



Concept

In Christ we are given a new identity.

Goal

Students will learn that with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can choose attitudes and behavior that reflect our new self because we have been made new in Christ and given new hearts.

Passage

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

Key Verse: "... lay aside the old self... and put on the new self..." Ephesians 4:22, 24 (NASB)

Planning Ahead

| Lesson Supplies | Craft Supplies |
|---|---|
| <p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large jars of baby food (label hidden), 2/class • Short board book • Baby rattle <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cardstock cards of Old Self/ New Self choices</i> • <i>Velcro strip or Gaffer's tape</i> | <p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Old to New"/"I Am... So, I Do..." printed sheet, 1/child • "Christ in You... You in Christ" crossword sheet, 1/student • Bible, 2/class • Pencils, 1/student • Scissors |

***TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE**

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

Disciples & Early Church • U6#3 1st-3rd Grade • Oct.13, 2024

"The pivotal verse of Ephesians, 'I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,' Ephesians 4:1 (NASB), draws a sharp line between the doctrinal and the practical divisions of this book. There is a cause and effect relationship between chapters 1-3 and 4-6 because the spiritual walk of a Christian must be rooted in his spiritual wealth. As Paul emphasized in Romans, behavior does not determine blessing; instead, blessing should determine behavior.

"Because of the unity of all believers in the body of Christ, growth and maturity come from the 'effective working by which every part does its share' (4:16). This involves the exercise of spiritual gifts in love. Paul exhorts the readers to 'put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man' (4:22) 'and put on the new man' (4:24) that will be manifested by a walk of integrity in the midst of all people. They are also to maintain a walk of holiness as children of light (5:1-21)."[1]

"The Apostle refers, first of all, to contrasted principles of life (iv. 17-24); and then to contrasted practice in living (iv. 25-32).

"The old life (17-19) and the new (20-24) are brought into sharp contrast. The old must be 'put off', and the new must be 'put on'.

"Here are contrasted evil and good, darkness and light, wrong and right, error and truth, heathendom and Christianity...

"Christianity is not a refined paganism, but an entirely new thing."[2]

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." 2 Cor 5:17 (NASB) This is such an awesome and freeing truth. We have a new identity; the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to live as new "creatures" and we no longer need to be in bondage to our sin nature. The problem is that our flesh (sin nature) is committed to continuing in its sinful ways and the evil one constantly tempts us to go back to our old ways. It is important for children to know that when we become Christians, we receive a new identity. Taking off the old and putting on the new means that as we forsake our old, fleshly, sinful ways, we replace them with the attitudes and actions that reflect our new nature.

[1] Talk Thru the New Testament, Wilkinson, Boa, 1983, Thomas Nelson Publishers, p. 403.

[2] Scroggie, W. Graham, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption, Vol. 3, © by W. Graham Scroggie, published 1994 by Kregel Publications, pp. 194, 195.

Activity Stations:

- **"As You Were" Course**
- **Goal:** Illustrate the absurdity of acting as we "were" rather than as we "are."
 - **Instructions:** In a corner of the room, lay out the course as follows. Station #1 – spoons, baby food and wipes. Station #2 – board book. Station #3 – rattle. When students arrive start them, one at a time, through the course. They must crawl to station #1, where they must guess the baby food flavor (make sure to hide the label!). Then they will crawl to station #2 and read through the board book. Last, they will crawl to station #3, where they will shake the rattle 10x. Time each student as they go through the course. The student with the shortest time gets a prize.
- **Worksheet – "Old to New"/"I Am... So, I Do..."**
 - **Instructions:** Give each child an activity sheet and have them draw a line from the "old" to the "new" on the one side and from the person to the thing that they do on the other side.
- **(If Time Permits) Crossword - "Christ in You... You in Christ"**
 - **Instructions:** Give each student a crossword puzzle to complete.

"Old to New"/"I Am... So, I Do..."

Did all of you do this worksheet when you came in? (Hold up "Old to New" side.) Who can tell me what this side says? This sheet shows that a tadpole changes to become a frog, an egg becomes a chicken, a caterpillar changes to become a butterfly, an acorn changes to become a tree and a baby changes and grows up to be an adult.

Let's look at this side now. (Hold up "I Am... So I Do..." side.) A tadpole swims in the water. When it becomes a frog it can still swim, but it also can hop on the ground and make funny noises. An egg just sits and waits to hatch. But when it becomes a chicken, it can eat, walk and make sounds. A caterpillar crawls on the ground. But when it becomes a butterfly not only can it crawl, it can also fly. God makes these changes happen in each of these animals. They change into completely new beings. He even makes those changes with people, doesn't He? What can an adult do that a baby can't do? (Walk, take care of himself, drive a car, etc.) Now what if the frog decided he was still a tadpole and never got out of the water? Or what if a chicken decided it was still an egg and wouldn't eat or move? Or what if a butterfly decided it was still a caterpillar and never flew from flower to flower to get its food? What if an adult decided he was still a baby and still wore diapers, drank out of a bottle and crawled wherever he went? That sounds pretty silly, doesn't it? An adult would do that only if he believed he was still a baby and not an adult.

