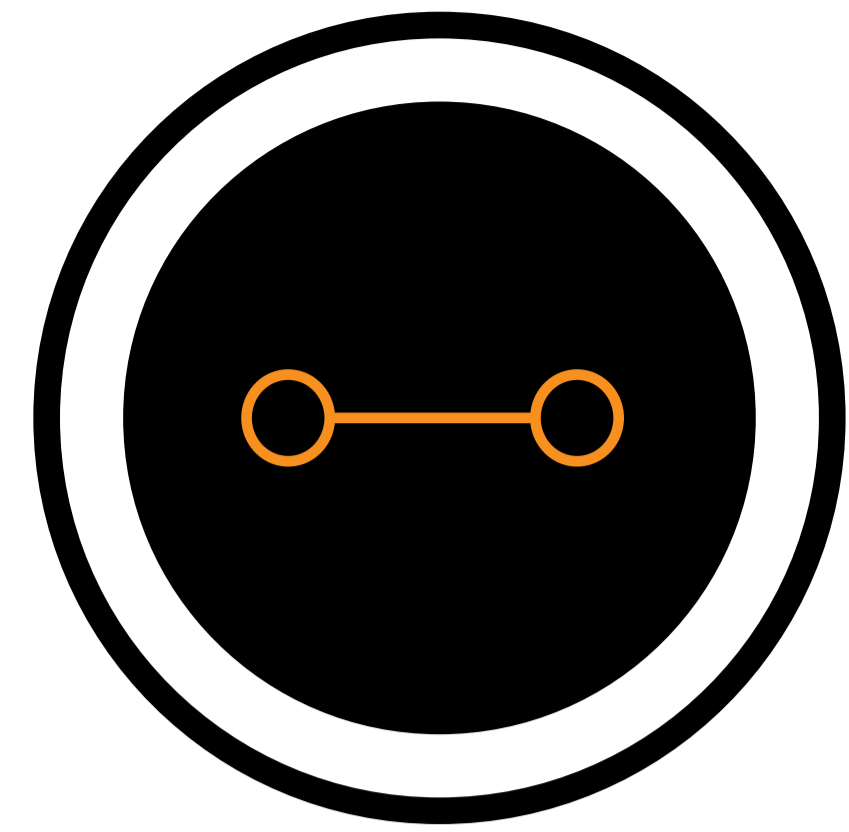




# Social Media & My Identity

LESSON 1



# LEADER PREPARATION

## Dear Small Group Leader:

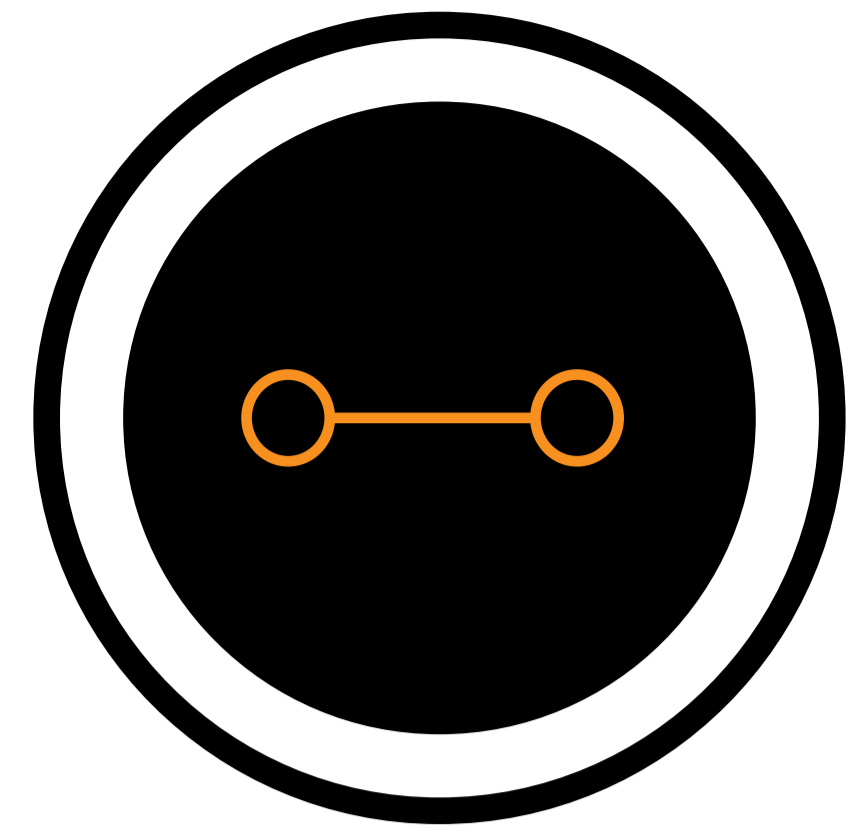
In this series, we're diving into the world of algorithms, hashtags, likes, and follows. Even though it began as a fun way to connect, social media is influencing our relationship to God, ourselves, and others in deep, meaningful ways we might not fully realize.

