



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Hello, My Name Is / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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BOTTOM LINE

It takes courage to live in the light.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand how to live in light of what Jesus has done for them.

SCRIPTURE

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8 NIV).

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise (Ephesians 5:15 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Paul tells the church in Ephesus that when they put their faith in Jesus, they moved from darkness to light. But now they have the choice to *live* as children of light—as children of God. The same is true for us today. We have the choice to *live* as the children of God. And as we work to figure out who we are and who we're going to be, the foundation of all of that is remembering that we are first and foremost *His*—God's children.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Identity is what makes you, YOU.

TENSION

We know *some* of our distinguishing characteristics—the unique good stuff about us.

But then there are some other things—stuff that we don't even like about ourselves.

And on top of all *that*, the things that are unique about us are constantly changing.

There's a lot of stuff at play when it comes to your identity. And most days, it just feels like a balancing act.

We're always listening to people, paying attention to how they react to us, and trying to make adjustments.

TRUTH

There *is* a way to know exactly what you're aiming for when it comes to your identity.

Almost 2,000 years ago the apostle Paul, the most famous and history-changing missionary of all time, wrote a letter to his church friends in a town called Ephesus.



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TEACHING OUTLINE

At the time he wrote this letter, they were really struggling to figure out their identity.

Paul begins by describing where they used to be: in darkness.

Basically it just meant, "You used to NOT know about Jesus, who He was, and what He did for you—but you know now!"

In other words, you get it now. The light switch has been turned on.

Because of your relationship with Jesus, you are different than you were before.

So . . . *live* differently.

It takes intentionality to live as children of light. More than that, it takes courage to live in the light.

Living in the light, as if your life has been changed, will always be the best choice for you.

People want to see a light show on display, and the same is true for people.

APPLICATION

What does it actually *look* like?
1) Be real 2) Be wise 3) Be kind

When you live as light, you get the attention of everyone, young and old, around you.

LANDING

Even if you're not sure about *all* the words that should fill in the blank in, "Hello, My Name Is _____," you can be sure that at least one word is "HIS."

You can start by being real about who you are, being wise in what you do, and being kind to the people around you.



TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

IT TAKES COURAGE TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

For the past few weeks, we've been talking about a word that gets thrown around a lot, but is rarely defined.

Identity.

And we've said that identity is about more than just your legal name. Sure, everyone can fill in the blank on a nametag that says, "Hello, My Name Is _____." But there are also a lot of other words that can fill in the blank. Words like "funny" or "kind" or "athlete" or "cool." All the words that fill in that blank for you are part of your identity.

According to Merriam-webster.com, one of the definitions of "identity" is the **distinguishing character** or personality of an individual.

In other words, identity is what makes you, YOU.

We all know our own distinguishing characteristics—the things that make us different from everybody else on the planet—right?

OK, not exactly.

TENSION

2 MINUTES

We know *some* of our distinguishing characteristics. We know *some* of the unique good stuff about us.

But then there are some other things—stuff that we don't even like about ourselves. Do those count as "distinguishing characteristics?" And what about the things we don't



TEACHING SCRIPT

even know about ourselves? The characteristics we've never even noticed? What about our online personality? Does *that* also make us unique? And is there such a thing as *too unique*? We know we want to be different and stand out, but just enough to be interesting, and not totally weird.

And on top of all that, the things that are unique about us are constantly changing. So basically, the reality is this: Identifying your identity is a lot of work.

Because there's a lot of stuff at play when it comes to your identity. And most days, it just feels like a balancing act.

- **We want to be different and interesting.**
- **But we don't want to be SO different that we're weird.**

- **We don't want to be fake.**
- **But we don't want to be too real either.**

- **We want to look like we have it together.**
- **But we also don't want to look like we're trying too hard.**

And if we're honest, most of us spend most of our time adjusting the way we look, tweaking the way we speak, and making minor updates to our personality, humor, and style in hopes that our identity will come out just right to other people.

We're always listening to people, paying attention to how they react to us, and trying to make adjustments. And because other people change moment to moment, we're never quite sure where to aim.

I mean, is there a *right* way to fill in the blank of, "Hello, My Name Is _____?" What *should* we aim for? And how do we know if we're getting it right?

TRUTH

3 MINUTES

Now, here's the good news: What we're going to talk about today is going to be helpful. Because there is a way to know exactly what you're aiming for when it comes to your identity.

Almost 2,000 years ago the apostle Paul, the most famous and history-changing missionary of all time, wrote a letter to his church friends in a town called Ephesus.

Ephesus was located on the western coast of Asia Minor. Today, it would be in Turkey (the country, not the poultry—just making sure we're on the same page here).

Paul's friends were building the first churches and gatherings of Christians in that town. At the time he wrote this letter, they were really struggling to figure out their identity. If they had the sticker, it would've said, "Hello, My Name Is I'll Get Back To You Because I'm Still Trying To Figure That Out."

TEACHING SCRIPT



And if we're honest, most of us could use a nametag like that at some point or another. We're all still trying to figure it out. So while Paul wrote to people in Turkey a long time ago, it still applies to you right this very moment, nearly 2,000 years later.

Paul begins by saying this:

For you were once darkness (Ephesians 5:8a NIV).

Now, this was not an insult. He was describing where they used to be, and basically it just meant, "You used to NOT know about Jesus, who He was, and what He did for you—but you know now! You used to NOT know Jesus was a gift for *you*, and that because of Him, you have access to God at any time. But you're aware of that now!"

In other words, something about you and your life has fundamentally changed.

