

Lesson 8 / July 20, 2008

# Positive ID

for use as

## STEP 1

Lesson 8

### Focus:

Jesus is the  
Son of God.

Lesson 8

### Bible Basis:

Matthew 17:1-12;  
2 Peter 1:16-18

Students will participate in one or two activities that demonstrate the difficulty of positively identifying a person, then apply what they've learned to identifying Jesus as God's Son.

#### You will need:

- A blanket (twin size works well) –or–
- An extra adult volunteer who can stop by your class for about 10 minutes
- A piece of paper and writing utensil for each student

Choose one of the following activities to start your class. If time permits, do both.

#### Activity option #1:

Divide your class into two groups. Have two tall volunteers hold the blanket by its corners so that it creates a screen between the two groups. The groups should be standing close enough to the blanket that most (or preferably all) of the students on one side are not visible to the other team. Each group should silently pick someone to play the first round of the game. The volunteers step forward and kneel about a foot from the blanket. On a three count, drop the blanket to the floor so that the two players are kneeling, facing each other, about two feet apart. The first person to say the other person's name wins, and the other person is out. Keep going until there are only two people left, and declare them the winners. (You may need to shuffle players from one side of the blanket to the other to keep the teams even).

The point: Even in a class where students have known each other for years, having to name a person quickly and at close range makes for some hilarious results. You won't believe how just this amount of pressure can leave your most outgoing students dumbstruck.

#### Activity option #2:

Arrange for an adult volunteer to come into your classroom and stay for about 30 seconds, then leave. They can pretend to have a question for you, or something to deliver, or they can just mysteriously appear, linger, and leave. After this person has gone, tell the students that he or she was actually part of your lesson for the day. Ask the students to write down the answers to the following questions:

Lesson 8  
Memory  
Verse

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

—John 14:6

- **Was the person who just visited our classroom male or female?**
- **About how old do you think this person is?**
- **What color was his/her shirt?**
- **What color were his/her pants (or skirt)?**
- **What color is his/her hair?**
- **What color were his/her shoes?**
- **Was he/she wearing any jewelry?**

Now, have your volunteer come back into the classroom and stand before the students so they can judge if they've answered correctly.

The point: The Innocence Project reports that misidentification by eyewitnesses is one of the leading reasons that innocent people sometimes get convicted of crimes. The exercise your students just tried will give them an idea why that's true.

Say, **You've just seen how hard it is for us to correctly identify people, even in situations where it seems it should be easy. The Old Testament prophets had been telling people about Jesus for centuries, but still, God knew that it would be hard for Jesus' friends, neighbors, and enemies to identify Jesus as His Son. So, He gave them a little help to make it clearer who Jesus really was. Let's read that story in God's Word.**

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; Step 4 appears below.)

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The Innocence Project  
<http://www.innocenceproject.org/understand/Eyewitness-Misidentification.php>

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STEP 4Lesson 8  
Focus:Jesus is the  
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Students will compare the attention they give to the identities of famous people with the attention they give to the identity of Christ and be challenged to identify Christ as their Savior.

## You will need:

- A computer with Internet access in your classroom –or–
- Several teen magazines

To get teens thinking about the amount of time they spend considering the identity of others (and more importantly, their identity as compared to others), hold up pictures of celebrities torn from teen and pop culture magazines. Ask your students to identify the people pictured.

If you have Internet access in your classroom, you can also have your teens play several celebrity-oriented games at <http://games.people.com/>. Try Celebrity Concentration or Odd Star Out. (Note: This site's main focus is idolization of celebrities. We suggest it as a sample of the celebrity-mania that affects many in the U.S., but we do not endorse the site itself.)

Now ask,

- **Are you ever tempted to compare yourself to these celebrities or others? When or why?**
- **How has your sense of identity (the way you define yourself) been shaped by famous people?**
- **If you're not one who compares yourself to celebrities, what about your friends? How do you compare yourself to your friends?**
- **How do you think God sees you?** (*God sees me as a sinner who falls short of His glory; God sees me as saved by Jesus' blood; God sees me as a precious adopted child; God sees me as perfect and holy, redeemed by Christ's sacrifice.*) As time permits, have students share Scripture passages that support their answers.

We've been talking for the last hour or so about Jesus' identity as the Son of God. Here's where His identity meets yours. If you have never accepted Jesus' sacrifice for your sins, your identity is still "dead in your sins" (Eph. 2:1).

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But you don't have to stay that way. The whole reason we've been talking about Jesus' identity is this: Because Jesus is the Son of God, He is perfect. He didn't need to die for His own sins, because He didn't have any. But He *did* die. And His death makes it possible for us to be forgiven for our sins and to receive eternal life. In a sense, we ask Jesus to cover our identity with His own.

Take a minute to pray silently. If you have never become a Christian, you can do so through faith, repentance, and baptism. If you are already a child of God through His Son Jesus' death, but you spend way too much time comparing yourself to others instead of finding your identity in Christ's love for you, you can pray about that too. And pray about specific habit patterns that you can break:

**Give up your magazine subscription**

**Stop visiting websites that exist only to glorify celeb culture**

**Avoid the temptation to forward on another MySpace or Facebook survey—they only exist to force people to tell you what they think of you**

**Turn off the reality TV show that mocks celebrities and others**

**Don't text about other people**

Give students a few minutes to pray in the way you've just described. As you close class for the day, make sure to invite any student with questions or concerns to feel free to talk with you at any time.

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