Today's lesson is all about identity. Where does it come from? Who and what is influencing my identity? And how am I using social media to shape my identity and share it with the world?

Ultimately, you'll point your students to who they are in Christ and to God's identity-forming process of sanctification. They'll see that the goal of our identity is to be fully conformed to the image of Jesus.

## Scripture References

- 1 John 3:2
- 2 Corinthians 3:16-18
- 1 Peter 2:9-10



## Lesson Objectives

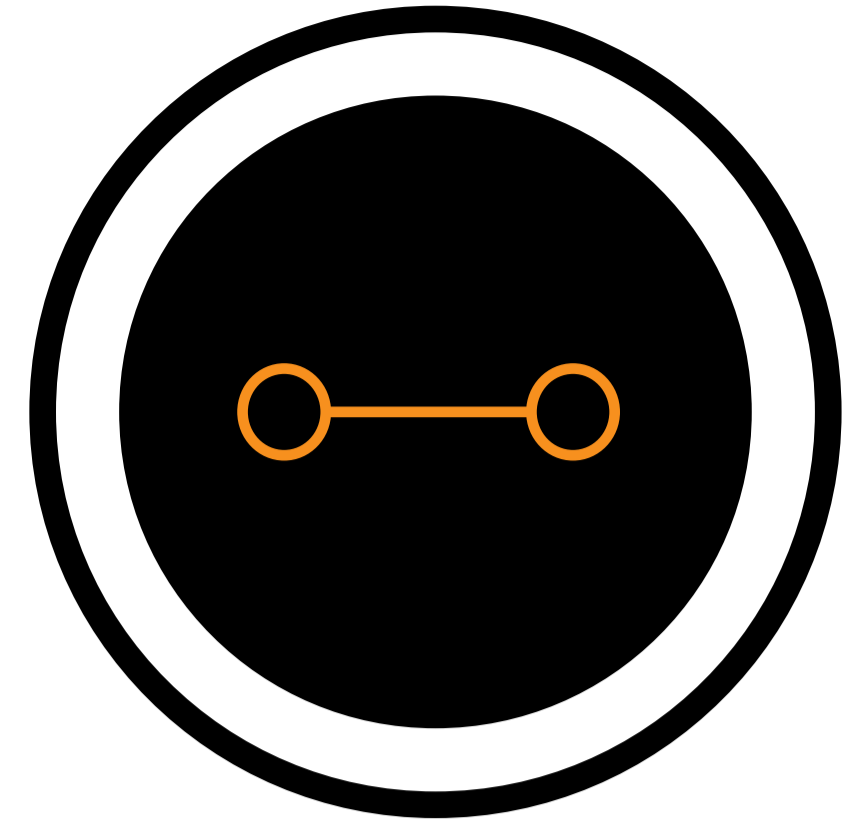
1. Students will explore different ways social media may be shaping their identity.
2. Students will recognize how God uses a community of believers to help them grow in their individual identity.
3. Students will discuss their new identity in Christ, both in the *right now* and *not yet*.