And how do we know they understood this about Jesus? Because of what Paul says next:

But now you are light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8b NIV).

In other words, you get it now. The light switch has been turned on. You've put your trust in Jesus and what He did—when He died and was resurrected—and you are connected to God. Paul could've summed it up this way:

Because of your relationship with Jesus, you are different than you were before.

Then Paul writes this:

Live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8c NIV).

Which makes you wonder, were some Christians *not* living in the light? And what does that even mean?

Basically, living in the darkness means being unaware of the access you have to God as a big, loving Father. And living in the light means you *are* aware of this about God and you've put your trust in Him.

So to live as children of light is knowing:

- I am a son or daughter of God.
- I can ask God for anything.
- God's power is available to me.
- The greatest power in the universe is on my side.
- The Person who invented love loves me unconditionally.
- No matter what I've done, because of Jesus, God and I are in good standing.

Paul is saying, "When you decided to follow Jesus, something changed about you and in you. Your life was like a dark room where someone turned on the light. In a word, you're **different**. So . . . *live* differently."

TEACHING SCRIPT



But here's the thing. The fact that Paul is encouraging a group of people to *live as children of light* tells me they have the option to NOT live as children of light. **In other words, we can believe something is true in our heads, but not have it affect the way we behave.** Even if we love the light, we have an option to live as if we're in darkness.

And the fact that Paul had to say this at all tells me that living like children of light is not our default mode of behavior. It doesn't come naturally. It's easier to live like we always have. It's easy to forget and act in a way that doesn't place any confidence in who God is and how we can relate to Him. **It takes intentionality to live as children of light.**

And more than that:

It takes courage to live in the light.

Living differently takes courage. It won't always be easy. It won't always come naturally. But it will be better. How do we know that? **Because the light is always better than the dark.**

When you're in a dark room, what do you reach for first? A light. And the same is true for your life and identity. Living in the light, as if your life has been changed, will always be the best choice for you.

Have you ever heard of the Northern Lights? Maybe you learned about it in school. Maybe you've even seen them in real life. For those of you not familiar with them, the Northern Lights are basically a natural light display in the sky.

[Communicator Note: Google search "northern lights" or "aurora" and find a high quality image to show your students.]

But you can't see them everywhere. You can only see them—you guessed it—in the north. Places like Alaska, Remote Norwegian Sea Islands, Scotland, Canada, and Greenland are just a few places where they are known to show up.

In Iceland alone, it's believed that tourists shell out over a billion dollars each year just to see these lights!

So what does that have to do with what we're talking about? A lot. **Because people want to see a light show on display!**

The same is true when it comes to *people* being a light display. People are attracted to—or at least, curious about—those who shine a light. People who realize who God created them to be. **People who say Jesus changed their lives and then live like changed people.** People who are honest about what's real in their lives. People who truly live their lives, even when it's not the same life that everybody else lives—or that everybody else expects them to live.

It may take a lot more courage, but living as a child of light is better.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

So, that sounds nice, right? But what does it actually *look* like? I mean, what *do* you actually do differently if you decide to live your life in light of what Jesus has done for you? Well, here are a few things:

- **Be real.** Living in darkness is about hiding who you really are. Living in the light is about being honest. Are you feeling insecure? Be honest about it. Do you feel like you don't measure up? Tell someone. Have you messed up? Own it. **Is there an area of life you're hiding because you're scared of what people will think of you? Bring it to light.** Instead of being "fake" or getting mad at people who are fake, just look at your own life and see if there's anything that needs to be talked about and addressed. Tell *one* person *one* thing. Start there. Don't get on social media and air your "realness." No, bring something to the light with someone you trust. Your student pastor or small group leader is a great place to start.
- **Be wise.** When you fully understand that God made you and He wants more for you, you begin to realize that your decisions matter because your life matters. In fact, Paul continues his letter to the Ephesians by saying this: *Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise (Ephesians 5:15 NIV)*. That means making decisions based on who God says you are, not on what other people think. **It means making choices that are best for your future, even if they don't make sense right now.** And here's fair warning: Being wise isn't common. It may even feel scary to make choices that are so different than the people around you. **It takes courage to live in the light, but light is always worth it.**
- **Be kind.** You know what's *not* normal in high school? A person who treats other people well all the time. It's like a light in a dark room. A person who encourages people instead of making fun of them, who celebrates others' accomplishments instead of being jealous, who treats people like they matter—that's different! **When you choose to be kind, you are living differently than you would have before you knew Jesus.** You are living as light in a dark world. This is something you can do randomly with the people in your home and the people at your school. But kindness is also something you can schedule. That's what it means to volunteer or serve at your church. You're basically scheduling time to be kind and to treat other people—often younger people—like they matter.

Listen, as students, you can get a bad rap sometimes. Often unfairly. You might be talked about as if you're always selfish, fake, or making dumb decisions. That's super unfair. But this low expectation also gives you a chance to let your light shine brighter. It makes you even more noticeable when you choose to be real, wise, and kind.

When you live as light, you get the attention of everyone, young and old, around you. Not only will they see *you* differently, but they'll see *God* differently because of you.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

As we head out, know this: Even if you're not really sure who you are, you can be honest about that. And that will actually be reassuring, attractive, and helpful to people who aren't sure who they are. Even if you're not sure about *all* the words that should fill in the blank in, "Hello, My Name Is _____," you can be sure that at least one word is "HIS." Because you belong to Jesus, you can live as a child of light, no matter what else about you is changing. And you can start by being real about who you are, being wise in what you do, and being kind to the people around you.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
