

“A JOB IDENTITY”

(February Lesson)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

By Katie McRee

Key verses:

Job 1:1- 2:10

Objective: To consider through the story of Job what gives an individual their identity- a reminder that when everything is stripped away, we are still children of God.

The Set up: Minimal

The Plan:

- **Hook:** Self-Image Collage (10 mins)
 - Everyone will create their own collage on one sheet of paper
- **Book:** Job’s Self image, Job 1:1-2:10 (10 mins)
 - Creating Job’s Self-Image Collage, and then crossing out the things that Satan was allowed to take away from him
- **Look:** A Walk in Job’s Sandals (10 mins)
 - Crossing through the parts of our collage that represent what Job lost
- **Took:** My True Identity (5-10 mins)
 - Praying over the parts of our identity that cannot be changed

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- One large sheet of paper per person
- (optional) magazine collage items- magazines, scissors, glue/tape, markers, etc.
- pens/pencils
- Bibles
- Whiteboard/ flipchart with marker
- Markers
- Copies of discussion questions (optional)
- Copies of the finger print page (one per person)

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions)

Self-Image Collage (Hook, 10-15 mins)

In this section, youth will be making a collage that is supposed to represent everything in their lives that is important to them and plays a role in their self-image. We are aiming for quantity over quality with this one. If you have a group that is not particularly into arts and crafts, it is totally appropriate to make lists and draw symbols... but if they like to create, then bust out the magazines, glue/tape, and scissors!

- Hand out a large sheet of paper and either crafting supplies or pens/pencils.
- Tell them that this sheet of paper represents everything that is important to them and is part of who they are. They are supposed to add as many things as they can think of- it's okay if it's not pretty, but we want to include as many elements as we can. Words, symbols, and pictures are all appropriate
- They may need some help thinking of what to put on there. Here are some questions to get them going: Who are the people in your life that are most important to you? How do you spend your free time? What are your most valued possessions? What personality traits define you?
- ***Let them ask questions, and then give them a MAX of 10 minutes to complete the assignment- be speedy!***

When they have finished or time has run out, give them an opportunity to share. If you have a large group or are crunched for time, have them partner up with someone and share their favorite parts. If you have a smaller group, then you can go around and let everyone share a few of their favorite things. The sharing piece should take no more than 3 minutes.

Job's Self Image (Book, 15 mins)

In this section, we are reading through the story of Job and creating a self-image collage on the white board/flip chart. In the second part we will cross out the items that Satan was allowed to take away from him.

- Write on the whiteboard/flip chart "Job's identity"
- Choose someone who can write on the board/flipchart while you read
- Have everyone else look up Job 1:1-5, and choose one person who will read out loud while everyone else follows along
- Explain that as you read, the person at the whiteboard will be writing down all the things that describe who Job was and what his life was about- character traits, family, possessions, etc.
- Read the verse and write on the board
- Here are the verses for your planning purposes:

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. **2** He had seven sons and three daughters, **3** and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

4 His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. **5** When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

- Now you are going to read through the next part of the scripture, and as you do so, you are going to cross through (don't erase) the things that Satan was allowed to take away from Job.
- You may want to choose a different white board person/ reader(s)
- Have everyone look up Job 1:6-2:10. Choose one or more people to read, one person at the board, and everyone else can follow along and make sure you don't miss anything. Here are the verses for your planning purposes:

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan[b] also came with them. **7** The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. **10** "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. **11** But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12 The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, **14** a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind

swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship **21** and said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I will depart.[c]

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
may the name of the Lord be praised.”

22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

2 On another day the angels[d] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. **2** And the Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”

3 Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

4 “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. **5** But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

6 The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. **8** Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

9 His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”

10 He replied, “You are talking like a foolish[e] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

(you may want to spend a few minutes here making sure that they understand that Job lost everything and still did not curse God. You can also talk about why God allowed for these things to happen... but there will also be opportunity for that discussion after the next section)

A Walk in Job’s Sandals (Look, 10 mins)

In this part, they are looking back and crossing through the things on their personal collages that they would have lost if they had been in Job’s place. Since they likely do not have many farm animals, you will have to press them on this- they are looking for the things that are the equivalent, even if they are not the exact same things!

- Have them get back out their collages that they created, and hand out a marker to each kid.
- Tell them that now they are going to pretend that they are Job and that God has allowed them to be tested in the same way. Just as Job lost things, they will lose things.

- They should cross through the things that are the EQUIVALENT to what Job lost.
- You may want to read back through the verses and pause after each time Job loses something so that they can mark it off. This part should take 5 mins.
- Things to consider:
 - Livestock- represent all material possessions
 - Servants- represent the things that provide ease and comfort
 - His children- represents all the people in our lives that we value most
 - Health- what in your life would you not be able to enjoy if you were so ill you had to stay in bed? (sports, clubs, travel, etc.)

****extra-** I like to think about how much can possibly be stripped away before I am no longer “me”. For example, if I get in a terrible accident and lose all my memories, am I still the same person? What if I lose my sense of humor? What if I am brain dead? I know it sounds morbid, but it is an interesting thing to think about and maybe press the kids on, because ultimately, what is unchanging is God’s love for us.**

Discussion Questions (5 mins)

(these can either be done with the entire group while you facilitate, or the questions can be printed up ahead of time and they can do this in small groups)

1. Why did God allow for Satan to test Job? How is this similar to how we are sometimes tested?
2. How did Job respond? How would have responded if you were in Job’s sandals?
3. Was it hard to think about losing all the things that you had to cross through?
4. After crossing through the things on your collage, what still remained? What does this tell us about what truly identifies us?

Mini lecture:

It’s easy to let the people we love, the things we own, and the way we spend our time define who we are, but God says we are something more than that. He knew that Job understood that as well, which is why he allowed for Satan to test him. Job knew that his personal identity rested in the security that he was a child of God, and nothing could convince him otherwise. Sometimes, when we are in pain and things don’t go our way, it makes it easier to see the truth- that what makes us important are the things that God created in us. In this world, there is no guarantee that things will be easy or that we won’t lose things that are important to us, but there ARE some things that will never change because God has made them true... (roll into last section)

My True Identity (Took, 5-10 mins)

In this section, we are going to look up some verses that are true about us because God has made it so. They are things that cannot change.

- Pass out a copy of “My True Identity” and a pen/pencil to each youth
- Assign kids to look up the different verses from the bottom of the sheet (there are loads of others if you want to add some that are particularly important for your group)
- After everyone has looked up their verses, have them take turns reading them out loud.
- As the verses are read, the youth can write things from the verses in the fingerprint that will always be part of their identity. (see example)
- After the verses are read, they can brainstorm other things about them that will always be true and add them to the fingerprint. Again, the provided list is not exhaustive.
- They can take the fingerprint home with them as a reminder of their true identity and what gives them value.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the things about our identity that are unchanging because of his love. Ask that God would help us to trust that those qualities are what give us value and that we would see that in other people as well.