## Main Point

Because you are a child of God, God's Spirit is working in you to transform your life to reflect your new identity in Christ.

## Helpful Hints

- We all tend to have strong feelings about social media but try to put your opinions and personal attitudes aside as you listen to your students. As digital natives, they have different motivations for

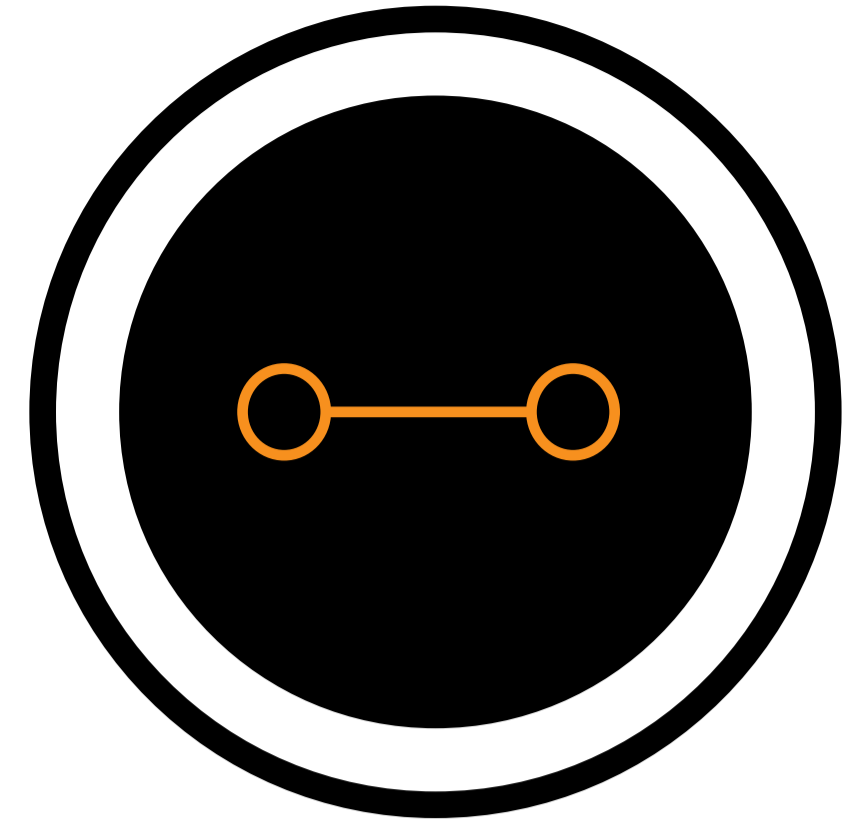


connecting online. Hear them out and affirm that there is a positive role for social media in our lives.

- Likewise, if students are not active on social media, this lesson can still be for them! Encourage those students to focus on the truth of God's word and examine how that truth changes and influences their identity formation.

