

## BIG IDEA

Help your child develop a reverence for life as created in the image of God in a society filled with threats to the sanctity of life.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *All people are fearfully and wonderfully made* (Ps. 139:13-14).
- *All people are made in God's image* (Gen. 1:27).
- *God cares for all people* (Ps. 145:9).
- *All life is important* (Ex. 20:13).
- *All people are planned by God before they are born* (Jer. 1:5).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILD IS ASKING

- What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
- Are some lives more important than others?
- What happens when people die?



### AT THIS AGE MOST ELEMENTARY CHILDREN WILL ...

- Begin to show empathy and offer help when they see someone in need.
- Value their friendships more and may desire to be popular.
- Begin to develop a conscience and a value system.
- Be interested in their own community and country.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Children at this age are becoming more sensitive to the feelings of others. They begin to imagine how it would feel to be in someone else's situation. They may desire to help others. Model empathy and caring for other people. Compliment your child when you observe her helping others who are in need.
- Younger elementary age kids often develop a strong sense of right and wrong (moral sense). They may begin to express opinions about fairness and making the world a better place. Be willing to engage in conversation with your child about his thoughts and feelings on topics relating to human dignity.
- Most younger elementary age children understand the finality of death, but some may have difficulty grasping why God allowed a person to die or what happens to a person after death. When questions arise, provide answers, avoiding abstract terms like "sleeping," "resting," and so forth.



### COACHING TIPS

- Because people are God's most important creation, encourage your child to begin seeing—and treating—every person as God's creation: loved and valued by Him. When we do this, we please God and honor Him.
- God works through people who do His work in their communities and in the world. Lead your family to reach out to people of other races, cultures, ages, socio-economic situations, special needs, and so forth, to champion human dignity and for the glory of God.
- God has a plan and purpose for every person's life. Help your child learn to trust that God's plan is always best, even when things happen that don't make sense (like death, poverty, sickness, etc.).



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **LOOK AT THESE PEOPLE!** Look through several magazines with your child, comparing the different types of people pictured throughout the pages. Talk about the ways people are different. Emphasize that God values every person, and we should value all people, too. Invite your child to name some ways to value other people.
- **LET'S LOOK AT YOUR BABY PICTURES.** Invite your child to look at her baby pictures with you. Note the many ways she has changed and grown. Transition into a discussion about people being created in God's image and how each of us is important and has a purpose.
- **WHAT CAN WE DO?** Look for volunteer opportunities at places such as nursing homes or homeless shelters where you and your child can spend time serving others together. As your child connects with people of other cultures, races, and stages in life, he will understand their importance as God's creations. Volunteering will help him develop a sense of value for each person.



### SAY OR PRAY

- People are God's most important creation.
- God created us in His image.
- God loves and values every person.
- God has a plan for every person's life.

## BIG IDEA

Help your preteen develop a reverence for life as created in the image of God in a society filled with threats to the sanctity of life.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *All people are made in God's image* (Gen. 1:27).
- *You shall not murder* (Ex. 20:13).
- *God designed all people. He knew our futures before we were born* (Ps. 139:13-16).
- *You should value your elders* (Prov. 23:22).
- *God alone should determine life and death* (Job 14:5).
- *All people are equally valuable in the eyes of God* (Job 31:15).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRETEEN MAY ASK

- Why do people treat certain people differently?
- How should I act toward everyone?
- Is every life equal?
- How should I relate to people who don't share my views?



### AT THIS AGE MOST PRETEENS WILL ...

- Begin to develop a conscience, a value system, and concepts of love and trust.
- Have formed concepts of personal worth.
- Feel deeply about their own experiences and can be sensitive to others.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Preteens experience rapid social and emotional growth. Although they may begin this life stage motivated by their own interests and experiences, they generally exhibit a newfound eagerness for responsibilities and opportunities for self-direction.
- Abstract thinking gives way to an ability to distinguish between fact and fiction, as well as the capacity for discerning relationships in terms of time and space.
- Preteens understand the finality of death but are easily influenced by their emotions and emotional reflexes. Use Scripture to help guide them to a healthy understanding of life and death. Apply personal experience gently to reinforce, in a balanced emotional approach to life, its fragility and its ultimate sanctity.
- Many preteens will be aware of the processes underlying life development and may ask practical, moral, and/or political questions about its contingent or theoretic value. Ground your responses in Scripture.

