

“Identity: You Are Part of a Family”

(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:

Matthew 12:46-50

Objectives:

- **To acknowledge that sometimes we feel out of place in our families, peer groups, or in the world in general.**
- **To celebrate that we actually belong to a much larger family, and that when we let that family define us, we find purpose and meaning.**

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 lessons can all stand alone, but if you are looking for more resources, you can certainly go back and start the series with the original Job lesson.

The Set up: Minimal

The Plan:

- **Hook:** Harry Potter, the Orphan (10 mins): Watching a video clip from “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” before he knows he’s a wizard.
- **Book:** Jesus’ Mother and Brothers (5-10 mins): reading verses about how Jesus defined his family.
- **Look:** Harry Potter, the Wizard (10 mins): Watching a second clip from Harry Potter when he starts to realize that he is part of a much bigger world.
- **Took:** God’s Family Tree (10 mins): Naming and claiming the people that are in our family tree and giving thanksgiving for our roots.

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- A way to show the two Harry Potter clips (one in Hook, the other in Look)
- Copies of tree trunks (one per youth)
- Markers and/or pens
- Dry erase board/flipchart and markers
- Something to act as a tree trunk and branches to represent God’s family tree- you can either sketch something out on a piece of butcher paper, or wrap together some tree branches to make it look like a small tree with several branches.
- “God’s Family Tree” print out (1 per student)
- Scissors
- Tape

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

Harry Potter, the Orphan (Hook, 10 mins)

We will be watching a clip from the first Harry Potter and talking about what it feels like when you know you don't belong.

- Show the clip from the beginning of "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHSvCMpCGM>
 - If you are a Harry Potter fan and want to show an extended clip from your own library, that is fine, but it is important that you stop before Harry first learns he is a wizard. The intention of the clip is to illustrate that Harry was not only treated terribly, but was also really out of place with the Dursleys and in the non-magical world.
- Pass out a copy of the tree trunk and pens or markers to the students- they will use this as they go through the discussion questions below...

Discussion questions/Harry's family tree:

- At this point in the story, who are the people in Harry's life that are part of his family, or close enough to be considered family?
 - Make leaves on the tree to represent each of those people.
- At this point in the story, what is Harry's life about? What keeps him busy and gives his life meaning?
 - Write these things on the trunk of the tree and on the roots.
- How do you think Harry felt living with the Dursleys?
- What made Harry's experience so terrible?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt really out of place, like you just didn't belong? What was that like?
- Why do we have the desire/need to be with people that are likeminded to us?
- Were the Dursleys Harry's REAL family? (yes)
- What is it that makes someone part of your family?

Transitional Statement: say something like:

Typically people look to their families to provide safety, community, and help form their identity. Hopefully most of us enjoy these sorts of things with our own families, but what happens when you feel totally out of place? Or what happens when you can't find your place at school or with other kids your age? You probably end up sort of like Harry Potter! It can be very lonely and confusing.

This need to be connected to a family is something that God understands. Let's see what Jesus said when he was questioned about his family...

Jesus' Mother and Brother (Book, 5-10 mins)

In this section, we are looking at a short passage and comparing Jesus' definition of family to the world's.

- Ask someone to hang out at the whiteboard/flip chart and keep a list. On the right side of the board, they should label the top as "world" and on the left they should label the top as "Jesus".
- Have everyone look up Matthew 12:46-50
- Tell them that as you read, they should ask themselves 2 questions: How does the world define Jesus' family? How did Jesus define his family?
- Have one person read out loud while everyone else follows along. Here are the verses for your planning purposes:

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

- Take a minute and make sure that you have the correct things written on your board. (world= mother and brothers, Jesus= anyone who follows the teachings of Christ)

Questions:

- How is Jesus' definition of family different from the world's?
- Is his response surprising to you? Why or why not?
- Why do you think he defined his family in that way?
- How does his response relate to us?
- How would Jesus' family tree look different than the one we just created for Harry Potter? (it should be MUCH fuller, and the purpose/meaning in the trunk and roots is so much deeper and significant)

Transitional Statement: say something like:

It is not uncommon to hear people say that they have friends that are "like family," and from what we can gather from this passage, Jesus would have spoken of his close friends the same way. In fact, Jesus claims that anyone who follows his teachings is part of his family- that's a big family! Not only does that mean that all the members of his giant family have other people to connect to, but they also have a common focus.