## Materials Needed

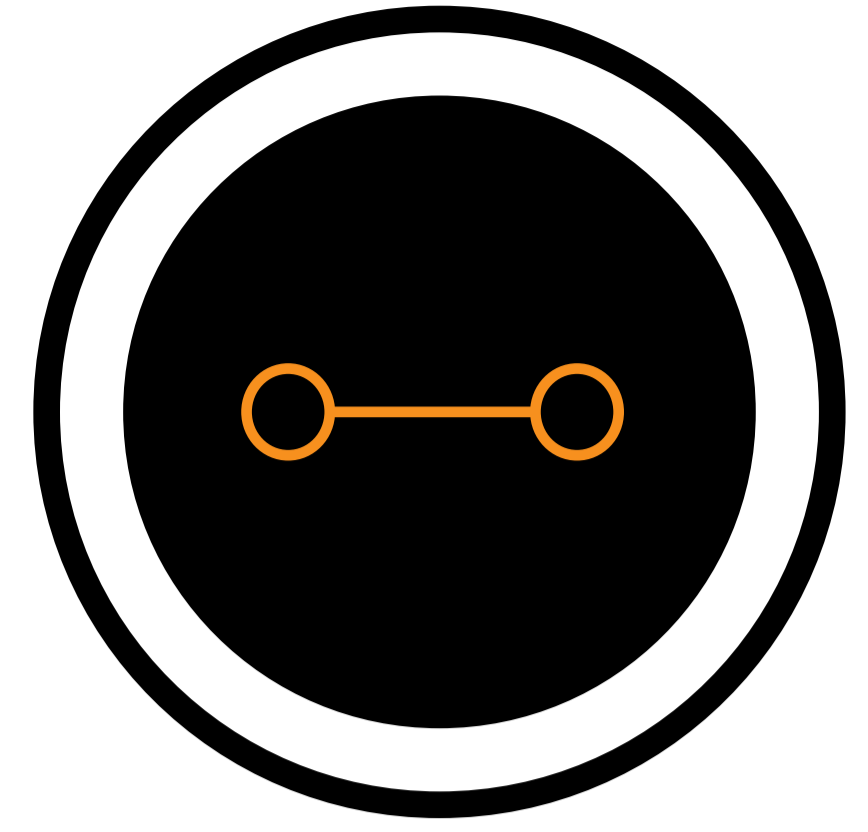
- Bible
- Laptop or TV with an internet connection to show videos
- Copy paper
- Index cards
- Writing utensils
- Tape



## #LIKEIT

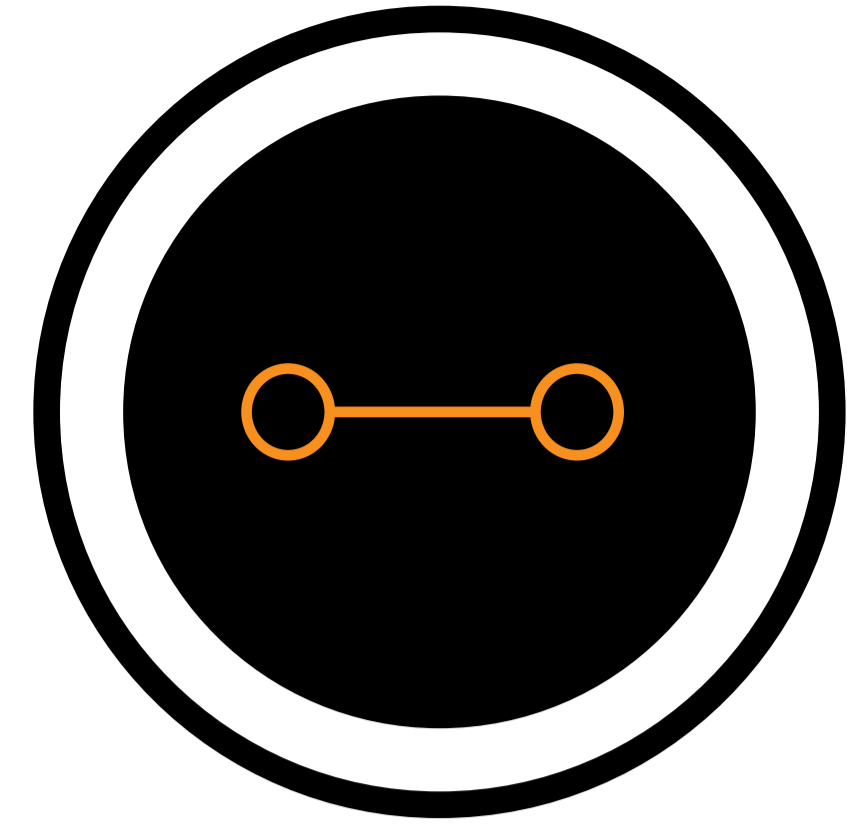
Each person in the group will share one thing they like to do. They will then give others with similar interests a chance to respond.