Transition

Lesson Continued

The Bible tells us that when God makes people completely new, they sometimes act as if they are their old selves. So let's talk about that!

Our lesson is about taking off old and putting on new attitudes and actions. Listen as I read Ephesians 4:17-24.

The first 4 verses describe the thinking and behavior of people who aren't Christians. The rest of the passage talks about how and why Christians can be different. Let's reread verses 21 & 23.

Why is it that Christians can think and act differently? (vs. 20—know Christ, in Christ; vs. 21—know the truth; vs. 23—thinking has been changed and made new, been given new hearts.) How are we put into Christ and given new hearts? (We admit that our hearts are sinful and ask for Jesus' death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He then forgives us for all our sin and begins a relationship with us.) Then, when we become Christians, the Holy Spirit lives in us, makes us new people and changes our hearts. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to lay aside our old selfish and sinful ways of thinking and acting and to choose new attitudes and behaviors that are like God.

Let's look at our key verse in Ephesians 4:22, 24. "... lay aside the old self... and put on the new self..." Let's see if we can figure out what this means.

What do you think is the "old self?" (It is who we are without Christ, e.g., deceptive, selfish, disobedient, etc.) The "old self" is the way we are when we're born. We think about our needs and ourselves more than we think about God or others. That is our old self.

So what does the key verse say to do with that old self? (Lay it aside.)

Read verses 17-19 again. What do you guys think it means to lay aside your old self? (It means to choose against attitudes and actions like selfishness, anger, disobedience, lying, etc.)

Is our old self taken away when we become Christians? Those of you who are Christians, do you still sin? Are you ever selfish? I am a Christian and I know I still sin every day. So we still have the old self with us.

What else does our key verse say we should do? (Put on the new self.) So, obviously it's not enough just to choose against certain attitudes and actions. We have to replace our sinful thinking and behavior with something else. We can now choose godly attitudes and actions because the Holy Spirit lives in us. What is the new self? (vs. 24)

What does it mean to put on the new self? (It means to believe you are the new person God has made you to be. Then you choose attitudes and actions that are the same as the new person God has made you to be.) This is like the "As You Were" course you did when you came in. Did you think it was weird to act like a baby? Believe me, it was even weirder to see elementary students act like babies. You are no longer babies; you have a different identity now. In the same way, it doesn't make sense for those of us who are Christians to act like our old selves when we have been given a new identity.

How do we know what are the attitudes and actions of the new self? (allow time for the kids answers). It doesn't make sense for us to continue to live as our old selves when God has made us brand new. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can choose attitudes and behavior that reflect our new self. We can "... lay aside the old self... and put on the new self..." (Ephesians 4:22, 24).

Transition

Let's stand up and see if you can decide which things are like the old self and which things are like God.

**Learning
Activity# 2
Lg. Group**

Game - Old Self/New Self Guessing Game

- **Instructions:** Using the chart below as a guide, write "Old," "Self" and "New" on the white board with a Velcro strip as the dividing line on the floor. Read Ephesians 4:25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32. As you say each of the following words and hold up the cards, the students decide on which side the word should go, then stand on that side of the line. Lay the cards on the floor and match the opposites across from each other.

| OLD SELF | NEW SELF |
|---|--|
| outburst of anger dishonest steal, laziness lying, deceitful unkind words mean, unloving disobedient greedy, selfish | self-control honest hard working truthful kind words loving, forgiving obedient generous, unselfish |

Debrief: "Paul says, 'Put on the new man.' Are you a Christian? Have you trusted Jesus with your old life? Then Take off the old clothes of your old life without Christ, and Put on the new Clothes of your new life with Christ. Jesus lives in you now. So your 'inside' life has been made new... Let your 'outside' life show to everyone what you're like inside—where Jesus lives now." [1]

[1]Explorer's Bible, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992, p. 1558.

Transition

Learning Activity#3 Sm. Groups

Now that we have an idea what it means to lay aside the old self and put on the new self, let's get in our small groups to talk more about this.

- What does God first offer us that we have to accept? (His forgiveness.)
- Why might we choose to continue to act like our old self? (We continue to act like old self because think it's too hard to change or don't believe God's ways are the best for us.)
- What are some attitudes and actions of your old self? How about your new self?
- How do we learn to live as our new self? (Share our struggles with our Christian friends, ask them to pray that the Holy Spirit will make us aware when we're acting like our old self. Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower us to live out our new self.)

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray now and thank God that He has given us a new identity in Christ. Please feel free to ask if you have any questions about what it means to have a new identity through Jesus. Let's pray that God will help us determine to "... lay aside the old self... and put on the new self..." (Ephesians 4:22, 24).