

CURRICULUM SERIES

FOUR WEEKS

# Measure Up



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## Freedom from Performance-Based Christianity

### UNDERSTAND IT

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This curriculum is a four-week series designed to help teens find freedom from performance-based Christianity by recognizing that they are already secure in Christ. It is conversational in style and would work well with a small- or medium-sized group. It could work for junior or senior high school students; however, the concepts may best be understood and embraced by older students.

### THE CENTRAL TRUTH OF EACH WEEK

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#### WEEK 1: IDENTITY DECONSTRUCTION

Students will express the various aspects of their identities and grapple with the inadequacy of identities based on performance.

#### WEEK 2: MADE NEW

Students will recognize that Christ came to free them from their old identities and that they've become new creations.

#### WEEK 3: YOU ALREADY MEASURE UP

Students will begin to see themselves for who they really are: righteous, valuable, and dearly loved.

#### WEEK 4: YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU DO

Students will learn to live their lives from a place of a solid Christian identity rather than try to earn identity through behavior.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# Identity Deconstruction

## UNDERSTAND IT

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### THIS WEEK'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Students will express various aspects of their identities and grapple with the inadequacy of an identity based on their own performance.

### KEY VERSE

Galatians 3:26-28

### PREP

Before your group meets, have your staff use their phones to take pictures of all of the teens in your group—try to make sure nobody gets left out. Use funny filters that distort or change faces—the pictures should be as outrageous as possible. Collect all the pictures and put them in a PowerPoint/Keynote presentation.

Collect enough paper plates and pens/markers so each teen can have one. Following the directions in this lesson plan, make an example pie chart based on your perception of the average teen in your youth group.

Print enough small group discussion questions for each group of six to eight students.

## INTRODUCE IT

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### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*Today we're talking about us—how we see ourselves. Many of us have distorted views of ourselves. It's as if we're looking in a mirror and we think we see a clear picture. But we don't. The mirror is dirty and warped, and we don't get a clear picture at all.*

*In a minute, we're going to jump into some deep stuff, but before we do, let's take a minute to laugh at ourselves.*

### DO THIS

Scroll through the distorted pictures, making comments and engaging the teens.

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*These pictures are funny because we know they're fake. We know we don't actually look like that.*

*There are lots of pieces to how we see ourselves that go beyond pictures—building blocks of our identities. It could be something as silly as a brand or a group at school. Or as big as our faith or families.*

*For example, some people might be athletic, so they see themselves as athletes. Others might be wealthy, so they see themselves as rich. Others might struggle in school, so they see themselves as dumb.*

## **ASK**

*What are some other things people might identify with?*

Note: If your teens are struggling to understand the concept, you could give them some examples of things that people identify with: neighborhood, school, clothing style, sexuality, habits, hobbies, religion, race, etc.

## **SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .**

*We're going to spend a little bit of time thinking about ourselves and the things that make up our identities. I'm going to give you each a paper plate and a pen. I want you to make a pie chart of your identity. If there's something really important to how you see yourself, give that thing a larger slice of the pie. The things that don't mean as much to you can take up less space.*

## **DO THIS**

Show the group the sample pie chart you made, and make sure everyone understands the activity. Then hand out the paper plates and pens to each teen. Play an upbeat song in the background while the teens work. Have the adult leaders walk around the room offering assistance to teens who are stuck.

## **ASK**

*Is anyone willing to share their identity pie chart with the group?*

## **DO THIS**

If your group is small enough, have teens stand up and share their pie charts. If you have a very large group, have the teens come to the front to share.

## **SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .**

*Sometimes it may seem as if your identity is on shaky ground. For example, if you derive your identity from being an athlete and you get injured and can't play anymore, you might have a hard time coping. Or if you're someone who gets a lot of your identity from your friend group and you have a fight with your friends, you might have a hard time knowing who you are on your own.*

*We could spend a lot of time thinking and talking about all of the different things that are important to us, but God has some stuff to say about identity, too.*

## **STUDY IT**

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## **SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .**

*The Bible has a lot of great things to say about how special we each are. We've each been given unique gifts to serve others with. But God never expects us to build our identities around those things. God offers us something greater.*

## **READ**

Galatians 3:26-28

## ASK

*Is someone willing to take a crack at what they think these verses mean?*

## SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*These verses are part of a letter written by a guy named Paul. He went to a place called Galatia and told the people there about Jesus. He told them about how God loved them and how all they needed to do to be forgiven for their sins was to accept Jesus as Lord of their life.*

*But then Paul had to leave, and the Galatians were on their own. And some other people came in and started confusing them. These people said that asking for God's forgiveness wasn't good enough. They said the Galatians had to do more in order to be saved. They made the Galatians forget about who they were in Christ.*

*What we read in these verses is a letter Paul wrote to get them back on track. He told them they didn't have to be confused about who they were. Everything takes a back seat to being a child of God.*

*We're going to spend the rest of our time in small groups talking about how we see ourselves.*

## CONNECT IT

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### DO THIS

Break up teens into groups of six to eight students, and assign a leader to each. If there aren't enough adult leaders for the small groups, select mature teens to lead groups.

## SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE

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### DO THIS

In each small group, have teens go around the circle and share their identity pie charts.

### ASK

- *What would be the hardest piece of your pie chart to lose? Why?*
- *Have you ever felt as if you didn't know who you are? What was that like?*
- *If you were to make this pie chart two years ago, how would it be different?*
- *In what way—if any—does God affect the way you see yourself?*

## LIVE IT

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### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*Whether we know it or not, we all protect the things that make up our identities. It's like with someone whose identity is built around being popular—that person might be pretty nice, but if you threaten his or her popularity, that nice person could turn into a backstabbing jerk in order to maintain social status.*

*This week, I want you to notice things in your life you're overprotective of—things you're really scared to lose. As we continue in this series, we're going to work on replacing some of the shaky pieces of our identities with the solid identity that comes from God.*