- Give each person a piece of paper and a writing utensil.
- Beginning with a #, each person will write one thing they enjoy doing.
  - Examples:
    - #football
    - #goingtothemovies
    - #reading
    - #fishing
    - #gettingcoffeewithfriends
- Now give each person six pieces of tape and five index cards.
- Have everyone write “like” or draw a heart on each index card. Write your name at the bottom of the card.



- Using the tape, stick the index card with your interest on the front of your shirt. Put the remaining tape on the other five index cards.
- Now move around the room and read each other's interests. If you like it, use one of your "like" cards and stick it to the back of the person.
- To make it more fun, be sneaky about it. Stick it to the person's back when they cannot tell it is you.

End by saying something to the effect of how sharing our likes is not the same thing as sharing who we are. We must be careful about defining our identity by what we say.



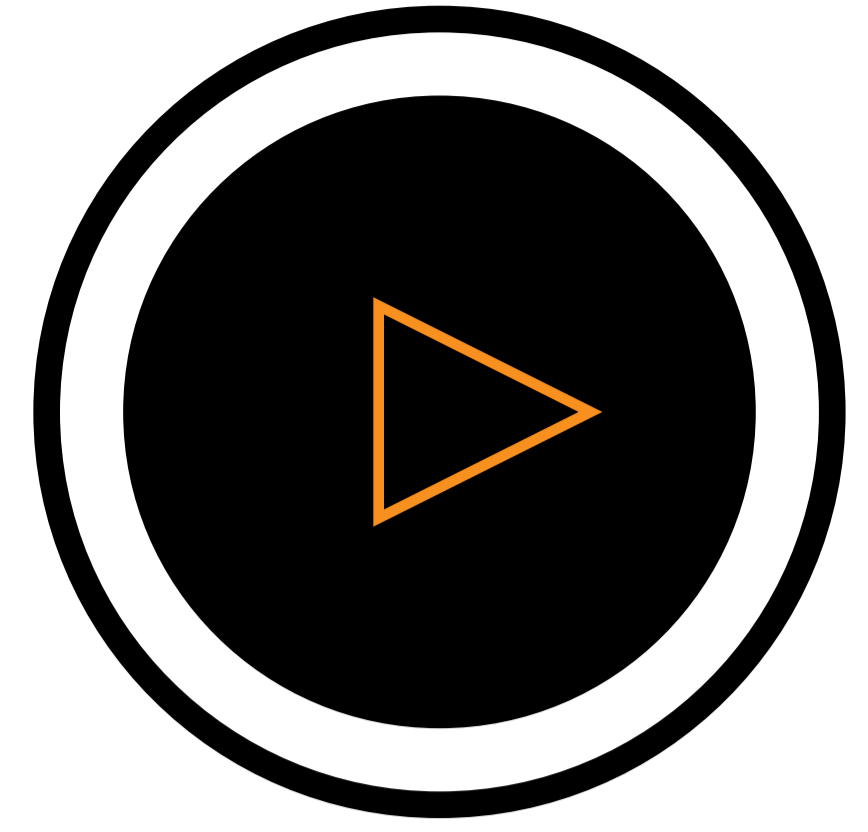
**Say:** “Who are you?” On one level, it’s the most basic question you could ask someone. On another level, it’s the deepest possible probe into who they are. So where do we find the answer? Where do our identities come from? Do we create them? Discover them? Do they change over time? What’s influencing who we are and who we are becoming? Today we’ll learn that God longs to give us an identity as his child, and his Spirit works in us to transform our lives to reflect our new identity in Christ.