Let's take a look back at Harry Potter and work on his family tree one more time...

Harry Potter, the Wizard (Hook, 10 mins)

Now you will watch another clip from Harry Potter- the one where he first learns he is a wizard. In this section, I have made the assumption that a few people know the general story of Harry Potter- you will be asked to discuss how his awareness of being a wizard changes his life and gives him meaning.

- Make sure the youth still have their Harry Potter trees nearby- they will be adding to it...
- Show the clip from “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” where Harry busts into the little cabin on Harry’s birthday and reveals Harry’s true heritage.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9Gwleh5FIY>
 - Again, if you are a Harry Potter fan and have the time, feel free to show an extended clip, just be aware of the time and make sure you get to the last section! The intention of this clip is to show Harry learning about how he belongs to an entirely different world- there are loads of scenes from The Sorcerer’s Stone that could reinforce this one.

Discussion questions/Harry’s FULL family tree:

- After Harry learns the truth about his parents from Hagrid, how does his family tree change, including the people that are “like family” because they are so close to him? (You or a youth may want to do some explaining about all the people that Harry becomes linked with in case there are some people who are unfamiliar with the story)
 - Make leaves on the tree to represent each of those people.
- After Harry learns about his heritage, what is Harry’s life about? What keeps him busy and gives his life meaning? (again, feel free to do some explaining)
 - Write these things on the trunk of the tree and on the roots.
- How would you describe Harry’s new family tree in comparison to the old one?
- How did Harry’s personality change after this revelation?
- Why was Harry’s life fuller?
- Was Harry’s life better? Easier? (there may be a chance to talk about how it was more difficult, but because it had meaning, it was more fulfilling)
- Have you ever had an experience where you discovered a new group of people that gave you a new focus/meaning and helped define who you were? Explain what that was like (like a sports team, outreach group, youth group, etc.)

Transitional Statement: say something like:

Harry’s story is a great one for so many reasons, but one of the things that makes it so intriguing is that he goes from really belonging to no one, to belong to a HUGE family of people that love him and give his life meaning. Isn’t that kind of like the giant family that Jesus is describing in the passage we just read? Let’s think about our own family tree in relationship to how Jesus describes family...

God's Family Tree (Took, 10 mins)

You will close by creating a family tree that represents the fullness of God's family, and illustrates the meaning we can find in placing our identity in the fullness of that tree

- Before the youth arrive, make sure to have your tree trunk constructed and ready to go.
- Put them in groups of 3-4 people. Don't make the groups too big or it will take forever.
- Give the youth a copy of the leaf print out and scissors and have them follow the instructions to document the people and meaning of God's Family Tree.
- After about 5-8 minutes, have the youth add their leaves and trunk/root details to the big tree that you have prepared.
- Spend some time discussing/observing the fullness of God's family tree and the strong purpose and meaning that we take root in and find strength. Point out some of the names in the tree and that we are all linked to these names, even the ones that other people wrote down and we have never personally heard of. Let the youth make observations. Ask
 - How does it feel to be a part of such an impressive tree?
 - How could living with the knowledge of this tree change your life?
 - How can you remind yourself that you belong to the heritage this tree represents when you are feeling lonely and without purpose?

Close in prayer, thanking God that we belong to a family with such a rich heritage and asking him to consistently remind us that we belong to something much stronger than just ourselves.



God's Family Tree

You are going to work with your small group to create a part of God's family tree. Here is what you should do:

1. Spend 90 seconds with your group writing down what it means to be a part of God's family. What are the things that should be written on the trunk and roots? What gives his family purpose and meaning?
2. Now you need to document the members of God's family. Write names in the leaves below to represent at least 3 people, including:
 - a. Yourself!
 - b. A Christian that you know personally and have learned something from (a teacher, parent, friend, etc.)
 - c. A Christian who you have never met, but you know has done good things for God (can be someone from the Bible, or someone from history, or someone who is still alive but lives in another part of the world).
3. Cut out your leaves.
4. If you have time, share the names of the people on your leaves with the people in your group.

