

# “Identity: You are Sealed”

(Part of the Identity Series, and a follow up the “Job Identity” lesson)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

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## Key Verses:

Ephesians 1:13-14 and various other passages

## Objectives:

- LEARNING about the different ways seals are used in the bible: for locking things in/out, protection, and as a sign of authenticity
- THINKING about what it means to be sealed with the Holy Spirit
- SENDING a note to ourselves to remind us of some of our spiritual goals.

\*\*\*This is part of a series that will be presented throughout the school year, and a follow up to the “Job identity” lesson that was posted in February of 2016.\*\*\*

**The Set up:** Minimal \*\*the supply list is long, but don’t let it frighten you... you need many items for comparison, but you don’t really have to do anything with them\*\*

## The Plan:

- Hook: **One of these things is not like the other** (5-10 mins): Youth are playing a simple game to try and identify the one thing that is different from the others... the one thing without a tamper evident seal.
- Book: **Bible Seals** (15-20 mins): Learning about the different ways that seals are talked about in the bible- lock in/out, authenticity, and protection
- Look: **YOU are sealed** (5-10 mins): Deciding what part of the biblical seal is applied to us in Ephesians
- Took: **Seal and Send** (5-10 mins): Sealing self-addressed envelopes to be sent to them later.

## The Supplies:

- Several items that have tamper evident seals (see the Hook section for ideas)
- ONE item WITHOUT a tamper evident seal
- Paper and pen/pencil
- Small prizes, like candies (optional)
- Verse references from BOOK section written on slips of paper or notecards
- Bibles
- Whiteboard/ flipchart and markers
- Copies of “You are Sealed” worksheet, 1 per student
- Envelopes
- Sealing wax, lighter, and a cross stamp. This can be found in the stationary section of a craft store or you can find several options online.

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

### **One of these things is not like the other** (Hook, 5-10 mins)

Youth are playing a simple game to try and identify the one thing that is different from the others... the one thing without a tamper evident seal. The BOOK section will take a while, so make this one speedy!

### **PREP:**

*Set up a table with a bunch of items on it. All the items EXCEPT ONE should be things that have a tamper evident seal. The only rule for the extra item is that it should NOT have a tamper evident seal... but obviously this game will be more challenging if you choose something that blends in well... maybe something with packaging, but not the seal.*

*For the sake of this lesson, I am defining something with a tamper evident seal as something that once it is opened, you can still reclose it, but it will be missing the manufacturer's seal... like maybe a banana? Or something that is impossible to open, but is not meant to be put back in the package?*

*Ideas for tamper evident items:*

- **Any number of food items**- coffee cream, jar of PB, cottage cheese, a box of sweetener packets (the kind that has a tear away tab), disposable sports water bottles, delicious Halo Top ice cream, etc.
- Vitamin/medicine bottles
- Beauty products- make up, rubbing alcohol, chapstick, etc.
- **An envelope with a tear away security seal**
- Chemicals- fertilizer, motor oil, etc.
- Crafting supplies- paint, glue, etc.
- **Electronics- DVD cases, etc.**
- A picture of a door with a sign that reads, "alarm will sound if you open this door." I recently opened one of those doors and it was DEFINITELY evident that I had tampered with it- OHPS!
- \*Make sure to select items that still have their seal... not just items from your home that were once sealed. The ones that are **BOLDED** you have the option of referencing in the BOOK section.

### **The Game Play:**

- Divide your students up into 3 groups.
- Within their groups, they are allowed to take a look at all the items and make mental note of what they think doesn't belong... but don't have them tell you their guess YET.
- After they have had a minute or so to inspect the items, have them sit with their groups, and send one person forward to make a guess of what they think the item is that DOESN'T belong.
  - They will NOT be making their guess verbally, but instead will write it down and reveal it to you on the count of three, that the guessing system is fair
- Continue this pattern until someone gets the correct answer and then award the candies (if you would like) to the winning team(s).

**Discussion Questions:**

- We identified the one thing that doesn't belong... what then do all the other items have in common? (There is chance they guessed and got it right, so be sure everyone understands!)
- What is the difference between a tamper evident seal and just regular packaging? (You can use the definition we stated earlier)
- Why do manufactures use tamper evident seals? (It's a way of making sure that the consumer is getting exactly what they intended for them to receive)
- What sort of items usually have tamper evident seals? (Things you are supposed to consume or NOT supposed to consume by accident, things that lose some of their value as soon as they are opened)

**Transitional Statement:**

We have all seen tamper evident seals and are pretty used to them, but we have probably never really sat down and thought about why some things get seals and others do not. There are likely times when things have seals that don't really NEED them, and vice versa, but ultimately a tamper evident seal is a way that manufacturers promise the customer that they are getting the product they intended... no one has added to it or taken away... it's exactly as it was when it left the processing plant. This may seem like a new idea, but it isn't new at all! In fact, there are several examples of tamper evident seals in the Bible... let's take a look at them...

## **Bible Seals** (Hook, 15-20 mins)

In youth are learning about the different reasons seals are used in the Bible. There is a lot of information in this section that makes the meaning so much deeper. Please take your time going through all the elements... it will be worth it!