**Ask** students to consider the following questions while they watch the video:

**Question 1:** How do you normally think about your identity and how it is formed?

**Question 2:** What happens to our identity when we follow Jesus?

VIDEO (10 MINUTES)



**PLAY VIDEO**





**Show** the Lesson 1 video to the large group. After the video is complete, **ask** the following questions:

**Question 1:** As you were thinking about the questions asked before the video, what stood out to you?

**Question 2:** Where have you seen people turn to form their identities?

**Question 3:** Do you ever feel like social media pressures you to alter or tweek your identity? How so?

**Question 4:** Have you ever felt pressured to live a holy life? How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is at work in your life give you hope?

**Question 5:** How do you use social media: as a way to create your identity, discover it, or something else? What are some ways you could use it to reflect your identity in Jesus?



**Direct** students into their small groups.

**Read** the following passages of Scripture with your students.

Dear friends, **we are already God's children**, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that **we will be like him**, for we will see him as he really is.

*1 John 3:2*

OPEN IN BIBLE APP

But **whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away**. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And **the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image**.

*2 Corinthians 3:16-18*

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**Say:** These verses show us both the right now and not yet parts of our identity in Christ. Right now, we are God's children. We are free to know him and grow to be more like him, little by little, day by day. When Christ returns, we will experience the fullness of knowing Christ completely, and our transformation into his image will be complete. What happens between now and then is called sanctification: the lifelong process in which God's Spirit is making me more and more like Jesus.



But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

**“Once you had no identity as a people;  
now you are God's people.**

Once you received no mercy;

now you have received God's mercy.”

***1 Peter 2:9-10***

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**Say:** God created us as individuals, and he designed us to flourish within a community. So it makes sense that God gives us a new identity on both a personal and collective level. When we trust him for our salvation, Jesus transforms us as individuals, and we become part of a community that is also being transformed. In this passage, the you is plural. Collectively, as the people of God, we have a new identity together in Christ: we are part of God's family!



**Ask** students the following questions.

**Question 1:** Consider the verse from 1 John. What's the *right now* reality of our identity? What part is *not yet*?

**Question 2:** According to 1 Peter 2:9-10, what should be the result of our new identity as "*royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession*"?

**Question 3:** Notice the word freedom and the imagery of the veil, darkness, and light in the two passages above. How do they help you understand your new identity in Christ?

**Question 4:** Describe the relationship between God's transformation of individuals and God's transformation of communities.



**Ask** students the following questions.

**Question 1:** How does thinking of yourself as a “work in progress” make you feel? Impatient? Excited? Why? What encouraging truths can you call to mind when you feel frustrated?

**Question 2:** Think about your new identity in Christ. In what ways are you struggling to be who God made you to be? Do you see any gaps between who God made you to be and who you are right now?

**Question 3:** How does social media impact the way we want others to see us? Do you see a gap between the way you portray yourself online and the way you really are?

**Question 4:** Do you find that social media helps you see yourself the way God made you to be? In what ways does it encourage you? In what ways does it distract or confuse you?

**Question 5:** God is at work on both the individual and community level. How can belonging to a community of believers impact you as you grow in your individual identity?