- As a parent, you are your preteen's primary example of how to act. Model empathy as often as possible and talk with your preteen about caring for others. Praise other people often and be generous with compliments and support.



### COACHING TIPS

- Discuss how all people develop according to the same process from infancy to adulthood to solidify the concept of life stages. Use Scripture to point out how biblical persons were just as human as yourself and your preteen, and how amazing works of God are done through people who are subject to the same process of physical growth. All human life, therefore, is sacred, God-given, and must be treated with utmost respect.
- Recognize and celebrate other cultures and races. Clarify how the differences between cultures, people groups, and accompanying modes of expression *do not* alter God's love for all people. Watch movies or read books together that take on cultural issues appropriately to provide her with a healthy venue for understanding challenging or complicated issues. Discuss the Civil Rights Movement and why we should show love and respect to all people. Explain that we can love the way Jesus loved and remain true to what the Bible says is true, even though it may be difficult and not always received well by others.
- While preteens are more capable of grasping the concept of death than younger children, be attuned to your preteen's emotions as well as his holistic understanding. Be reassuring but assertive in your coaching, reminding him of God's promise of eternal life for believers after death.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **LET'S GO HELP OTHERS.** Engage in a volunteer organization, program, or activity with your preteen. Work together to serve others. Your preteen will develop a love for people, no matter her stage or situation in life. Outreach will help reinforce in your preteen how everyone is unique and valuable.
- **WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ON THE NEWS OR FROM FRIENDS ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE, DEATH, AND WHEN LIFE BEGINS?** Encourage your preteen to share while you listen attentively. Treat these conversations as opportunities to grow closer together over tough subjects. Teach your preteen that studying the Bible deeply is a crucial step toward disentangling some of life's most troubling issues.



### SAY OR PRAY

- God created life, and all life comes from God.
- God designed everyone differently, but He loves each person the same.
- God wants to have a relationship with you.
- God made you to show His love to others.

## BIG IDEA

Your middle schooler needs to know that every human life, regardless of age or ability, has inherent value from being created in God's image.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Every person is created in God's image* (Gen. 1:26-27).
- *Every person created in God's image has inherent value, dignity, and worth* (Ps. 139:13,16; Jer. 1:5).
- *We are to love all people regardless of their situation or who they are* (Mark 12:28-31).
- *Taking innocent life created in God's image is sinful* (Gen. 9:5-6).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Why am I supposed to love everyone?
- What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
- Why can't we get along with everyone?
- Why would someone want to kill their baby?



### AT THIS AGE MOST MIDDLE SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Begin to develop an opinion on the sanctity of human life.
- Begin to engage with the arguments coming from both sides of the issue, at least those presented in pop culture and their friends.
- Recognize injustice and bias in the adults and peers around them. They often will have strong reactions to those being unfairly judged or those treated unfairly.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Middle schoolers will see and some will experience bullying including racial slurs and acts of aggression toward someone. Create a listening environment for them to talk through what they see, hear, and how they feel.
- During middle school there is a link between self-worth or self-hatred and rebellious behavior. Middle schoolers need to be treated with dignity and respect, kindness and firm discipline.
- Most middle schoolers want to explore moral and ethical issues confronted in the culture, media, and daily interactions they experience in their families and with peer groups.



