

LESSON 1: NEW CREATIONS

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Becoming a new Christian, or making a commitment to deepen your relationship with Jesus, is cause for a huge celebration. But for new believers, it also can be overwhelming as they seek to understand what happens next. This lesson will help new Christians recognize what has happened in their lives and how Jesus sees them. It also will help them embrace Jesus' promises about being a new person whose life has purpose.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. **WHAT:** Through Jesus' grace, he transforms each new Christian into a new creation.
2. **WHY:** Although new Christians may not feel different, the Bible promises that Jesus has changed us and has plans for us.
3. **HOW:** As students begin to understand Jesus' promises and power, they'll begin to live out these truths.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:8-10

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:17

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

Paul wrote Ephesians (while in prison!) as a letter to Jesus' followers in the city of Ephesus. Paul's goal is to help people grow in their faith and understand Jesus' purpose for their lives. Paul reminds us that Jesus offers his gift of grace when we decide to follow him. This gift that covers our sins isn't anything we can brag about accomplishing ourselves. Jesus saves us through his grace, knowing we can't do anything to earn our salvation.

This lesson reveals that whether or not we feel different after becoming a Christian, Jesus is at work in our lives. It's important for students to realize that Jesus will change them from the inside out, yet the way they think, speak, or act is *not* what earns them Jesus' love or salvation. Those are all grateful responses for what Jesus does in their lives.

Encourage students to view themselves through Jesus' eyes. He doesn't look at who they were before or what mistakes they make; instead, he sees them as his individual masterpieces. As a priceless creation of Jesus, each student is so valuable to him.

As new creations, we each have the opportunity to do the good things God planned for us (verse 10). It's so exciting to help students envision a new future for themselves. They aren't robots, and Jesus isn't trying to control them. But he has a beautiful purpose for their lives. It's up to them to embrace it and lean into Jesus' great vision for their lives.

These eight lessons will help students explore their new identity in Christ and the exciting journey ahead as they follow him.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- *Ever seen a true masterpiece? Come see this week—and bring a friend!*
- *Want to know what Jesus has already done in your life? Get ready for some great conversation this week!*

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear Parents,

We just started an eight-lesson series called “My New Life With Jesus.” The goal is to support new Christians, or kids who've made a deeper commitment to Jesus, on this great adventure—and to remind us all about some key basics of our faith. Each week, we'll talk about a new topic related to following Jesus.

In the first lesson, we studied Ephesians 2:8-10, where Paul reminds us that Jesus' grace is a gift; we can't earn our salvation. We also talked about being new creations in Jesus, who has great plans for our lives.

This week, please spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about the lesson. Use these discussion-starters to begin a conversation:

- *What's the best gift you've ever received? In what ways is grace a gift?*
- *What does it mean to you to be God's masterpiece?*
- *How do you feel about Jesus having plans for your life—even if you don't know them yet? How can you discover those plans?*

Thanks for all your prayers for our students and our ministry. Have an amazing week!

LESSON 1: NEW CREATIONS

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED



Preview the following video clip for your group: www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5QH3bGF4uU (or find another video about being made new). You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then introduce the video clip.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *I'll bet many of you have seen a video in biology class of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Let's watch a short video of a butterfly emerging from its cocoon. While watching, consider what words you'd use to describe the changes.*

Play the clip.

ASK:

- *How would you compare the butterfly's appearance before its transformation to when it flies away?*
- *Think about what it means to become a Christian. What are examples of transformation that happen when someone believes in Jesus and accepts him as Lord and Savior?*
- *Comparing the butterfly to a new Christian, what are some similarities? What are some differences?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *People and insects are very different, of course, but the change from caterpillar to butterfly has similarities to becoming a new believer in Jesus. Today we'll talk about some things that happen in us when we become Christians.*

TEACHING POINTS



Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *These Bible verses are a good summary of the truth about becoming a new Christian. Let's spend a few minutes breaking them down so we understand them better.*

1. GRACE IS A GIFT

ASK:

- *What's one of the best birthday or Christmas gifts you've ever received?*
- *How did you feel toward the gift-giver, and why? Did you have to do anything to deserve or "earn" the gift? Explain.*
- *Grace is an important word for our faith journey. How would you define it?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Each of us had a different experience of coming to believe in Jesus as our Savior. There isn't one right way to become a Christian, but one thing is true for all of us: We can't do a single thing to earn our salvation.*

2. YOU CAN'T EARN JESUS' LOVE

ASK:

- *If you have a job, what is it like to earn your own money? What are some other things you have to earn in life?*
- *Verse 9 talks about boasting—when we boast, what internal need are we trying to meet?*
- *Why do you think it's difficult for people to accept the truth that we can't earn salvation?*
- *If we can't earn salvation, why do we still try to do good things for Jesus? What's the point of doing good works and living a good life?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *These verses in Ephesians remind us that Jesus gave us a gift we didn't deserve. And in verse 10, Paul (the writer of Ephesians) reminds us that Jesus sees us each as a masterpiece. When we believe in him, he transforms us into new creations.*

3. JESUS HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus made you into a masterpiece because he has good things prepared for you. No matter how unqualified you might feel, Jesus has a special vision for your life.*

ASK:

- *What makes an artwork a "masterpiece"—what sets it apart from other works of art?*
- *How is the value of a masterpiece determined, and by who?*
- *Why do you think the Bible compares Jesus' followers to a masterpiece?*
- *The Bible includes many glimpses into the lives of ordinary people whom Jesus works through in extraordinary ways. How would you rank your openness to Jesus moving through you to do big things? Use a scale from one to seven, with one being "I don't believe it" to seven being "I can't wait to see what Jesus has planned for me."*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three. Have them read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:17 and then discuss these questions.

ASK:



PAIR
SHARE

- *This Bible verse says a new Christian's "old life is gone; a new life has begun." What does that mean to you?*
- *What are some things a new Christian might experience on the inside? What might you observe about a new Christian on the outside?*

Bring everyone back together, and ask a few people to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- *What did you discover today about Jesus or your faith in him?*
- *If you're a newer Christian, what excites you the most about what you heard today?*
- *If you fully embraced that you are Jesus' masterpiece, what would you stop doing and starting doing this week?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *If you recently became a new Christian, I'm so excited for you! The Bible says God and his angels are also celebrating this big, amazing decision. It's important to remember that even though you have a past life—we all do—it no longer defines you. Jesus sees you as a masterpiece and pours his grace on you each day. He has a purpose for your life and wants to walk in relationship with you each day.*

Ask if anyone has questions or reflections. Then close in prayer together as a group.

SUMMARY



LEADER
TIP

Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:10).