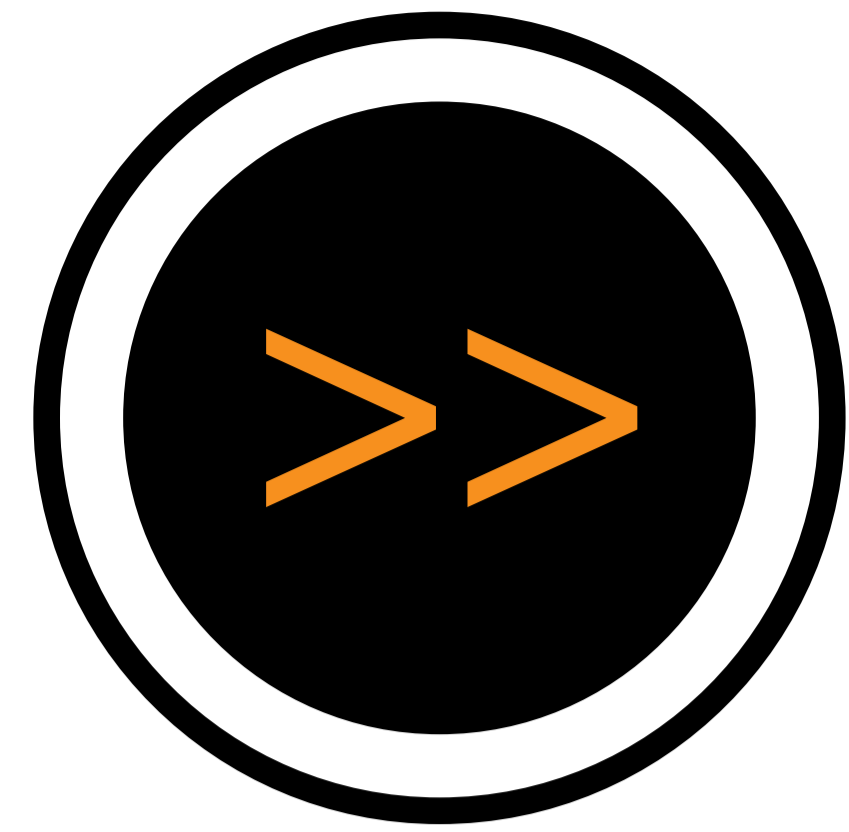


**Suggestion:** If you're able to bring the small groups back together into a large group, do so at this time. Alternatively, this activity and the remaining activities can also take place in small groups. Share the following Catechism question and answer with the students.

**Question:** What is adoption?

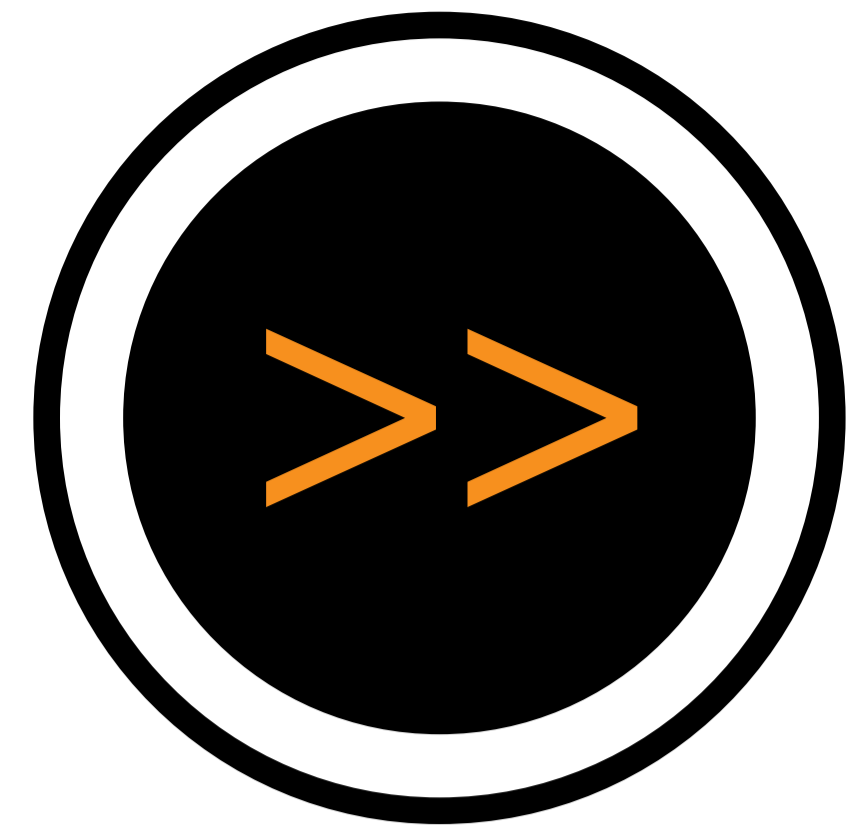
**Answer:** Adoption is when God makes us his sons and daughters through faith in Jesus Christ.