### COACHING TIPS

- Genesis 1 shows that every person is made in God's image. We are God's image-bearers with value and worth because we reflect Him. Think about ways you can instill this value in your middle schooler on a consistent basis through your words, actions, responses, and attitude. Make sure you are treating your middle schooler in this way.
- David declares that the Lord "knit me together in my mother's womb" (Ps. 139:13). Help your middle schooler understand that this is true of every person whether they know Christ or not. Discuss how as a family you can demonstrate your understanding that all life is sacred—even with unbelievers.
- The Scriptures clearly teach that humans are made in God's image and therefore have innate value. Discuss how as a family you've messed up and stereotyped people or failed to show that others were of great value. Don't be afraid to own your mistakes and change. Discuss what you can do differently.
- Provide opportunities for your middle schooler to interact with people who are different than her. Plan family activities that make this happen, including having people of different races and ethnicities in your home. You may need to move out of your own comfort zone to accomplish this.
- Be an example of what you are teaching. It will be hard to teach your middle schooler to love and respect all people if you are not setting that example.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN YOU?** Push your middle schooler to think beyond superficial differences and think about those different racially, ethnically, economically, and so forth. If she struggles to name anyone, that's a good clue you need to provide opportunities for her to meet some new friends.
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE?** Let your middle schooler wrestle with this question. He's probably heard the phrase but may not have really thought about what it means.
- **HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OR SEEN SOMEONE EXPRESS RACISM?** If your middle schooler answers negatively, talk about what her response would be if a friend made a racist joke or made a racist statement.



### SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that God would give you and your middle schooler the courage to take a stand for the inherent value, dignity, and worth of each person created in the image of God.
- Pray your middle schooler would have a heart for people not like him.

## BIG IDEA

Your high schooler needs to know that every human life, regardless of age or ability, has inherent value from being created in God's image.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Every person is created in God's image* (Gen. 1:26-27).
- *Every person created in God's image has inherent value, dignity, and worth* (Ps. 139:13,16; Jer. 1:5).
- *We are to love all people regardless of their situation or who they are* (Mark 12:28-31).
- *Taking innocent life created in God's image is sinful* (Gen. 9:5-6).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
- Why is there so much racial tension in our world?
- How do I treat people who are different than me?
- Is it ever OK for someone to have an abortion?



### AT THIS AGE MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Increasingly encounter people different than them—racially, economically, religiously, and so forth.
- Be greatly influenced by their peer group on how they are supposed to think about and treat others.
- Be forming opinions on sanctity of life issues.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- High schoolers will become more aware of the differences in people and will be more open to developing relationships with them.
- Youth at this age will begin to become less self-focused and begin expressing empathy toward others, especially those in need. Many will be moved by the situations of the oppressed in the world and become interested in social causes.
- High schoolers will have a deeper capacity for caring, sharing, and developing more intimate relationships.
- Youth at this age are engaged in higher-level thinking and abstract problem solving, which means they may want to ask and wrestle with tough questions about abortion and other sanctity of life issues.



## COACHING TIPS

- It's difficult to respect and care for people different than you if you don't know or aren't around people of varying races, cultures, or statuses. Provide opportunities for your high schooler to interact with people different than them. You may have to push her a bit to get her outside of her comfort zone. But first, you must be willing to move outside your own comfort zone to make this happen.
- Your high school student may show lots of concern, care, and respect for people in difficult situations around the world, while showing little of that for you and the rest of the family. Remind her that showing people honor and dignity begins at home.
- Treat your high schooler with respect and dignity. It's difficult to ask him to do this for others if you are not loving him in this way.
- Be willing to have conversations with your high schooler about difficult sanctity of life issues, and do so from a biblical perspective. She will have plenty of voices speaking the secular view. Make sure she understands how the gospel shapes our view of all people.
- Talk about how Christ treated us when we were His enemies: He chose to die for us (Rom. 5:8).



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO BE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD?** High schoolers are definitely not too young to be tackling this question. Follow this question by discussing how the truth that we are all image-bearers of God should shape the way we see and treat people.
- **WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO QUIET THE RACIAL TENSION IN OUR COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY?** Talk about how you and your family can be instruments of peace in this area.
- **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A FRIEND WHO WAS CONSIDERING ABORTING HER BABY?** This question will open doors to talk about this difficult issue. You may find that what she nods her assent to in church is different from what she really feels about the issue.



## SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your high schooler will see himself and others as made in the image of God.
- Pray that you and your family will be instruments of peace and messengers of reconciliation in a world of conflict and lostness.
- Repent of your own prejudices and pray that you would model for your high schooler how to truly love others as Christ loves them.

## BIG IDEA

Your young adult needs to know that every human life, regardless of age or ability, has inherent value from being created in God's image.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Every person is created in God's image* (Gen. 1:26-27).
- *Every person created in God's image has inherent value, dignity, and worth* (Ps. 139:13,16; Jer. 1:5).
- *We are to love all people regardless of their situation or who they are* (Mark 12:28-31).
- *Taking innocent life created in God's image is sinful* (Gen. 9:5-6).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR YOUNG ADULT IS ASKING

- What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
- Why is there so much racial division in our country?
- Why is abortion wrong?



### AT THIS AGE MOST YOUNG ADULTS WILL ...

- Likely be in an environment where they consistently encounter various cultures, races, and ethnicities.
- Be engaging in experiences, conversations, and situations where sanctity of life is a prominent issue.
- Probably know someone who has had or is contemplating having an abortion.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Young adults are experiencing significant changes in their ability to think. They are able to wrestle with complex abstract ideas and do future thinking. They also are more capable of empathy toward others. This will affect the way they view the sanctity of life issue.
- At this age, young adults are able to consider different points of view, which enables them to have more concern for those around them. They may struggle at times balancing concern for others with the truth.
- Young adults will begin to formulate strong opinions concerning sanctity of life and human dignity issues. They may feel strongly about human injustices and want to find ways to take action.
- Because young adults' environment is more culturally diverse, their friend group is likely to reflect that environment, which could include friends of different races, ethnicities, faith, and sexual orientation.



## COACHING TIPS

- Remind your young adult that all people are made in the image of God and have worth and value because of that. You may get that opportunity in a conversation about a professor he doesn't like, a drill sergeant who's pushing him hard, or a boss he doesn't respect.
- When discussing a controversial subject, seek to have a reasoned conversation that ends well, even if the two of you don't agree. This could help teach your young adult the art of agreeing to disagree. You want to make sure to leave the door open for further conversations about the subject.
- Talk about how Christ treated us when we were His enemies: He chose to die for us (Rom. 5:8).
- It's going to be very difficult to have respectful conversation about human dignity if you don't see and treat your young adult as an adult. In a conversation, show her the same respect you would other adults, even if you disagree.
- Be prepared for your young adult to express strong opinions that are different than yours. It could be that he doesn't yet hold that position but is outwardly processing it.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

### • DO YOU THINK ALL PEOPLE HAVE VALUE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

This question could easily lead into a discussion about what it means to be made in the image of God.

