessings for one place.

B. Picture the Promise

Genesis 13:14–18 *And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."*
18 *Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.*

1. Verse 14 says, *"Lift your eyes… for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever."* Get a picture of what God has promised you! You will only be given what you can see. See with the eyes of faith!
2. What are you believing God for? Get a clear and detailed picture of it and stay focused on it!

C. Belief/Faith Is Accounted For Righteousness

Genesis 15:1–6 *After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*
[2] But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3] Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"
[4] And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."
[5] Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."
[6] And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

1. God is our shield and our protector. He will cause us to receive our reward! What reward? The reward is receiving the promises of God!
2. Verses 2–3 show us that Abram struggled at times. He stepped out in faith but had been waiting for 11 years since he first believed God's promise.
3. V. 5, God reminds Abram of the promise and gets him to picture that promise, *"Look at the stars…so shall your descendants be!"*
4. V. 6, Abram believed in the LORD, and God accounted it to him for righteousness.

D. Change of Identity

Genesis 17:1–7 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.*
[2] And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." [3] Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:
[4] "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. [5] No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. [6] I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. [7] And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

1. Abram was 99 years old. It had been 24 years since the promise was first recorded in Genesis 12.
2. V.2, The first time the promise is solidified by a covenant, a solemn oath between God and man. *"I will multiply you exceedingly."*

3. V. 5, Old identity: Abram means "exalted father." New identity: Abraham means "father of a multitude." God had more for Abraham and changed his name to reflect the change in his identity. God wanted Abraham to see himself as God saw him.
4. V. 6, "Exceedingly fruitful." God wants us to be exceedingly fruitful. He wants to bless us so much that our lives are a testimony to unbelievers.
5. God changed Abram's identity, and by faith, Abraham believed in God's promises even when he didn't see their fulfillment over the years.

E. The New Testament remembers Abraham for his faith in God's promises. Galatians 3:6-9, 14 *Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." [7] Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. [8] And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." [9] So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. … [14] that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*
   1. V. 6, We are righteous by faith.
   2. V. 7, We are the seed of Abraham by faith.
   3. V. 8, We are justified by faith.
   4. V. 9, We are blessed by faith.
   5. V. 14, In Jesus, the blessing of Abraham is upon me. I have the promise of the Spirit through faith. The same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in me.
      a. Give the young people an opportunity to take a step of faith and receive Christ as their Savior and begin their new identity in Him.

Bottom Line:
You need to continually remind yourself of who you are! The moment you believe on Jesus—you are given a new identity. Faith establishes you in that identity and enables you to walk it out!

Small Group Time:

1. Your identity needs to come from who God says you are! God called Abram by his new identity, Abraham. Maybe other people (or yourself) have called you by names

that don't line up with what God says about you. Take your old identity and speak what God says about your new identity.

"Failure" meet your new identity: God says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) and "I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me" (Romans 8:37).

"Poor" meet your new identity: God says, "You are blessed by the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 4:19).

"Ugly meet your new identity: God says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psalm 139:14).

"Dumb" meet your new identity: God says, "You have the mind of Christ, that He may instruct you" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

- What identity do you want to change? What is the source of that identity: friends, family, social media, or yourself?
- What steps are you willing to take to change it? (find new friends, stop social media, read the Bible)

2. To receive God's promises that shape your new identity, you must believe that God's Word will never be broken. It will never change. God's character and His love will never change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. When you believe God's Word and His promises are for you, your faith will speak and show your new identity!

- Who does God say you are?
- What promises in the Bible affirm who God says you are?

Declaration:

"I have a new identity in Christ. By faith, I receive and believe I am who God says I am. My eyes are on God and not on who I used to be."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** This week, what change in your life will show people you have a new identity in Christ?

- **Pray:** Ask God to confirm your new identity and help you focus on who you are in Him and not who the world says you are.
- **Read:** Isaiah 43:18–19 each day and write down something new that God showed you about yourself and your new identity. Don't focus on the past, but keep your eyes ahead and on Him. Praise God for each new thing He has done in you! Do not remember the former things!
- **Live It:** You have a God-given purpose. As you take hold of God's promises and see them change your identity to be more Christlike, you can take opportunities to speak into others' lives. When you see people around you who are in an identity crisis and believe the wrong identity, you can share with them who God says they are. Commit to pray for them to embrace God's identity for them.
- **Create:** On your mirror, use a dry-erase marker to write down each identity that God says you are. When you look in the mirror, read these identities aloud and praise God for them!

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you could choose a nickname, what would it be, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Look online for pictures of before and after remodels. As you show the images, discuss how the renovation took time and effort. Point out that once the remodel is finished, you would not want to return to how it was before. Today's lesson shows the importance of embracing our new identity in Christ and not returning to our old identity.

Opening Affirmation: "I am who God says I am. The old me is gone, and by faith I believe God's promises to me."

Giving Time: Psalm 91:13–14 *Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.* [14] *They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing.*

These verses show the importance of being planted or rooted in the house of God. When the youth develop a habit of following God's ways, such as giving, they will reap benefits when they are old. We sow seeds now that will bring a harvest later.

Don't neglect giving because later you will enjoy God's blessings on what you give now!

BEYOND –
ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: This week's challenge is for the young people to affirm each other's' new identity in Christ. For example, in a conversation about anxiety over something in the future, remind the person that God is always with them and has good plans for them. Next week, have the young people share how affirming others' identity encouraged and impacted that person.

Biblical Worldview: A biblical worldview of identity comes only from God's Word. Young people hear and see the world's view of what their identity should be, and the two worldviews are complete opposites. Have the young people look online for lists of who they are in Christ and their identity in Him. Encourage them to write down characteristics of their new identity and boldly speak out who God says they are: loved, chosen, redeemed, forgiven, blessed, and victorious.

Outreach/Missions: Missionaries in Muslim countries deal with the mindset that anyone born in that country is automatically a Muslim. It is widely accepted that America is a "Christian" country and its citizens are Christians. Pray for the missionaries to effectively convey the need to step out in faith and gain a new identity in Christ through accepting forgiveness of sins.