**Say:** While culture tells us our identities are something we create or discover, God tells us that our identity comes from knowing him and being transformed into the image of Jesus. God invites us to rest in the fact that we belong to his family! In the same way that you just are a child of your earthly parents, by no effort of your own, you simply are a child of God when you trust him for salvation. You don't have to earn it or prove it. And the moment you become God's child, the Holy Spirit begins the transformative process of sanctification, making you more and more like Jesus each day, until he returns. These truths about our identity free us from the pressures of trying to find ourselves, prove our worth, or look for affirmation anywhere else.

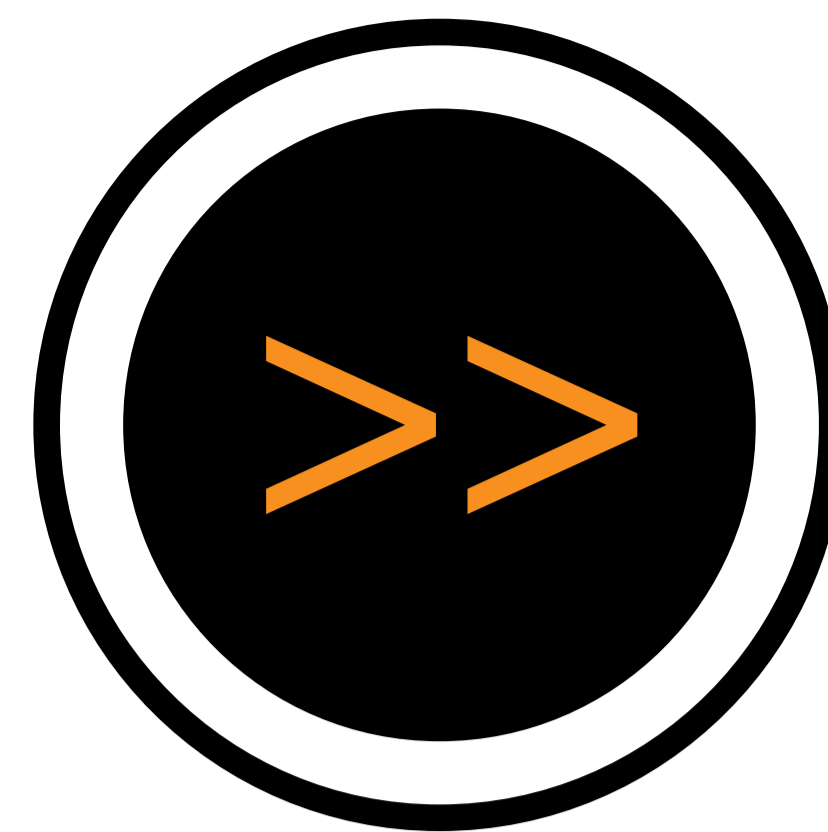
**Give** students time to reflect and respond on their own, either on paper or in the Notes app on their phones.



- How do you view yourself? Is this view different from who God says you are? If you're struggling with insecurity or shame, take a moment to savor the phrase, "I am a child of God." How does this truth change your perspective of yourself? Today and throughout the week, ask God to help you grasp his love for you and the new identity you have in Christ as a beloved child.
- Think about the way you use social media. Does your time online leave you feeling encouraged or discouraged about who you are? Does it confuse you or bring you clarity? Is it pulling you toward a better understanding of your identity in Christ or not? Ask God to give you wisdom and ask him to transform every aspect of your life, both online and offline.

## **Close in Prayer**

End this time together by praying over your students.



## YouVersion Reading Plan

Before you go... We've included a three-day YouVersion Reading Plan to engage students further in the conversation and close the gap between next week's lesson. Invite your students to download the plan and complete it this week. It can be found by searching for "Catechism: Social Media & My Identity" in the Bible App's collection of reading plans.





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