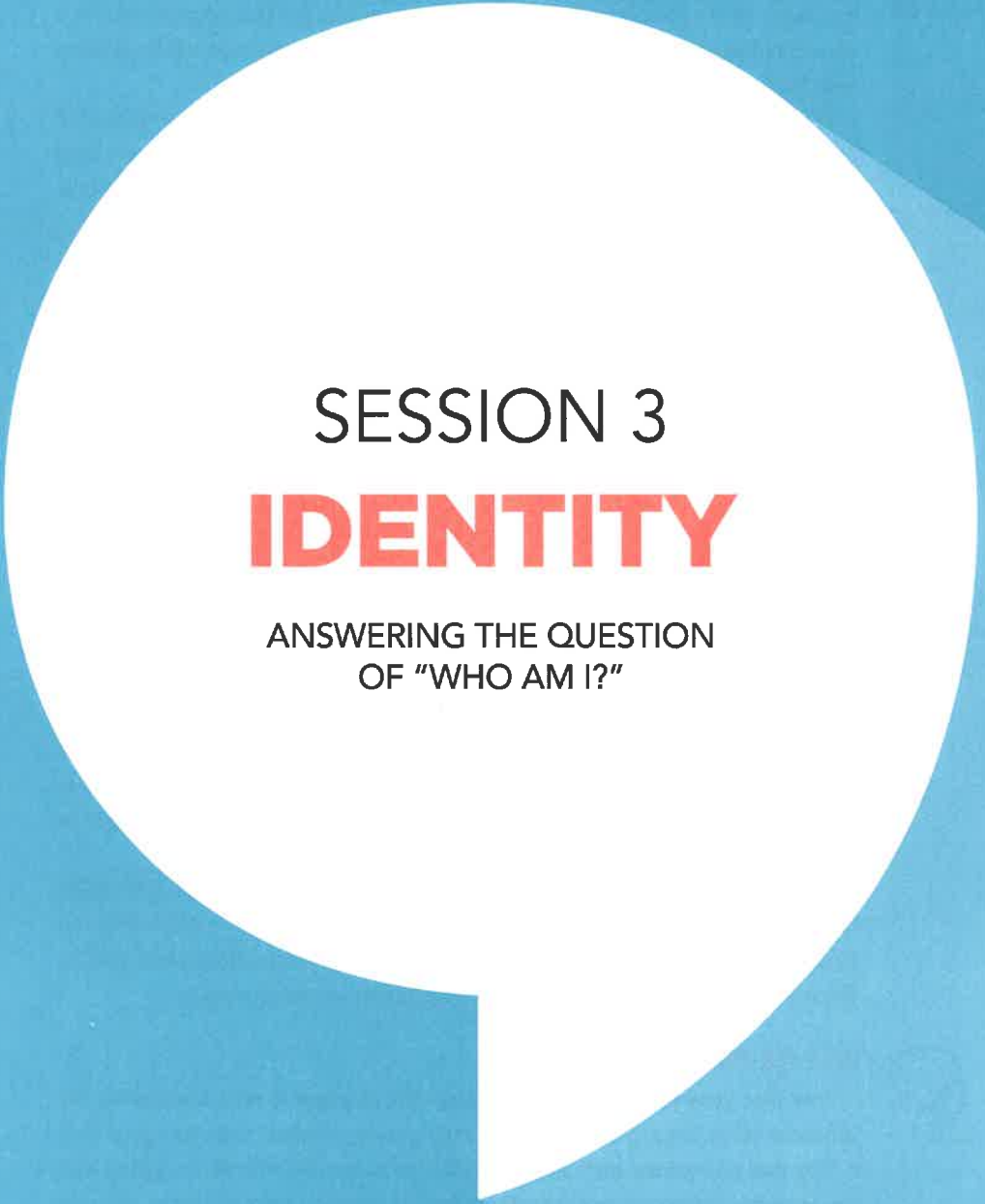
• **DO YOU SENSE RACIAL TENSION IN YOUR DORM/AT YOUR WORKPLACE/IN YOUR MILITARY UNIT?** You may be a safe place for your young adult to discuss this subject. This may also give you an opportunity to help her explore how God could use her to be an instrument of peace in the situation.

• **WHO ARE SOME SENIOR ADULTS YOU ADMIRE? WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THEM?** Use this question to remind your young adult that our elders still have value and so much to give. This conversation could lead to discussing ways to love and minister to the senior adults around you.



## SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your young adult would have the courage to take a stand for the inherent value, dignity, and worth of each person created in the image of God.
- Pray that your young adult will be sensitive to those who may be struggling with life decisions that have huge implications, such as whether or not to have an abortion.
- Ask God to constantly remind your young adult that he has value because he is an image-bearer of the Creator. Sometimes it's easy to remember that for someone else but forget it for yourself.



# SESSION 3

# **IDENTITY**

ANSWERING THE QUESTION  
OF "WHO AM I?"