- Keep them in the groups that they are already in... if the groups are large, they can divide further and just have multiple groups looking up the same set of verses.
- Each group will get a verse(s) that talks about a seal in the Bible and all they have to is decide what the PURPOSE of that seal was... they CANNOT use the word "seal" in their description! **\*\*\*If they are struggling, have them think of a word or words they could use to replace the word "seal" while still keeping the same meaning\*\*\*** They can also check out the verses surrounding the one they are assigned to help make meaning of what they are reading.
- **\*\*\*\*BE SURE TO USE A TRANSLATION THAT USES THE WORD "SEAL"\*\*\*\*\***
- I have listed the verses below for your planning purposes, but this is a good chance to have them get out their bibles and look it up!
  - Matthew 27:66 (So they all went to the tomb and made it safe from thieves. They did this by sealing the stone in the entrance and putting soldiers there to guard it.)
  - 1 Corinthians 9:2 (If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.)
  - Revelation 7:3 (Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.)
- When they seem done (3-5 minutes), bring them back into the group and allow them to share.
- As they share, write the different reasons for a seal on the whiteboard/flip chart and talk about the elements that make each quality significant.
- Because there is a lot of information to share, your best bet is to just tell them the elements. Of course if you can do this in a Q and A style, that would be great as well! The 3 qualities and the notes for each:
  - Matthew 27:66- TO LOCK UP SO NOTHING CAN COME IN OR GO OUT (5 mins)
    - As a group, read through the scripture leading up to this verse... it is really helpful! (Matthew 27:62-66).
    - Sealing a tomb with Pilate's official seal wasn't a normal practice, but the authorities were worried that Jesus' body would be stolen because of the prophecies made about rising in 3 days.
    - Keep in mind that a leader's seal wasn't just a cute decoration, but a stamp that was a legal seal- something that was typically used on letter and other important documents. It's how you know that nothing was added to or removed from the document (or in this case, tomb) since the sealer left it. - **If you had a tear away envelope in the HOOK section, this would be a good time to reference it.**
    - In addition, Jesus tomb was covered with a GIANT rock... something that makes it hard to easily scoot aside and pop in. All this to say, the authorities were scared and took every precaution to make sure that Jesus' followers were dissuaded from tampering with the tomb

- 1 Corinthians 9:2- PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY (2 mins)
  - In these verses, Paul is defending himself against people who are making petty accusations against him and saying he isn't a legit apostle.
  - He claims that his success in the fact that he preaches to these young churches as PROOF that he is doing God's work.
  - This is his PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY- **If you had something like a DVD in the HOOK section, this would be a good time to reference it**
- Revelation 7:3- FOR PROTECTION OF WHAT IS TO COME (2 mins)
  - These verses are about the end times and talk about how God's angels would be making God's followers before all the scary things that are about to happen.
  - The marking, or seal, was used as PROTECTION from the things that surrounded them- **if you had a food product in the HOOK section, this would be a good time to reference it.**

Transitional Comments/Questions:

- Give them a chance to ask any clarifying question about what you just taught on, and make sure they see the 3 qualities of a seal - LOCK IN/OUT, AUTHENTICITY, PROTECTION
- Ask, what does this have to do with us as followers of Christ?.... let's look into that some more...

## **YOU are Sealed** (Look, 5-10 mins)

Youth are thinking about ways they have been sealed in relationship to what was just discussed.

- Pass out pencils/pens and copies of the “You are Sealed” worksheet that is located at the back of the lesson.
- Work through Part I as group- they will have to give some personal answers, but you may need to help clarify. Be prepared to give examples for the three aspects of a seal.
- Then allow them to do Part II on their own, assuring them that those answers will remain private.

### Transitional Statement:

We touched on this briefly when we were looking at our Bible verses, but sealing things wasn't just something that was reserved for the folks in the Bible... this is something that has been going on for a long time and still happens. The information you recorded on your sheet is important and it should be SEALED for you to look at later. Before we leave, we will be SEALING our worksheets in envelopes as later proof of authenticity. You will receive them in the mail in a few months, hopefully with the seal still in tact, and you can check on your progress.

### **Seal and Send** (Hook, 5-10 mins)

The youth will be sealing their worksheet in an envelope with a stamp to signify its authenticity upon arrival in a few weeks/months.

- Pass out envelopes and instruction them to address the envelopes to themselves at home and put their worksheets in there.
  - I know it sounds crazy, but a lot of youth (even high schoolers) have no idea how to do this- make sure to it the right way or they won't!
- Have them take turns using your sealing wax and stamp to seal the opening of their envelope.
- Tell them that you will mail them to them in 2 months (or whenever) and collect the envelopes
- Set a reminder in your phone to mail the envelopes on the correct date and where you stored them.
- Close in prayer, thanking God that he has sealed us with the Holy Spirit and asking him to help us work on the items we listed in our worksheets

## You are Sealed

### PART I:

Look up Ephesians 1:13 and answer these questions:

- Who is sealed in this passage?
- How does one become sealed?
- What part of the trinity is at work when we are sealed?
- What are we guaranteed with our seal?
- Practically speaking, when do we experience this “sealing” in the Episcopal tradition?

From what we learned about the significance of a seal, how might the different elements of being sealed in the Holy Spirit be present in your life?

- What are some good barriers in your life through the Holy Spirit (LOCKED IN/OUT)?
- How are you made AUTHENTIC through the Holy Spirit?
- How are PROTECTED through the Holy Spirit?

### PART II:

Understanding that your answers are safe and will be sealed so that they are just between you and God, how would you respond to the following questions?

- Are there any things about you that you wished would NOT be LOCKED IN or things that you do NOT want LOCKED OUT, because you know you would be better if they weren't?
- Is there anything about your life that feels INAUTHENTIC and like it should change so that you can be truer to yourself?
- Is there anything important in your life that you have not PROTECTED the way you should (spending time with God or your family, taking good care of your body, saying things that are only beneficial, etc.)

How can you be spending the next 6 weeks working to make the above-mentioned things better? How would you like to see those things change, and how can you ask God to be present in that change? Write a prayer or note to God on that back of this page telling God how you feel and what you hope for.